



Working together  
www.rcis.ro

## **Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala**

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

---

### **OVERPROTECTION AS A FACTOR OF ANXIETY IN ADOLESCENTS**

*Alina PROSKURNIA*

---

Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2023, vol. 81, pp. 194-210

<https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.81.12>

Published by:  
Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:  
„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,  
Department of Sociology and Social Work  
and  
HoltIS Association

# Overprotection as a Factor of Anxiety in Adolescents

Alina PROSKURNIA<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The article aims to identify adolescent anxiety as a personal trait, one of the most dangerous consequences of an overprotective parenting style in modern conditions. The methodological basis of the study involves a set of diagnostic methods (diagnosis of parental attitudes, diagnosis of personality motivation for success, parental attitude research instrument) using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, correlation and regression analysis, and other methods of mathematical statistics. The empirical research has found that excessive care, especially in mother-dominant families, leads to pronounced overprotective. The authors of this article found a direct correlation between this parenting style and the levels of anxiety and motivation in adolescents (an inverse correlation between anxiety level and motivation for success was found). High personal anxiety was recorded in 33% of adolescents, which indicated a negative experience of suffering anxiety. The practical value of this article is due to an integrated approach to the tasks of correctional psychology, which should consider both the personal predisposition to anxiety in adolescents and their early experiences of anxiety. At the same time, educational work with parents and psychological methods to reduce adolescent anxiety are equally important. The involvement of wartime contexts in the perception of the issue raised makes this article original.

*Keywords:* anxiety in adolescents, parenting styles, overprotection.

## Introduction

It is known that the success of the further socialization of a child, their mental state, the ability to communicate productively with the environment, and the formation of their inner world depend on parental education. The lack of parental care and reasonable control is the cause of the following deviations: an adolescent is being brought up on the street, in computer games, and (very often) informal associations. The consequences of such a parenting style are early drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, aggression... However, excessive parental care and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Human and Social Studies, Institute of Psychology Mykolas Romeris University Vilnius, LITHUANIA. E-mail: [alina\\_proskurnia@sci-academy.cc](mailto:alina_proskurnia@sci-academy.cc)

desire to protect the child as much as possible from any negative influences of the outside world sometimes have unexpected adverse consequences. First, this concerns anxiety in adolescents, which increases depending on the degree of awareness of their dependence and helplessness in various life situations. A child's development of life strategies requires them to learn to be independent and take feasible solutions to everyday problems, whether in training, communication with peers, or choosing a hobby, etc. If parents control a child excessively and decide all the issues for them, anxiety will grow and have a destructive effect on the adolescent psyche (Giunta *et al.*, 2022).

Scientists who studied the age characteristics of personality formation noted that the foundations for leading a future social life were laid in adolescence (McKay & Storch, 2011; Huberty, 2012). Adolescence is a sensitive period for the formation and development of many areas of a child; it is an emotionally rich and crisis period for children and parents. The support of parents is essential during this period, which should not replace a child's experience but help to acquire it to use it in the future. Therefore, it is so hard to choose the right parenting style and find a "golden mean" between help and the replacement of a child's experience with one's own. Only a child's own experience and understanding of their mistakes and ways to overcome life obstacles can help form a person capable of self-actualization. However, anxiety caused by parental overprotection always inhibits the process of spiritual growth of a child; this anxiety can harm a person in all spheres of life, disrupt mental balance, or cause severe psychosomatic disorders.

The wartime context foregrounds and exacerbates the problem of parenting styles (especially if parents with children are temporarily abroad). The desire to provide a child with optimal well-being and isolate them from the tragic events in Ukraine can have unexpectedly negative consequences. A child will come up against reality sooner or later, which requires adequate understanding and appropriate actions. Children who were protected from the cruel realities of time by excessive parental care would experience helplessness, fear of new possible threats, and difficulties in communicating with the environment, including with peers who have experienced the war to some extent and grown up significantly. Anxiety will only grow in an adolescent as the consequence of overprotection and the lack of proper preparation of a child for difficult life circumstances, the development of behavioral strategies, and responsible decision-making.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the correlation between the overprotective parenting style and the level of anxiety in adolescents.

## **Literature review**

Adolescence is the most challenging period for a person; during this period, the excitability of an adolescent increases sharply, their reaction to insults becomes acuter, and their criticism towards older people rises. The ignorance of these

features of adolescence can lead to the formation of persistent deviations in an adolescent's moral development and behavior. Unsuccessful entry into society can significantly exacerbate the overall crisis situation, lead to maladaptation of an individual, and disrupt all further life activities. The behavior of an adolescent can contradict the traditions and interests of society. Therefore, the development of effective strategies for correcting adolescent behavior is an "eternal" subject for psychologists and teachers. However, adolescence is considered a sensitive period for correcting disorders related to the development of an individual. Here, the relationship between the parents and the child plays a crucial role.

