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Parental attitudes of mothers and fathers and adolescent shyness and egocentrism¹

Postawy rodzicielskie matek i ojców a nieśmiałość i egocentryzm u adolescentów

Abstract. The objective of this study was to answer the question whether the properties of parental attitudes manifested by mothers and fathers are related to the level of adolescent shyness and the intensity of egocentrism in their offspring. The question of the relationship between shyness and egocentrism of adolescents was also posed. The following findings were expected: 1) the overprotective, overdemanding, inconsistent and rejecting attitudes are to a greater degree connected with a higher level of adolescent shyness than the accepting and autonomy giving attitudes; 2) the overprotective, overdemanding, inconsistent and rejecting attitudes are to a greater degree connected with a higher level of egocentrism in adolescents than the accepting and autonomy giving attitudes, and: 3) there exists a positive relationship between shyness and the level of adolescent egocentrism.

The theoretical grounds for this research were: the concept of parental attitudes (Plopa, 2005), the concept of adolescent egocentrism (Elkind, 1967, 1985) taking two types of egocentrism into account – the personal fable and imaginary audience, as well as the concept of shyness as developed by Philip Zimbardo (2011).

A total of 120 Polish “gymnasium” (lower secondary school) pupils aged 13–14 years were tested. The shy group amounted to 84 persons, 43 of whom were girls and 41 were boys. The absence of shyness was declared by 36 persons, 20 girls and 16 boys. Three measuring instruments were used: The Parental Attitude Scale of Plopa in the version for mothers and fathers, the Stanford Shyness Survey of Zimbardo and the unpublished Adolescent Egocentrism Questionnaire of Ludwika Wojciechowska and Żywek. The results of the research allowed the following statements to be made: 1) the attitude of excessive demands on the part of the mother is most strongly connected with adolescent shyness; 2) the overprotective attitude manifested by the mother most strongly relates to the egocentrism dimension of the personal fable; 3) the mother’s attitude of excessive demands is most strongly related to the egocentrism dimension of the imaginary audience; 4) a positive relationship exists between shyness and the level of adolescent egocentrism.

Keywords: egocentrism, adolescents, shyness

Słowa kluczowe: młodzież, egocentryzm, nieśmiałość

INTRODUCTION

The adolescence is the period considered to be a time of undertaking unique challenges and solving complex developmental tasks that are closely related to the transition process from childhood to adulthood (Gurba, 2013). The first phase of this process, lasting approximately from the age of 11 years to 16/17 years old, is characterised by a particular intensity of the transformations. Apart from the biological transformations occurring at the time, there is a marked progress in the mental capacity and the formal operational phase of thinking is achieved (Piaget, Inhelder, 1996). This leads to an improved cognition and comprehension of the physical, psychological and social reality (Oleszkowicz, Senejko, 2013). New rules are also being established by the parents, whose authority gradually becomes smaller, making room for the significant role of the peer group (Bardziejewska, 2005).

The adolescents' attempts to find an individual life path and determine their identity sometimes encounter certain obstacles. Two such obstacles were examined in greater detail in this study. The first is connected with adolescent egocentrism, which accompanies cognitive development when applying newly acquired mental structures (Wadsworth, 1998). Due to the relatively narrow life experience accompanied by an unconditional trust placed in recently-mastered logical thinking, adolescents give priority to logic when solving problems. Thus, the personal perspective dominates over the objective assessment of reality and the resultant behaviour begins to assume non-adaptive traits (Wadsworth, 1998). According to Elkind (1967), adolescent egocentrism is also manifest in two mental constructs – the personal fable and imaginary audience. The second obstacle is not typical of the period of adolescence, but its consequences may be particularly onerous for the adolescent, especially in situations of getting involved in peer groups or making decisions or performing tasks independently. This hindrance is shyness (Tyszkowa, 1978; Zimbardo, 2011). We assume that shy adolescents find it more difficult to complete the developmen-

tal tasks involved in adolescence in comparison to their self-confident peers unafraid of social exposure. We assume that shy adolescents, who commonly have a low self-esteem and experience problems in their group relations, are more prone to coping by construing a personal fable and imaginary audience and thus, to manifesting a higher level of egocentrism than non-shy adolescents.

