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## PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SPOUSE'S EXPERIENCE OF SOME FAMILY CRISES

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By this research authors tried to find any psychological features of spouse's experience of some normative family crises. 24 married couples from Novosibirsk, aged 20 to 41 years, take a part in this research. There were 8 couples at the «Childless couple stage» and 16 couples at the stage «Family with young children».

**Purpose** is an identifying of psychological characteristics of some normative family's crises

**Methodology** based on using of psychodiagnostic testing with Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale III (FACES III), test of Role expectations of partners (N.Volkova), test of the interaction of the spouses in a conflict situation (Yu.E.Aleshina, L.Ya.Gozman, E.M.Dubovskaya) and method of mathematical statistics with the Spearman rank criterion and the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test.

**Results** describe some psychological characteristics of spouses at the «Childless couple stage» and at the stage «Family with young children», include difference between men and women in this experience. The most important at the «Childless couple stage» is an attitude to expression of jealousy. If the family endures the crisis, spouses have an active negative reaction on an expression of jealousy. At the stage «Family with young children» at the forefront there are money disagreements, which prove an existence of family crisis from our point of view.

**Practical implications** are in the area of practical and scientific activity of family psychologists.

**Keywords:** family lifecycle; family crisis, young family.

## **ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПЕРЕЖИВАНИЯ СУПРУГАМИ НЕКОТОРЫХ КРИЗИСНЫХ ПЕРИОДОВ В РАЗВИТИИ СЕМЬИ**

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Предметом данного исследования являлись психологические особенности переживания супругами кризисов принятия супружеских обязательств и освоения родительских ролей. Эмпирическую базу исследования составили 24 супружеских пары г. Новосибирска в возрасте от 20 лет до 41 года, 8 из которых находятся на этапе принятия супружеских обязательств, 16 – на этапе освоения родительских ролей.

**Цель** - выявление психологических особенностей переживания супругами некоторых нормативных кризисов в развитии семьи.

**Метод или методология проведения работы:** использованы метод психодиагностического исследования в виде группового тестирования с помощью комплекса тестовых методик (опросник Д.Олсона (FACES III); методика «Рольные ожидания партнеров» (РОП) Н. Волковой; методика «Взаимодействие супругов в конфликтной ситуации» Ю.Е.Алешинной, Л.Я.Гозмана, Е.М.Дубовской) и методы математической обработки (корреляционный анализ при помощи  $r$ -критерия Спирмена и сравнительный анализ при помощи  $U$ -критерия Манна-Уитни).

**Результаты** отражены в описании некоторых особенностей психологического переживания кризисов на этапах принятия супружеских обязательств и освоения родительских ролей, в частности, различия субъективных переживаний кризисов мужчинами и женщинами. На этапе принятия супружеских обязательств особенно важным оказалось отношение к проявлению ревности. В случае если семья переживает кризис, супруги активно проявляют негативную реакцию на ревность партнера. На этапе освоения родительских ролей на первый

план выходят разногласия в отношении к деньгам, на основании чего можно предполагать наличие семейного кризиса.

**Область применения результатов** относится к сфере практической и научной деятельности семейных психологов.

**Ключевые слова:** жизненный цикл семьи; семейные кризисы; кризисные периоды в развитии семьи; молодые семьи.

The researches of psychological features of spouse's experience of some family crises are presented in Russian and foreign scientific publications. Some aspects of this problem were investigated by A.Ya. Varga [2], N.I. Olifirovich, T.F. Velenta, T.A. Zinkevich-Kuzemkina [4], P. Vatslavik, S. Minukhin, Yu.A. Aleshina [1], J. Wallerstein, V.A. Sysenko, A.V. Chernikov and others. Despite the big amount of family's and family lifecycle researches, the problem of psychological features of spouse's experience of normative family crises and its psychological content is still not resolved.

Changes in a relation to a family as a social institution and to a structure of family lifecycle make family's evolution depended on spouse's needs. A lot of young families are in a risk zone of a divorce, because they don't have very rigid responsibilities to the society and their reference group. That's why many partners overcome normative family crises hardly. It makes this problem actual, because if we want to find the way to help the family to overcome its crises, we need to study main psychological features of spouses, which can seriously influence on a beginning and overcoming of normative family crises.