Numerous conflicts naturally arise during the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Parents should remember that adolescents acutely experience their awkwardness, physiological changes in appearance, and speech difficulties; they cannot abstract from these difficulties or explain to themselves and others what is happening to them. According to the concept of Piaget (1997), the personality is finally formed in adolescence, and a life program is created. Vygotsky (1990), in turn, notes that adolescence is a historical formation, i.e., the features of the course and duration of the adolescent period vary significantly depending on the level of development of society (and historical circumstances). As for the psychological characteristics of modern adolescents, the changes are especially noticeable. Feldstein (2004) rightly states, "changes in socio-economic life cause qualitative differences in the social component of the formation of consciousness, self-awareness, and personality of young people."

Adolescents raised in families with different income levels vividly sense the differences that affect their self-esteem and environmental assessment. Adolescents with an increased anxiety level are isolated in their social status (Rapee *et al.*, 2022). External attributes (the ability to have fashionable clothes, a car, or an expensive smartphone) become extremely important for adolescents who react sharply to social reactions about themselves. Since adolescents are fussy over their appearance and exaggerate their physical defects at this time, it causes the severity of the reaction to approval, admiration, mocking, or contempt by peers. All this leads to low self-esteem, uncertainty, stiffness in communication, and a decrease in self-respect. In addition, sexual development is inextricably linked with the formation of personal identity and feelings of dignity and pride. The main contradiction of adolescence is the desire but the failure to be an adult. This is a contradiction between the desire for independence and the need to obey the instructions of adults.

School educational activity recedes into the background in adolescence because the center of life is transferred to the sphere of communication. In a situation of martial law, when families find themselves outside Ukraine, the linguistic aspect of communication becomes of exceptional importance. The best option is the parallel entry of parents and children into a foreign language environment and the maximum contact of adolescents with peers. When parents and their children jointly overcome language barriers in communication, it helps to establish a

democratic parenting style and reduce anxiety. Experience shows that children are more likely to adapt to a new language environment due to the need and necessity of communicating with peers, so they can be ahead of adults in their language skills, which increases their self-esteem and reduces anxiety. The effectiveness of joint attendance of art therapy by parents and children or their participation in volunteer work has also been proved. It is pretty evident that the skills of independence, the desire for autonomous decisions, and faith in their capabilities are the means of self-realization for adolescents. At this particular time, the role of the reference group comes to the fore, which contributes to the break with parents as role models. Accordingly, restrictions and prohibitions of parents increase proportionally, so conflicts arise in the family more often than not.

The researchers analyze the phenomenon of adolescent anxiety and note that the reason behind the strained relationship between parents and children is not a generation gap but social changes caused by economic conditions and technological progress. These changes make parents and children feel insecure and restless, which generates anxiety. Here, it is necessary to emphasize the general anxiety of society, which is experiencing a long bloody war and economic difficulties that are likely to continue after the victory. Well-tempered and cohesive people should be the key to the success of the reconstruction; this applies to society as a whole and the family. This primarily relates to families that foster adolescents already involved in “adult” life.

The most dangerous thing is that the anxiety of adolescents often leads to aggression on their part. The mental defense mechanism works; adolescents take an aggressive position against those people who are expected to threaten their prestige and self-esteem. Such aggression can take very acute forms. Parents can support the child at this time if they take into account all these features of a dangerous age and understand the condition and needs of the adolescent. However, the usual parenting style continues to affect family relationships automatically. What previously provided emotional comfort, a sense of child protection, and constant support from parents can change to the experience of complete discomfort, insecurity, and helplessness (Clarke *et al.*, 2013). As already mentioned, the center of an adolescent’s life is transferred to the activity of communication; an adolescent is expected to react quickly and spontaneously, imagine their capabilities and realize them. Unfortunately, this is not always possible, even with the most thoughtful parenting style called “cooperation,” because the living conditions and the influence of the environment make their adjustments.

An overprotective parenting style is a dangerous factor in the growth of anxiety in adolescence. Prihozhan (2000) proves that the mechanism of consolidation and enhancement of anxiety actively accumulates and deepens the negative emotional experience. Children exposed to parental overprotection become uncertain of their capabilities and dependent on their parents, who strive to do everything for them. However, when they seek to protect their child from any negative impressions and everything unpleasant that occurs in life at every step, they forget about the

need to prepare for a collision with reality. The child gets used to the protection and actively demands it. For example, a little boy watches a movie and sees the hero in a dangerous situation; he frighteningly shouts, "Mom, turn off," and his mother blinds his eyes. The mother cares for the child's mood, trying to protect him from negative impressions, but such protection is excessive for a boy who should develop willpower and courage.