The upbringing situation in the family was analysed with a view to not only gaining insight into the problem of adolescent egocentrism in shy persons but also searching for the source of their shyness and egocentrism. Although cognitive development, according to Jean Piaget (1966), is determined by internal mechanisms, it is also stimulated by social determinants that play an important role in designating the rate of mental transformations. This is why it seems justified to investigate the quality of socialisation in the family, which impacts the shaping of the emotional and social profile of the adolescent, as well as their cognitive coping with the world. Parental attitude models are commonly used to assess and describe the emotional situation in the family. The most frequently used model in Poland is that developed by Plopa (2005), and this model was used in the study described in this article.

Thus, the purpose of the research was to search for the answer to the question concerning the relationship between adolescent shyness and egocentrism, and the relationship between parental attitudes and the level of shyness and egocentrism in adolescents.

THE CONCEPT OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES BY MIECZYŚLAW PLOPA

The use of parental attitude analyses is typical for studies on the family. Scholars point out the usefulness of this construct in explaining the differences in the scope of the functioning and development of a child (Plopa, 2005; Sitarczyk, 2002; Ziemska, 1972), and consistently emphasise the importance of the emotional aspect of the attitudes of mothers and fathers towards their offspring. The created attitude mod-

els are based on both the emotional relationship properties and the scope of control given to offspring (Ziemska, 1972), which together allow an accurate description of the upbringing conditions of the child.

Five dimensions characterising the relations between parents and their children were identified in the model devised by Plopa (2005). They include the attitude of Acceptance – Rejection, Autonomy, Inconsistency, Overprotection and Excessive Demands. These will be briefly described hereunder.

The attitude of acceptance is connected with a safe, trusting and kindness-filled atmosphere in the family home that enables the establishment of sincere relations between the parent and the child. The parent fully affirms their child, shows them respect and is sensitive to their needs, problems and emotional states. **The attitude of rejection** is the opposite of the attitude of acceptance and is characterised by an indifference on the part of the parent to the problems and needs of their child, reluctance to have close relationships with the child, as well as being distant when the child shows the initiative of closeness. The parent is more inclined to satisfy the material needs of the child than to take care of their emotional state. **The over-demanding attitude** occurs when the child is treated uncompromisingly and strictly, and only the behaviours that are in line with the parent's expectations are accepted. The parent sees themselves as an unquestionable authority, which is why no tolerance is given to criticism or objection. They fail to notice the psychological needs of the child and frequently judge them severely without taking their current capacity and stage of development into consideration. **The attitude of autonomy** is characterised by respect for the psychological needs of the child and the adaptation of expectations to the stage of child's development. The parent is aware of the child's striving for autonomy and approves all attempts of them taking independent decisions. When difficulties are encountered, they do not impose their own views but try to rationally show tolerance. They also recognise the child's right to intimacy. **The inconsistent attitude** is connected with an unstable approach

of the parent to their child, which is dependent on their well-being or personal and work problems at the time. The parent may be irritable, punishing and ignoring towards the child. This kind of unstable behaviour which is manifested by the parent may lead to the child losing their sense of security and beginning to distance themselves from their parent, as well as completely abandoning the idea of sharing any problems with the parent. **The overprotective attitude** is linked to showing too much care and attention to the child. The parents treat their child as though the child was much younger. They worry when they see attempts of autonomy and independence and express their anxiety about how the child will cope in later life. They are usually unaware of the fact that too much interference in the affairs of an adolescent may be the source of conflict, even if it does result from good intentions (Plopa, 2005). Furthermore, being overprotected increases parental control. Bryce McLead, John Wood and Jeffrey Weisz (2007, quoted after: Gere et al., 2012) found that overprotective parents commonly encourage their adolescent child to be subordinate to them and try to suggest what their child should be involved in and how they should think. Maria Ryś (2004), on the other hand, pointed out the fact that young adults from an overprotective home are frequently found to put off the time of leaving home and, once they finally do move out, they experience a sense of guilt.

