Regarding the implementation of the „CHANGING IMPLICIT COGNITIONS: AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH” project (PN-II-RU-TE-2011-3-0230) for the whole contracted period (January 2012 – September 2014).

The goal of this project is to test and validate a series of implicit interventions (the evaluative conditioning paradigms) with practical applicability in two major areas: (1) Health Psychology, by developing a procedure meant to reduce cigarettes consumption and (2) Work and Organizational Psychology, by validating a procedure meant to facilitate the enhancement of behaviors aimed at finding a job. The decided goal was split into four objectives. The first two objectives were accomplished during the first year of the project (January- December 2012), and the following two were accomplished during the time between January 2013 and the moment the project ended. For each of the four objectives, a 100% degree of accomplishment was attained as it results from the following synthetic presentation. Moreover, in order to disseminate the results of the research effort, a series of indicators were set: to publish a total of 3 ISI indexed articles, one article indexed in international databases and to uphold 6 presentations within 3 national and 3 international conferences. The results of this project allowed to exceed the initial indicators, as it follows from the second table of the current report. Hereafter we will synthetically present the degree of accomplishment of the decided objectives and indicators and afterwards, we will elaborate the main results acquired throughout the project.
The project`s objectives and the degree of accomplishment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Time of development</th>
<th>Degree of accomplishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>O1. Using a meta-analytic approach for exploring the efficacy of implicit interventions in changing implicit cognitions.</strong></td>
<td>January 2012 – December 2012</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O2. The ongoing of a series of studies conceived in order to validate an intervention. The purpose of this intervention is to change the implicit cognitions within the two addressed fields of applicability.</strong></td>
<td>January 2012 – December 2012</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O3. Implementing a randomized controlled trial aimed to test the incremental efficacy of an implicit (previously validated) intervention. The purpose of this intervention is to reduce cigarettes consumption for people with a moderate or severe addiction.</strong></td>
<td>January 2013 – September 2014</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O4. Implementing a second randomized controlled trial meant to test the incremental efficacy of an intervention. This intervention is aiming to change implicit cognitions towards job seeking, with the purpose to amplify job seeking behaviors for the young people (MA, MS students).</strong></td>
<td>January 2013 – September 2014</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicators undertaken within the project and the degree of accomplishment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Undertaken / Accomplished</th>
<th>Year I</th>
<th>Year II</th>
<th>Year III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISI articles</td>
<td>Undertaken</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDI articles</td>
<td>Undertaken</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending international conferences</td>
<td>Undertaken</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending national conferences</td>
<td>Undertaken</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4 manuscripts submitted to ISI indexed journals, among which 2 are at the second revision (revise and resubmit), and 2 were sent towards the end of the reporting period and are now in the evaluation process (after passing the initial screening stage). The exceeded indicators are shown in blue.*
Objective 1, developed during January 2012- December 2012 (degree of accomplishment 100%):

Using a meta-analytical approach to exploring the efficacy of implicit interventions in changing implicit cognitions. This objective was 100% accomplished, and the acquired results were partially disseminated through presentations within three major scientific events (national and international). Furthermore, based on the results acquired through meta-analysis, the evaluative conditioning procedures were conceived and tested in the intervention program.

Objective 2, developed during January 2012- December 2012 (degree of accomplishment 100%):

The ongoing of a series of studies conceived in order to validate an intervention. The purpose of this intervention is to change the implicit cognitions within the two addressed fields of applicability. The second objective for the first year was again 100% accomplished, a series of evaluative conditioning paradigms being tested, with applicability in the intervention fields decided within the project. Furthermore, a series of explicit and implicit instruments for measuring some of the variables subjected to study were adapted. The acquired results were disseminated through presentations within relevant scientific events but also through an ISI indexed journal and two BDI journals - for more information see the Indicators section.

Objective 3, developed during January 2013- September 2014 (degree of accomplishment 100%):

Implementing a randomized controlled trial aimed to test the incremental efficiency of an implicit (previously validated) intervention. The purpose of this intervention is to reduce cigarettes consumption for people with a moderate or severe addiction. The randomized controlled trial, conceived to test the efficacy of some techniques meant to reduce or even cease cigarette consumption, was initiated with a delay because the pharmacotherapeutical product, held forth as one of the tested and compared alternatives within the study, ceased to be commercialized on the Romanian market. Thus, because of the additional effort for researching and finding an alternative path, the actual on-going of this objective happened at the beginning of the second semester. In spite of all this, during the remaining six months from the second year of the project, 50% of the activities were accomplished. By overcoming the impediments met in the second year of the project, it allowed us to accomplish this objective by 100% during the third year. Hence, following the mass media promotion of the study, 126 adult smokers signed in, among which 75 participated in the first evaluation meeting and 62
were admitted in the study. The 62 participants were randomly distributed in the three conditions of the study (Mixed intervention- group counseling and evalulative conditioning; Group intervention; Pharmacotherapy). Finally, a total of 27 participants remained within the study until the end. The abandonment rate registered in the research is reflecting a noted tendency within the studies on addictions. All participants that remained within the study until the end reported significant cutbacks of cigarette consumption, compared to the level prior to entering the study, without a significant difference between them. Furthermore, the analysis upon the participants with an intent to treat themselves (62 participants) revealed pharmacotherapy as the most efficient treatment regarding short term effects, but not for long term effects (the effect was lost three months after the intervention ended). Regarding the mechanism of change, the participants that underwent both the group intervention and the implicit intervention registered a diminution of the implicit attitudes towards smoking. This result represents one of the few evidence of this kind and the one with the most powerful effect. The dissemination of the acquired results was made by means of two presentations within international conferences and an article that is in the review process at an ISI indexed journal.