Psychological features of spouses in our point of view are personal psychological characteristics, which influence on a spouse's experience of normative family crises.

**Purpose of research** is an identifying of psychological characteristics of some normative family's crises.

In an object of research were normative family crises.

**The subject of research** includes psychological features of a spouse's experience of normative family crises at the «Childless couple stage» and at the stage «Family with young children».

To achieve the purpose we have identified next tasks:

1. Theoretical overview of family as a social institution including the family lifecycle and main stages of family's evolution.
2. Investigation of psychological content of spouse's experience of normative family crises at the «Childless couple stage» and at the stage «Family with young children».
3. Identifying of the difference between men and women in this experience.

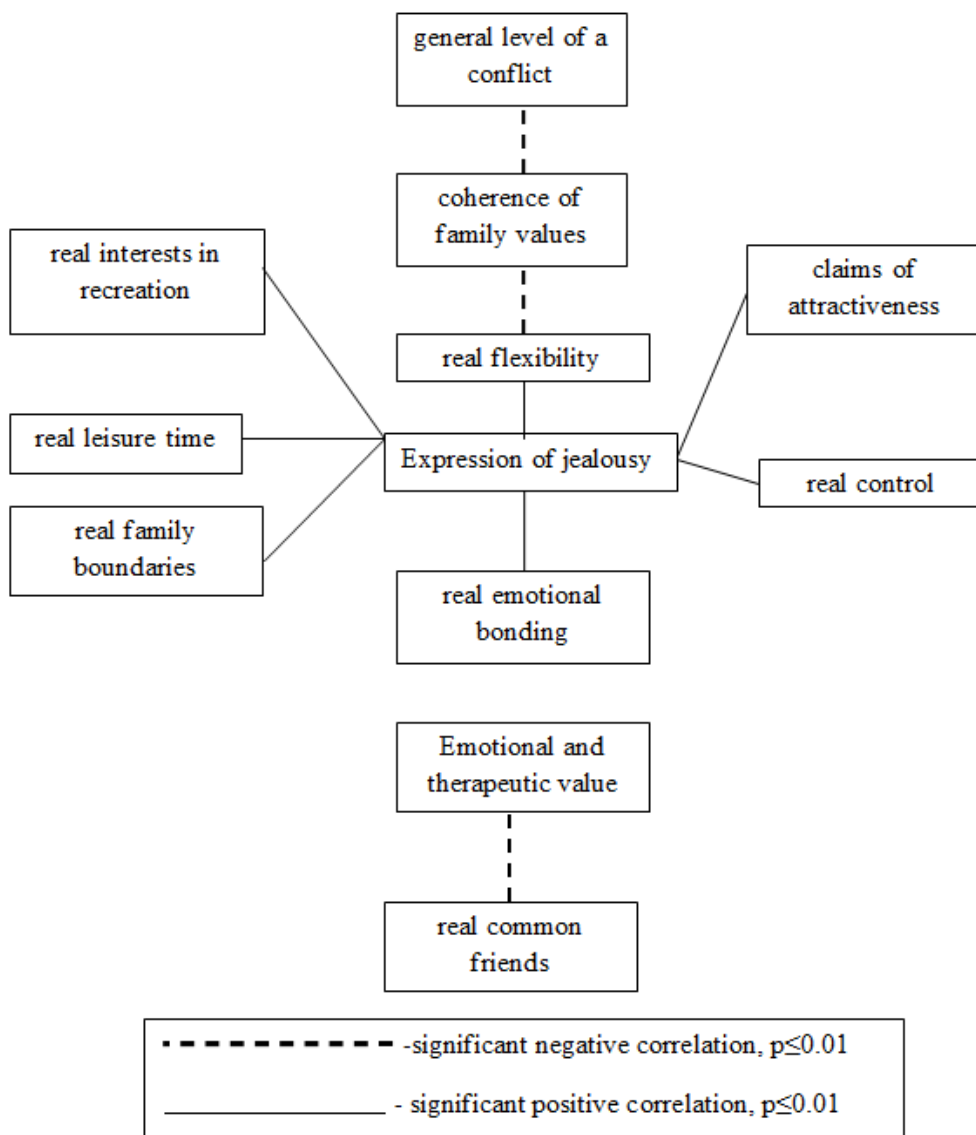
**Hypothesis:** there are some specific psychological features of spouse's experience of normative family crises at the «Childless couple stage» and at the stage «Family with young children» including the difference between men and women in this experience.