## Methodology

### *Conceptual and categorical framework of research*

Overprotection is excessive parental care for their child (Vasyagina & Glukhanyuk, 2004). Psychologists distinguish between indulgent and dominant overprotection; a child is allowed absolutely everything, or their every step is controlled. A common feature of both types of overprotection is a distrust of a child and an underestimation of their capabilities. Parents may be ashamed that their child is less successful than other peers and somewhat inhibited or has particular physical disabilities or strange behavior. The motive of parental overprotection can be the fear that something bad may happen to their child. However, exaggerated parental fear is transmitted to a child and becomes a reason for a child's alienated attitude toward others. A child feels anxiety and dependence on their parents and, consequently, badly orients in life situations.

The main danger of overprotection is the outbreak of unrest and anxiety at the early stages of personality development that are not typical for childhood. All this gives rise to new problems that will further complicate life in society, such as a lack of independence and timely skills of development and communication, self-doubt, and dependence. The desire of parents to sacrifice everything for the sake of a child's happiness leads to the project of an "unhappy fate." Ovcharova (2003) notes, "a child who has experienced overprotection finds it difficult to adapt to a broad social environment." Thus, the victim of overprotection will find it challenging to adapt to the requirements and conditions of the environment at every step and in any situation. When a child faces reality and does not find confirmation of their high self-esteem, the conflict between the actual and ideal "self" is developed. This causes heavy emotions in children and forms such negative personal qualities as aggressiveness, distrust, suspicion, stubbornness, and painful insult. All this complicates any educational process and makes children unsociable; they are hardly perceived in any group outside the family, which further deforms their personality.

The researchers believe that the hypertrophy of positive emotional contact between parents and children in the family contributes to a conflict of ambivalence in children and thus significantly complicates their social adaptation. A conflict of ambivalence is manifested in the contradiction between the child's desire for

contact with strangers and the lack of means for them to establish these contacts (Bunge *et al.*, 2017). Psychologists have proven that overprotection leads to the development of such traits in a child as humility, dependence, politeness, accuracy, obedience, non-creativity, and maximum compliance. Evidently, negative qualities prevail in such a characteristic (Vasyagina & Glukhanyuk, 2004).

It is worth noting that the reasons of overprotection and the motives for choosing this parenting style can differ. The reason is not purely a sacrificial love for children and a sincere desire to protect them from life's troubles and dangerous situations. It can also be associated with parents' dissatisfaction with their status and the desire to achieve their unrealized ambitions through their child, i.e., a kind of self-love. Moreover, parents with a high social status and material well-being do not often want to see their child as a "loser." Their constant help to the child (in particular, the fulfillment of school assignments for a child) and inflated requirements make the child feel fear of non-compliance with expectations from others. A fear of becoming a loser can actually be a reason for the inferiority complex of a child. On the other hand, the desire of parents to protect their child from any real or fictitious threats makes the child feel insecure in the face of danger. All this becomes an obstacle to normal child development, prevents the realization of their creative abilities, and significantly complicates communication with adults and peers.

Horney (1991) notes, "Guilt comes to the fore in heavy emotions of anxious adolescents associated with the family." Children who have gotten used to emotional comfort and enjoyed parental love and constant care experience their failures especially acutely. Children do not see the connection between their upbringing and its consequences; therefore, they tend to blame themselves. One of the reasons for chronic anxiety in adolescents is a failure in communication. Adolescents who have to speak in public (in class, in a study group, at school meetings, during solemn events, etc.) can hardly accept their inability to speak easily, express requests tactfully and clearly, or vividly convey their impressions of what they have read or seen. When parents limit a child's contact with a broad social environment, the adolescent feels inferior to their peers. Adolescents constantly worry about their failures due to a self-esteem conflict, a contradiction between the desire for personal autonomy and the habit of dependence, or fear of making life choices driven by the inability to assess their actions objectively. All this increases negative emotional experiences and contributes to the development of anxiety. If there is no timely psychological and pedagogical support for adolescents with high anxiety levels, the so-called "adolescent crisis" can be delayed for a pretty long period.

It is worth considering the anxiety level of an adolescent is influenced by the type of relationship realized by parents during upbringing and the type of character accentuation. In particular, adolescent anxiety is directly related to pedantic character accentuation and hyperthymic and cyclothymic traits with sticking and ecstatic accentuations (Bertie *et al.*, 2022). Remschmidt (1994) believes adolescents constantly compare themselves with their peers, which

inevitably generates the need for self-assessment of their abilities and capabilities. The researcher holds, "In this process, the range of normal variability remains unknown. This increases anxiety and can lead to acute conflicts, depression, and even chronic neuroses."

Thus, the connection between parental overprotection and the subsequent uncertainty of adolescents in their abilities is explicit, as well as the possibility of far-reaching sad consequences. In this regard, it is relevant to conduct empirical studies of the psychological reasons for anxiety in adolescence and its connection with parenting style.