Objective 4. Developed during January 2013 – September 2014 (degree of accomplishment 100%):

Implementing a second randomized controlled trial meant to test the incremental efficacy of an intervention. This intervention is aiming to change implicit cognitions towards job seeking, with the purpose to amplify job seeking behaviors for the young people (MA, MS students). The randomized controlled trial meant to enhance the job seeking behaviors for young people (MA and MS students), by amplifying job seeking efficacy and by changing implicit cognitions, was developed in a great proportion (degree of accomplishment 90%) during the second year of the project. This was possible thanks to harnessing the time that became available because of the delays encountered in the development of the third objective. The acquired results demonstrated an effect of the intervention both at an explicit level (by enhancing the levels of self-efficacy in job seeking for both groups that underwent the training) and at an implicit level (the evalutive conditioning procedure changed the implicit attitudes towards seeking a job). Furthermore, one month after the study ended, the participants in the group that underwent both the training program and the implicit intervention registered a significant increase in the frequency of job-seeking behaviors (higher even than the participants that only underwent the training program). From the standpoint of the reemployment degree, 17 (22%) of the participants in the study found a job during the first month after the study ended, among which 12 participants that underwent one of the two types of intervention. The partial dissemination of the results was done by means of two presentations within national conferences. The acquired results
represent both a national premiere (the empirical validation of a training program, destined for people in seek for a job) but especially an international premiere (testing and proving the efficiency of an implicit kind of intervention in the indirect enhancement of job seeking behaviors).

Additional accomplishments (due to the activity supported by this grant):

Overcoming the accomplishments we set out through this research project, we acquired an important series of adjacent results.

Thus:

- The research team aggregated its structure and composition by organizing within a research laboratory (Social Cognition and Personality Assessment Lab – SOCPERS; www.socpers.psihologietm.ro);
- The two research assistants that have been employed for the entire duration of the project finalised and successfully defended their Ph.D thesis;
- National collaborations were attained (for instance with the members of the Psychology Department within „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University from Iasi), materialized in two articles that passed the first revision (revise and resubmit) for ISI indexed Journals;
- The team members participated in four documentation / specialization stages abroad (USA, Germany, Italy, Belgium) and took this opportunity to initiate international partnerships. Among these partnerships, it’s worth to mention the following:
  - The collaboration with Prof. Dr. Marco Perugini, Milano Biococca University, with which we have currently initiated the development of co-operative studies.
  - The collaboration with Prof. Dr. Keith B. Payne, North Carolina University, within its coordination we are continuing the research steps that we began by means of this grant. Specifically, together we won a project proposal meant to elucidate the psychological mechanisms underneath the evaluative conditioning effect. This project is ongoing at the present time, and it allows us to continue our work with an important contribution from one of the most promising researchers in contemporary Social Psychology (Keith B. Payne, Ph.D).
- Finally, the visibility attained by participating in the European Association of Personality Psychology conferences and the collaboration with Prof. Dr. Marco Perugini (the president of the association) allowed us to hold forth and receive approval to organize the association’s future event in Timisoara. Thus, the 18th edition of the European Association of Personality Psychology Conference will be held in Romania, at Timisoara. The previous events attracted approximately 500 participants among which there are
important names within the field. We consider it will be an especially important event and an opportunity to help increase both the visibility of the Romanian academic community and our country in general. Furthermore, the local economic impact is another benefit to keeping in mind.

Dissemination of the results acquired throughout the project:

✓ Articles in ISI indexed journals (undertaken – 3 / accomplished – 5*):

Published manuscript:


*Manuscripts in the revise and resubmit stage:


*Manuscripts in the evaluation stage (having succeeded through the initial screening and being assigned to evaluators):


Magurean, S., Constantin, T. & Sava, F. A. The indirect effect of evaluative conditioning on smoking. Journal of Substance Use

✓ Articles in BDI indexed journals (undertaken – 1 / accomplished – 4):


☑ Presentations within international conferences (undertaken – 3 / accomplished – 7):


☑ Presentations within national conferences (undertaken - 3 / accomplished – 6):


✓ Others - lecture within an international event:


Principal Investigator,
Prof. Florin Alin Sava, Ph.D