24 married couples from Novosibirsk, aged 20 to 41 years, take a part in this research. There were 8 couples at the «Childless couple stage» and 16 couples at the stage «Family with young children».

**Methodology** based on using of psychodiagnostic testing with Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale III (FACES III), test of Role expectations of partners (N.Volkova), test of the interaction of the spouses in a conflict situation (Yu.E.Aleshina, L.Ya.Gozman, E.M.Dubovskaya) and method of mathematical statistics with the Spearman rank criterion and the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test.

### **Results and discussion**

The results of using of mathematical statistics with the Spearman rank criterion at the «Childless couple stage» are presented at the figure 1.



**Fig. 1.** Significant correlations at the «Childless couple stage»  
(Spearman rank criterion)

As we can see at the figure 1, the scale «expression of jealousy» (test of the interaction of the spouses in a conflict situation) has the most correlations. It correlates with 7 scales of FACES III: real flexibility, claims of attractiveness, real control, real emotional bonding, real interests in recreation, real leisure time, real family boundaries. It means that reaction on a spouse's jealousy is very important for general state of marriage.

When young spouses react on a partner's jealousy positively, it saves their emotional closeness. In this case spouses are the most close to each other people, so they appreciate solidarity and can ask each other for help. These spouses like to spend their leisure time and to decide together, take into consideration partner's opinions, change their family roles and rules, make adjustments to changes in a stressful situation flexibly. Their attractiveness is also important for them, so they try to be in fashion in dress.

If the family endures the crisis, spouses have an active negative reaction on an expression of jealousy. In this case spouses become estranged to each other on emotional level, they don't seek for spend leisure time together, take decisions by themselves without a discussion with a partner, make adjustments to changes in a stressful situation hardly, change the family roles and rules very rarely.

On the basis of the results we can conclude, that family conflicts about the jealousy influence on the whole family system, so these families need help in a regulation of family conflicts about the jealousy to smooth out the family system in common.

Also negative correlations between «real flexibility» and «expression of jealousy», «coherence of family values» were found. It can be interpreted this manner: if the family system is rigid, if it makes adjustment to changes and stressful situations, changes the rules and roles of family relationship hardly, spouses react on expression of jealousy positively, their representations about important life aspects are coherent. The negative correlation between «coherence of family values» and «real flexibility», «general level of a conflict» means that high level of a coherence of representations about important life aspects corresponds to a rigid family system and low level of a conflict, i.e. spouses with similar values and principles make adjustments to stressful situations, change their family roles and rules rarely but their interaction is not conflict.

There is a negative correlation between «real common friends» and «emotional and therapeutic value», which can be interpreted as a big importance of mutual emo-

tional support for spouses. Marriage for them is a close area of psychological relaxation and stability, that's why they don't approve friends of themselves and other family members sometimes.

The comparative analysis utilizing Mann-Whitney U-test revealed the main differences between men and women at the «Childless couple stage».

Attractiveness ( $U=69.0$ ,  $p<0.03$ ), claims of attractiveness ( $U=65.0$ ,  $p<0.02$ ), expectation of social activity ( $U=70.5$ ,  $p<0.03$ ) and claims of emotional and therapeutic function of marriage ( $U=75$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) are more important for women at the «Childless couple stage». In other words women more than men want to be attractive, to be in fashion and expect the same from their husbands. Also women expect an expression of social activity from their spouses, i.e. husbands must have serious professional interests and active social position. At the same time wives are ready to be emotional leader and realize function of a «family psychologist».