### *Methodological framework*

The study involved 52 adolescents (28 girls and 24 boys) who were seventh-grade students of the Ternopil secondary school No. 3, specialized in studying foreign languages, and their parents (28 mothers and 20 fathers). The psychodiagnostic examination took place in September 2021, when the epidemiological restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic were eased up, and schoolchildren returned to classroom training. Parents and students were examined separately. Thus, students took tests after school lessons during the homeroom period with the participation of the school psychologist, and parents passed tests during the teacher-parent meeting and individually (if they were not present at the meeting).

The parental attitudes questionnaire developed by Varga and Stolin (1989) is a psychodiagnostic tool focused on the identification of parental attitudes toward children. It determines the dominant parenting styles in the family. The questionnaire identifies rational, emotional, and behavioral components of parental attitudes. It includes a system of diverse feelings for the child, parenting strategies, and an understanding of the nature and personality of the child, their actions, and behavior.

The parental attitude research instrument (hereinafter - PARI) by Schaefer and Bell (1958) is designed to study the attitude of parents toward different aspects of family life and their parental role. PARI makes it possible to assess the specifics of family relations and the features of family life organization. Another technique used in this article was the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory by Spielberger (1972) in the adaptation of Hanin.

The technique for diagnosing personality motivation for success developed by Ehlers (1981) is a questionnaire designed to study the motivational orientation of a person to achieve success or avoid failures. Quantitative data processing was carried out by methods of mathematical statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, calculation of mean values, etc. Data processing was carried out in Excel and SPSS programs.



## Results

The authors of this article analyzed the data obtained using Varga-Stolin parental attitudes questionnaire and determined that the vast majority of parents (70%) received average scores on the main test scales, a fifth of the sample (21%) - high scores, and minority - low scores (9%) (Figure 1).

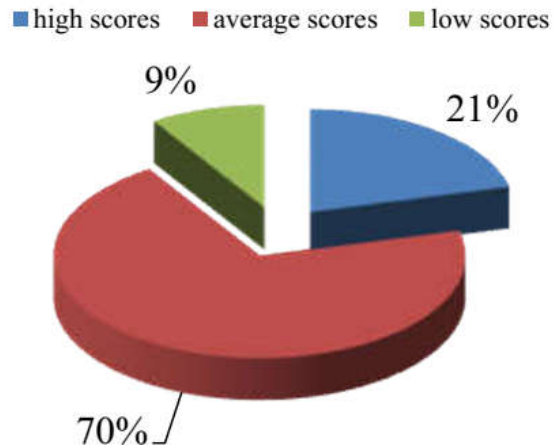


Figure 1. Results of diagnostics based on the Varga-Stolin parental attitudes questionnaire

According to the questionnaire, high rates are important and indicate the severity of this scale, i.e., the presence of a particular style of attitude towards adolescents. The scales with low scores are no less important and indicate the pronounced opposite attitude towards adolescents on the corresponding scale. Interpretation of high and low scores depends on the content of the scale. High scores indicate the positive nature of the parental attitude on the scales of “acceptance” and “cooperation.” High scores indicate the negative nature of the parental attitude on the scales of “symbiosis,” “hyper socialization,” and “little loser” (or infantilism).

High scores of respondents were found on such scales as “symbiosis” (4% of respondents), “authoritative hyper socialization” (9%), “infantilization” (4%), “cooperation” (2%), and “acceptance” (2%). Respondents had low scores on such scales as “acceptance-rejection” (2%), “symbiosis” (2%), “hyper socialization” (2%), and “infantilization” (3%) (Table 1).

Table 1. The distribution of respondents' answers to the Varga-Stolin questionnaire by the severity of the scales

Severity	Questionnaire scales					Total
	rejection-acceptance	cooperation	symbiosis	authoritative hyper socialization	little loser	
The number of respondents						
High	1	1	2	5	2	11
Average	50	51	49	46	48	36
Low	1	-	1	1	2	5
Structure, %						
High	2	2	4	9	4	21
Average	96	98	94	89	93	70
Low	2	-	2	2	3	9

The results showed that most parents have average scores on different scales, which means their parenting style is not expressed in the direction of active positive or negative manifestations. According to the developers of this questionnaire, high scores on the scales of "acceptance," "cooperation," and "symbiosis" should testify to the constructive parenting style. In this particular sample, 9.2% and 13% of parents have high scores on the "constructive" and "destructive" scales, respectively.

One or another form of overprotective attitude style was manifested in 9 parents (17%) who had high scores on such scales as "symbiosis" (4% or two persons), "hyper-socialization" (9% or five persons), and "infantilization" (4% or two persons). The authors of this article found that mothers mainly had high scores on the scales of "hyper-socialization" and "symbiosis." They treat adolescents as very young children who cannot perform their tasks themselves. Mothers consider their children unable to be independent and worry that their children are not protected from bad influences. Therefore, they try to protect adolescents from difficulties through constant control, which primarily represents an interference with their independent life. Such attitude style limits the development of children and forms their passive personality traits. Excessive attention and care manifest in such a parenting style as "symbiosis," which also limits the development of the inner world of adolescents. "Infantilization" is the most dangerous parenting style since parents (mainly mothers) are stuck in the early stages of the development of their children and seek to preserve the appropriate psychological climate in the family. In other words, parents continue the "childhood" of their adolescents. As a result, adolescents grow up absolutely unprepared for an independent life.

