

**Third scientific report on the implementation of the project
AGEISM AND SOCIO-COGNITIVE FACTORS IN THE ETHICAL DECISION-
MAKING OF PRACTICING NURSES AND NURSES IN TRAINING, acronym
AASCFITEDMOPNANIT**

**Project type: PN-III-P1-1.1-PD-2019-0982, within PNCDI III
Contract number: PD 21 / 2020, during January-August 2022**

The general aim of our project is to investigate the socio-cognitive predictors of Romanian practicing nurses' and nursing students' ageism targeting older patients and its potential connections with nurses' moral distress. We aimed to do this by relying on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, drawing on the socio-constructivist perspective of Social Representations Theory, Moral Psychology, Terror Management Theory and Social Identity Theory. After fulfilling our proposed objectives and publishing our results, we expanded our scope to include nurses' experiences of moral injury during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus going beyond our initial goal and exploring our research topics more in-depth. To accomplish this, we drew on the Self-Determination Theory and recent research on moral autobiographical episodic memories.

During the third stage of our research, from January 1, 2022, to August 31, 2022, we set out to conduct two additional studies which investigated the long-term impact of Romanian nurses' exposure to Potentially Morally Injurious Events (PMIEs) on their occupational wellbeing and turnover intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The fourth wave of the pandemic had a very dramatic impact on the already understaffed and poorly financed Romanian healthcare system, which found itself unable to accommodate the increasing number of infected patients and the deceased ones. As such, moral injury (one of the main outcomes of exposure to PMIEs) has increased considerable in Romania, similarly to other countries where healthcare workers have been exposed to this type of situation. Nurses are frontline workers, and they have been among the social groups hit the hardest by the overwhelming afflux of patients, combined with the severe scarcity of resources. As such, according to past research, they were more likely to have suffered from exposure to PMIEs and, consequently, moral injury than other healthcare workers. The long-term consequences of exposure to PMIEs had not yet been investigated in this social group, with most past studies focusing on war veterans.

Our first study compared the effects of nurses' memories of self-perpetrated PMIEs to the effects of nurses' memories of other-perpetrated PMIEs on their burnout and turnover intentions. The second study added a control group to this design, along with work engagement as an outcome variable and two potential moderators: self-disclosure and perceived supervisor support, shown in past studies to mitigate the detrimental impact of PMIEs on health and wellbeing. In both studies, we proposed the satisfaction for the three basic psychological needs as mediators of these relationships (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness). The first study has already been published, while the second is still in peer-review.

During this stage, we also finalized the publication process of our first three articles, and participated to an international conference with proceedings sent for ISI-indexation, according to our original plan. For the additional two studies, after conducting a comprehensive literature review, we validated the following instruments on the Romanian population: Work Climate Questionnaire (WCQ) (Baard et al., 2004), Distress Disclosure Index (DDI) (Kahn & Hessling, 2001), Basic psychological need satisfaction in autobiographical episodic memories scales (Philippe et al., 2011), the Turnover intentions scale from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Camman et al., 1979).

We then contacted relevant stakeholders in healthcare to gain access to our targeted populations (i.e., nurses who worked in clinical setting during the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic) and proceeded to contact participants both at their places of work and on social

media. The final sample sizes for our studies were 463, and, respectively, 634 nurses. manuscripts.

Dissemination activities

We completed the publication process of the following articles, for which we had collected and analyzed the data in the previous stage of the project:

1. Gherman, M. A., Arhiri, L., & Holman, A. C. (2022). Ageism, moral sensitivity and nursing students' intentions to work with older people—A cross-sectional study. *Nurse Education Today*, 113, 105372. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105372> Impact Factor = 3.442
2. Gherman, M. A., Arhiri, L., & Holman, A. C. (2022). Ageism and moral distress in nurses caring for older patients. *Ethics & Behavior*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2022.2072845> Impact Factor = 2.148
3. Arhiri, L., Gherman, M. A., & Holman, A. C. (2022). Ageism against older patients in nursing: conceptual differentiations and the role of moral sensitivity. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 34(3), 198-221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08946566.2022.2086957> Impact Factor = 2.205

We conceptualized, carried out and finalized the publication of the following study:

Gherman, M. A., Arhiri, L., Holman, A. C., & Soponaru, C. (2022). Injurious Memories from the COVID-19 Frontline: The Impact of Episodic Memories of Self- and Other-Potentially Morally Injurious Events on Romanian Nurses' Burnout, Turnover Intentions and Basic Need Satisfaction. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(15), 9604. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19159604> Impact Factor = 4.61

We conceptualized, carried out and are currently editing according to reviewers' suggestions the following study:

Gherman, M. A., Arhiri, L., Holman, A. C., & Soponaru, C. (in review). Effects of Nurses' Memories of Potentially Morally Injurious Events during the COVID-19 Pandemic on Occupational Wellbeing and Turnover Intentions: The Moderating Roles of Autonomy Support and Self-Disclosure. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Impact Factor = 4.614

One last objective for this stage was to have a conference presentation at an international event with ISI indexed proceedings. We fulfilled this objective by participating online to the 9th Edition of the International Scientific Conference *Globalization, Intercultural Dialogue, and National Identity*, May 21-22, 2022. Our paper was based on the synthesis of the studies we already published in the project. The proceedings of the event were published online and subsequently sent to Clarivate Analytics for ISI indexation: Conference Proceedings Citation Index (CPCI) – Web of Science.

Gherman, M.A. (2022). AGEISM IN ROMANIAN NURSING – SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES. In I. Boldea (Ed.), *Culture in Globalization: Identities and Nations Connected. Communication, Journalism, Education Sciences, Psychology and Sociology* (pp. 250-258). Tîrgu Mureş, Romania: Arhipelag XXI Press. ISBN 978-606-93691-3-5.

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