«Real discipline» (FACES III) is pronounced at men ( $U=73.5$ ,  $p<0.04$ ), so they can be more flexible than women at situation of variance of opinions and habits, can find different ways of resolving the problem.

The results of using of mathematical statistics with the Spearman rank criterion «Family with young children» stage are presented at the table 1.

Table 1

**Significant correlations at the «Family with young children» stage  
 (Spearman rank criterion)**

<b>The name of characteristic</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-level</b>
Expectation of emotional and therapeutic function of marriage & real family rules	0,75	0,01
Expectation of emotional and therapeutic function of marriage & ideal family rules	0,65	0,01
Sexual value & real discipline	-0,66	0,01
Sexual value & manifestation of an autonomy	-0,67	0,01
Money disagreements & social activity	-0,68	0,01
Money disagreements & claims of social activity	-0,77	0,01
Money disagreements & claims of emotional and therapeutic function of marriage	-0,67	0,01

Let's consider the results presented at the table 1. The scale «Money disagreements» has negative correlations with «social activity», «claims of social activity», «claims of emotional and therapeutic function of marriage». If young parents have a big amount of money disagreements, their social activity doesn't influence on the marriage's stability, expression of professional needs, intention to be a «family psychologist». Because of these results we suppose, that money disagreement is the main reason of conflicts, which proves an existence of family crisis.

«Expectations of emotional and therapeutic function of marriage» correlates with «real and ideal family rules». If spouses have an attitude to change family rules or family rules have any changes actually, young parents want their partners to take the role of emotional leader to correct a psychological climate, to give them an emotional support. If there is no support in a family, spouses prefer to use strong and rigorous family rules.

«Sexual value» correlates with «real discipline» and «manifestation of an autonomy». If a sexual harmony is not important for spouses as a condition of family happiness, spouses seek to an autonomy, try to be more flexible at situation of variance of opinions and habits, try to find different ways of resolving the problem.

The comparative analysis utilizing Mann-Whitney U-test revealed the main differences between men and women at the «Family with young children» stage.

Attractiveness ( $U=20.5$ ,  $p<0.02$ ) and positive reaction on wife's domination ( $U=11.5$ ,  $p<0.03$ ) are more important for women. It means that women appreciate not even letting them insist on their opinion in some cases but positive reaction from their husbands on domination.

Active positive spouse's reaction on breaking the expectations about family roles is more important for men ( $U=13.5$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In other words men want their wives to perceive quietly, when husbands don't fulfill obligations caused by social stereotypes of husband's role, for example, when man didn't repair the iron.

## **Conclusions**

As a result of our research we can present next conclusions:



1. The most important at the «Childless couple stage» is an attitude to expression of jealousy. If the family endures the crisis, spouses have an active negative reaction on an expression of jealousy. In this case spouses become estranged to each other on emotional level, they don't seek for spend leisure time together, take decisions by themselves without a discussion with a partner, make adjustments to changes in a stressful situation hardly, change the family roles and rules very rarely. The difference between men and women at this stage was found: women more than men want to be attractive, to be in fashion and expect the same from their husbands; women expect an expression of social activity from their spouses, i.e. husbands must have serious professional interests and active social position. At the same time wives are ready to be emotional leader and realize function of a «family psychologist». Men at the «Childless couple stage» can be more flexible than women at situation of variance of opinions and habits, can find different ways of resolving the problem.

2. At the stage «Family with young children» at the forefront there are money disagreements, which prove an existence of family crisis from our point of view. If young parents have a big amount of money disagreements, their social activity doesn't influence on the marriage's stability, expression of professional needs, intention to be a «family psychologist». There are also significant differences between men and women in a psychological content of this stage. Attractiveness and positive reaction on their domination is more important for young mothers, at the same time young fathers are interested in an active positive spouse's reaction on breaking the expectations about family roles, caused by social stereotypes about husband's obligations.

Thus we confirmed the hypothesis about the existence of some specific psychological features of spouse's experience of normative family crises at the «Childless couple stage» and at the stage «Family with young children» including the difference between men and women in this experience.

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