High scores on such scales as “acceptance-rejection” and “cooperation” indicate that parents are interested in the emotional experience of an adolescent and their experiences and plans. Parents help to form a sense of self-respect and adulthood and develop intellectual and creative potential. However, a small percentage of parents had high scores on these scales. This indicates the need to explain to all parents the benefits of such an attitude toward their adolescents. The results of the application of the PARI technique were processed separately for fathers and mothers, considering the requirement for converting “raw” scores into sten scores and their interpreting. Table 2 provides an assessment of parental attitudes toward family roles.

Table 2. Attitudes of parents to the family role according to the PARI technique

No.	features	Average scores	sten scores	severity
Fathers				
3	the interests of a woman are limited to the family	10	2	Low
5	a sense of self-sacrifice as a mother	8	1	Low
7	family conflicts	9	1	Low
11	excessive authority of parents	14	5	Moderate
13	dissatisfaction with the role of a housewife	8	2	Low
17	“indifference” of a husband, his non-participation in family affairs	8	1	Low
19	mother domination	8	2	Low
23	dependence of a mother	10	1	Low
Mothers				
3	the interests of a woman are limited to the family	12	4	Moderate
5	a sense of self-sacrifice as a mother	12	3	Low
7	family conflicts	13	4	Moderate
11	excessive authority of parents	13	5	Moderate
13	dissatisfaction with the role of a housewife	14	6	Moderate
17	“indifference” of a husband, his non-participation in family affairs	13	3	Low
19	mother domination	19	9	High
23	dependence of a mother	15	5	Moderate

The overwhelming number of scales that characterize the attitude of parents to family roles have low (for fathers) and moderate (for mothers) values. Mothers have a high score in such a feature as “mother dominance,” the value of which reaches 19 raw points and 9 sten scores. The calculation of the results characterizing the

attitude of parents to family roles was also carried out separately for fathers and mothers in accordance with the requirements for converting “raw” into sten scores. The results of determining the attitude of parents toward adolescents according to the PARI technique (Table 3) show that evaluated features have predominantly moderate and low severity in the following groups of characteristics: emotional contact, excessive emotional distance, and excessive concentration on the child.

The following features of male parental attitude toward a child have the highest moderate scores: “partnership relations,” “development of ambitions,” “equality,” “irritability,” “rigor,” “excessive care,” “suppression of will,” and “suppression of aggression.” Mothers have high scores in such features as “verbalization” and “excessive care.” The first feature indicates that respect is paid to adolescents, and they can express their thoughts and attitudes, which is essential for their socialization in the family and among peers. The limit indicator of the feature of “excessive care” confirms such dynamics of relations in the family as mother dominance (which was established by the Varga-Stolin questionnaire).

The authors of this article cannot argue that overprotective is the dominant style of attitude towards adolescents since the features that form it (“excessive care,” “suppression of aggression,” “suppression of sexuality,” and “excessive interference with the child’s world”) have general moderate and low values. However, the features and consequences of this style may appear later or should be determined by other techniques (Table 3).

Table 3. The attitude of parents toward their children according to the PARI technique

Parental attitude to the child raw score		Fathers			Mothers		
		sten scores	severity	raw score	sten score	severity	
a) optimal emotional contact							
1	motivation of verbal manifestations, verbalization	12	2	Low	16	7	Moderate
14	partnership relations	14	4	Moderate	12	3	Low
15	development of ambitions of the child	16	4	Moderate	15	3	Low
21	equality between parents and the child	15	5	Moderate	15	1	Low
b) excessive emotional distance with the child							
8	irritability, irascibility	13	5	Moderate	12	5	Moderate
9	rigor, excessive austerity	13	5	Moderate	13	6	Moderate
16	avoidance of contact with the child	13	5	Moderate	12	4	Moderate

c) excessive concentration on the child							
2	excessive care	13	6	Moderate	15	7	Moderate
4	suppression of will	13	4	Moderate	13	4	Moderate
6	fear of offending	12	2	Low	14	4	Moderate
10	elimination of family influences	11	2	Low	13	4	Moderate
12	suppression of aggression	12	5	Moderate	12	4	Moderate
18	suppression of sexuality	10	2	Low	9	1	Low
20	excessive interference with the child's world	12	3	Low	13	3	Low
22	desire to accelerate the child's development	11	2	Low	13	4	Moderate

The next step of this study is to examine the level of situational and personal anxiety in adolescents according to the technique of C. Spielberger (1972) in the adaptation of Hanin. According to the test results, most students (83% or 43 people) had a low level of situational anxiety (29 points). An average level of situational anxiety (34 points) was found in five students, which constituted 10% of respondents, and four students (7% of respondents) had a high level of situational anxiety (47 points). The difference between boys and girls is one point on average.

50% of students had average values (34-37 points) of the level of personal anxiety. High (45-48 points) and low (28-29 points) levels of personal anxiety were found in 33% and 17% of students, respectively. The obtained results show that adolescents tend to perceive most situations (especially unpredictable ones) as threats and react to them in a particular way. The distribution of the studied group of adolescents by the level of situational and personal anxiety is presented in Figure 2.

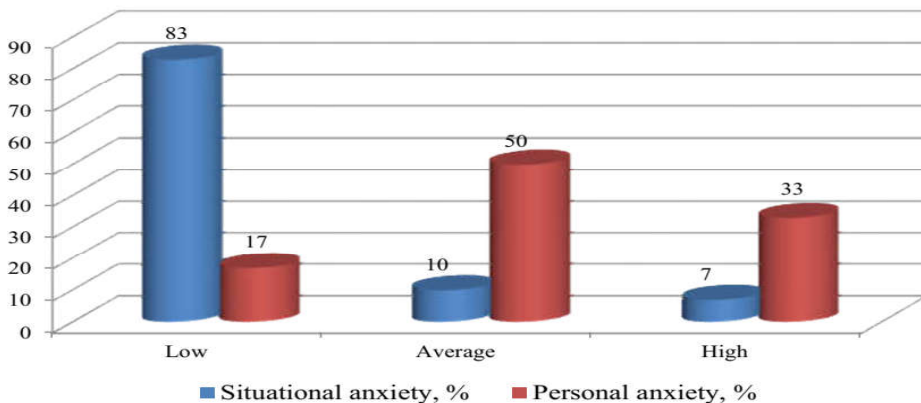


Figure 2. Distribution of the studied group of adolescents by the level of situational and personal anxiety

The authors of this article compared situational and personal anxiety and found that the testing did not cause significant anxiety in adolescents. The level of personal anxiety in girls and boys differed by 1-2 points. The next step is to analyze the level of motivation for success in adolescents according to the technique developed by Ehlers (1981). The results of testing by the said technique indicate that 42 students (80% of respondents) have an average level of motivation; girls have 17 points, and boys have 16 points. Eight students (16% of respondents) can boast of a high level of motivation; on average, girls have 20 points, and boys have 18 points. Two students (4% of respondents) have a low level of motivation. The generalized results are shown in the pie chart (Figure 3).

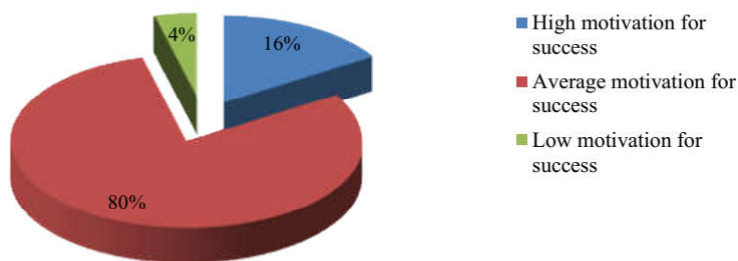


Figure 3. Distribution of the studied group by the level of motivation for success

The authors of this article have compared the points of motivation for success with the grade points average of the students and established that adolescents with the highest motivation for success study hard, set ambitious goals, and work to achieve results. The studied group of students who has an average motivation for success, on the contrary, shows non-persistent results. Students who are low-motivated to succeed are indifferent to learning outcomes, do not show perseverance, and get much more modest grades.

In order to establish the correlation between the features of parenting style and anxiety and motivation for success, the authors of this article analyzed the results by methods of statistical data processing in SPSS-17 programs. A statistically significant connection between the scales is evidenced by a correlation from 0.50 at the significance level of 0.01 and 0.05. However, given the high significance of the correlation coefficient of the defined sample, this indicator may be slightly lower. At the same time, the significance of the correlation coefficient should be 0.05 for one-sided correlation and 0.01 for two-sided correlation. Below the authors of this article provide the correlation indicators obtained at the significance level of 0.01.

The results of the correlation analysis of the data obtained by the Varga-Stolin and PARI techniques make it possible to determine that the correlation exists between such scales as “acceptance” and “cooperation” (correlation coefficient  $r=0.47$ ), “acceptance” and “symbiosis” ( $r=0.37$ ), “acceptance” and “little loser”

( $r=0.39$ ). According to the data obtained by the PARI technique, a correlation was found between the scales “emotional contact,” “attitude to the family role,” and “excessive concentration on the child.” There are positive manifestations of such correlations. For example, such scales as “motivation of verbal manifestations, verbalization” and “equality between parents and the child” have a high correlation ( $r=0.75$ ) with the feature “the interests of a woman are limited to the family.” This suggests that a mother who spends most of her time at home has more opportunities to listen to her children and treat them with attention. However, such a feature as “the interests of a woman are limited to the family” has an inverse correlation with the “suppression of aggression,” “suppression of sexuality,” and “the desire to accelerate the child’s development” ( $r=0.75$ ).

The study also found a correlation between “excessive care” and “a sense of self-sacrifice” ( $r=0.38$ ), “dissatisfaction with the role of a housewife” and “development of ambitions of the child” ( $r=0.37$ ). “Excessive authority of parents” correlates with “elimination of family influences” ( $r=0.37$ ). A direct correlation was determined between the scale of parental attitude “acceptance” and situational and personal anxiety ( $r=0.97$  and  $0.82$ , respectively). The probability of overprotection is highest in mother-dominant families and families with the excessive authority of the parents. This is a reason behind anxiety in adolescents, which can subsequently form anxiety as a trait of their personality.

Thus, the families of the studied group of adolescents tend to show excessive care with the features of mother dominance and non-involvement of the husband in family affairs. Adolescents who suffer an unfavorable climate of parental overprotection can try to compensate for their dissatisfaction outside the family; this can negatively affect their attitude to learning and worsen relationships with peers. A high level of personal anxiety correlates with “mother dominance” in the family ( $r=0.56$ ). The average level of motivation for success correlates with such a parenting style as “cooperation” ( $r=0.51$ ) and has an inverse correlation with “excessive authority of parents” and “mother dominance” ( $r=-0.70$  and  $r=-0.71$ , respectively).

## Discussion

Based on the results of an empirical study, the authors of this article can argue that the style of parental attitudes and the overprotective parenting style are connected with the level of anxiety in adolescents and their motivation level. The relationship between parenting strategies and negative emotional states in children has been investigated repeatedly. However, the authors of this article were the first in Ukraine to analyze the negative impact of overprotection on the mental health of adolescents. Foreign researchers believe the primary source of anxiety in children and adolescents is the excessive parental attention and neglect of the child’s personal boundaries (Deng *et al.*, 2021).

Gere *et al.* (2012) from the Center for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Eastern and Southern Norway, give pride of place to overprotective in the occurrence of anxiety and the manifestation of behavioral disorders of adolescents. The results of their study show that significant correlations between excessive parental care and symptoms of child anxiety disappear after controlling for concomitant behavioral symptoms in children. Researchers and practitioners need to consider the attendant problems of child behavior when working with parents of anxious adolescents (Gere *et al.*, 2012).

The researchers from the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Amsterdam, conducted a meta-analytical approach and found a link between anxiety in parents and children with increased parental control. Factors that may function as enhancers of these links were identified, such as the gender of the parents and the child, their age, and the socioeconomic status of the family (van der Bruggen *et al.*, 2008).

According to Kaveh *et al.* (2022), parenting styles are the main determinants of individual and social behavior, and dysfunctional styles (in the case of their application) can cause problems with the emotional sphere of adolescents and their behavior. The study identified a relationship between a mother and a female child and determined the risk of anxiety and depressive disorders.

The authors of this article analyzed research by foreign psychologists and outlined the following problems that should be studied within the realities of Ukrainian society: the correlation between overprotection and behavioral disorders and the neurological status of adolescents, considering the age and gender of parents and children, the level of education, the presence of siblings, and the general psychological climate in the family, and its economic and social situation. However, interpersonal relationships in the family between parents and children during wartime are of particular importance.

## Conclusion

Thus, the authors of this article found a direct connection between an overprotective parenting style and psychological manifestations of anxiety in adolescence. Parents have different motives for resorting to overprotection, and the degree of its effect on the personality formation of adolescents also varies due to the specifics of their character accentuations. However, overprotection during adolescence increases anxiety levels due to the growing need for independent decisions and the inability to do so. In the future, an increase in anxiety can lead to depression, chronic neuroses, and spontaneous aggression. Psychologists note that parents do not often realize the dangerous consequences of overprotection; therefore, the problem of psycho-correction is associated with the need for educational activities among parents, teachers, and adolescents themselves.



In course of the study, the authors of this article applied the Varga-Stolin parental attitudes questionnaire, the PARI technique, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory by Spielberger in the adaptation of Hanin, and the technique for diagnosing personality motivation for success by Ehlers. The results of the conducted tests are as follows: 1) the predominant style of parental attitude towards adolescents in the sample under study is mixed and non-persistent; 2) such parental attitude styles as “verbalization” and “excessive care” have the highest moderate values bordering on high scores.

The first indicator is positive for the development of adolescents and the establishment of emotional contact with them. However, the second indicator, in combination with “mother dominance,” leads to pronounced excessive care, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient calculated on different scales. Furthermore, high personal anxiety was recorded in 33% of adolescents, which indicated a negative experience of suffering anxiety. It is predominantly associated with school anxiety because the growing school requirements create difficult situations for students accustomed to overprotection. The lack of independence of adolescents and the experience of school failures can significantly decrease their self-esteem, which also increases their anxiety. High motivation for success was found only in 15% of the studied group of adolescents. An inverse correlation between the level of anxiety and motivation for success was established during this research. This study has proved that psycho-correctional work should be carried out taking into account the personal predisposition to anxiety in adolescents and their early experiences of it, which is multiplied in school years due to parental overprotection.

The authors conducted this study before the beginning of full-scale Russian aggression. However, martial law exacerbated the problem of overprotection due to anxiety in children and its dangerous consequences, especially in adolescence. Nowadays, parents need more than ever to develop clear-headed attitudes of adolescents to life circumstances, teach them to cooperate with adults, emphasize the necessity of mutual support, and avoid an overprotective parenting style.

### References

- Bertie, L.A., Sikuri, G., & Hudson, J.L. (2022). Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. *Comprehensive Clinical Psychology*, 5(2), 217-232.
- Bunge, E.L., Mandil, J., Consoli, A.J., & Gomar, M. (2017). CBT strategies for anxious and depressed children and adolescents: A clinician’s toolkit. New York: The Guilford Press, 326 p.
- Clarke, K., Cooper, P., & Creswell, C. (2013). The parental overprotection scale: Associations with child and parental anxiety. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 151(2), 618–624.
- Deng, N., Bi, H., & Zhao J. (2021). Maternal psychological control and rural left-behind children’s anxiety: The moderating role of externalizing problem behavior and teacher support. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.624372>

- Ehlers, T. (1981). *Fragebogenskalen zur Beschreibung der Umwelt und der Verhaltensbesonderheiten von Kindern durch die Eltern*. Marburg: Fachbereich Psychologie d. Philipps-Univ.
- Feldstein, D.I. (2004). *Psychology of growing up*. Moscow: Flinta, 622 p.
- Gere, M.K., Villabø, M.A., Torgersen, S., & Kendall, P.C. (2012). Overprotective parenting and child anxiety: The role of co-occurring child behavior problems. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 26(6), 642-649.
- Giunta, L.D., Lunetti, C., Gliozzo, G., Rothenberg, A.W., Lansford, J.E., Eisenberg, N., Pastorelli, C., Basili, E., Fiasconaro, I., Thartori, E., Favini, A., & Virzi, A.T. (2022). Negative parenting, adolescents' emotion regulation, self-efficacy in emotion regulation, and psychological adjustment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(4), 2251.
- Horney, K. (1991). *Neurosis and human growth: The struggle towards self-realization*. New York: W. W. Norton, 400 p.
- Huberty, T.J. (2012). *Anxiety and depression in children and adolescents: Assessment, intervention, and prevention*. New York: Springer, 496 p.
- Kaveh, M.H., Sadeghi, S., Motamed-Jahromi, M. (2022). Which mother-headed households' parenting styles are related to children's behavior problems? A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, 63(1), 90-96.
- McKay, D. & Storch, E.A. (2011). *Handbook of child and adolescent anxiety disorders*. New York: Springer New York, 532 p.
- Ovcharova, R.V. (2003). *Psychological support of parenthood*. Moscow: Publishing House of the Institute of Psychotherapy, 319 p.
- Piaget, J. (1997). *Selected Works*. New York: Routledge, 2864 p
- Prihozhan, A. M. (2000). *Anxiety in children and adolescents: Psychological nature and age dynamics*. Voronezh: Scientific Production Association "MODEK", 304 p.
- Rapee, R., Wignall, A., Spence, S., Cobham, V., & Lyneham H. (2022). *Helping your anxious child: A step-by-step guide for parents*. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, 328 p.
- Remshmidt, H. (1994). *Teenage and youthful age: Problems of personality formation*. Moscow: Mir, 320 p.
- Schaefer, E.S. & Bell, R.Q. (1958). Development of a parental attitude research instrument. *Child Development*, 29, 339-361
- Spielberger, C.D. (1972). Conceptual and methodological issues in anxiety research. *Anxiety: Current Trends in Theory and Research*, 2, 481-493.
- Van der Bruggen, C.O., Stams, G.J.J.M., & Bögels, S.M. (2008). Research review: The relation between child and parent anxiety and parental control: A meta-analytic review. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(12), 1257-1269.
- Varga, A.Ya. & Stolin, V.V. (1989). Parental Relationship Test Questionnaire. Retrieved from <https://psycabi.net/testy/646-test-oprosnik-roditelskogo-otnosheniya-a-ya-varga-v-v-stolin-metodika-oro>
- Vasyagina, N.N. & Glukhanyuk, N.S. (2004). Phenomenology of symbiotic dependence in the mother-child dyad. *Education and Science*, 2(26), 50-57.
- Vygotsky, L. (1990). *Adolescent pedology*. Moscow: Prometheus, 165 p.
- Waddell, M. (2018). *On adolescence: Inside stories*. New York: Routledge, 282 p