ADOLESCENT EGOCENTRISM

Cognitive egocentrism on every developmental stage identified by Piaget (1966) takes on different forms but is generally understood as the incapacity of a child to make distinctions (Wadsworth, 1998). The adolescent egocentrism period, more precisely up to 16 years of age, is characterised by the incapacity to distinguish a personal world, construed on the basis of formal operations, from the real world, where the rules of logic often do not apply (Piaget, 1966). The embracing of logical schemes during this period leads to thinking about the world and what it should be like, and failing to perceive its actual traits or bend-

ing the actual state to a rational order (Inhelder, Piaget, 1970). Therefore, sometimes it is the case that adolescents make up various social and political theories and strive to reconstruct society according to their own visions (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 1997). What is more, thoughts about other persons and reflections about what others think about the adolescent appear at the beginning of the period of adolescence (Inhelder, Piaget, 1970). Sometimes adolescents are convinced that they are being awarded attention by people around them and begin to feel that they are unique and even exceptional individuals (Enright, Lapsley, Shukla, 1979).

Elkind (1967), noticed some interesting signs of adolescent egocentrism. In his view, two new types of egocentric thinking can be mentioned during adolescence, particularly at its onset, namely, the personal fable and imaginary audience.

The personal fable is a type of egocentric thinking that is connected with the adolescent's beliefs in their own immortality and uniqueness. The sense of immortality is connected with the reflections and predictions of what other people's reaction would be if the adolescent passed away, whereas, through the sense of being exceptional, the adolescent is under the impression that they are an important person for many people. The sense of indestructibility in an adolescent also signifies the conviction that other people are mortal, susceptible to diseases and addictions, but that they themselves are an exception to this rule. An illusion of strength and a conviction that their peers do not possess such powers may also appear within the personal fable (Blos, 1962, quoted after: Buis, Thompson, 1989). Signs that the personal fable exists may, according to Elkind (1967), be found in the journals and diaries of adolescents. In his view, the autobiographies that they contain are usually created with a belief in the universality and great significance of the events and experiences faced by the adolescents.

The mental construct constituting **the imaginary audience** is connected, according to Elkind (1967), with the adolescents' conviction that their milieu is paying attention to their

behaviour and appearance, as well as with the belief that they will be judged critically or praised by them. If the adolescents judge themselves severely, they will be under the impression that others value them in a similar way. The imaginary audience is also expressed in paying attention to their own appearance and comparing it to the external appearance of their peers. For adolescents, superficiality and the body constitute a significant aspect of their own Self, raising or lowering their attractiveness among their peers (Głuchowska-Bogacka, 2002).

Overcoming adolescent egocentrism, as explained by Elkind (1967), may occur in two dimensions. Firstly, in the cognitive aspect, which means that adolescents start to differentiate their point of view from the point of view of others, and secondly, on the affective level, when they overcome egocentrism through the integration of their emotions or their own and other people's feelings.

It should be further mentioned that there exists another view of the signs of egocentric thinking (Lapsley, 1993, quoted after: Frankenberger, 2000), according to which the personal fable and imaginary audience are strongly set in the social context and not, as Elkind (1967) thought, in the cognitive development. According to Daniel Lapsley (1993, quoted after: Frankenberger, 2000), the personal fable helps adolescents maintain their emotions and feelings that relate to their own Self, whereas the imaginary audience enables them to sustain relationships with others and also helps control the anxiety connected with a loss of full dependence on their mother or father. Luc Goossens, Inge Seiffge-Krenke and Alfons Marcoen (1992), on the other hand, claim that the personal fable and imaginary audience play a crucial role in the separation and individualisation process. According to them, the personal fable appears in order to drown out the anxiety connected with the gradual distancing from the parents to become more focused on oneself, while the imaginary audience results from the separation anxiety that is connected with the diminishing dependence of the adolescent on their parents.

SHYNESS

Shyness is sometimes considered to be a multi-aspect syndrome of symptoms that are activated by social interactions and is connected with social anxiety (Harwas-Napierała, 1979, 1995; Tyszkowa, 1978). It is manifest in: a conscious conflict between the “ideal Self” and the “real Self”; the domination of the “ideal Self” inducing the setting of high task performance standards for oneself; a sense of incapability of meeting the demands; the inclination to acknowledge other people so as to cope better with the high quality performance of tasks; a labile self-esteem; and an unstable sense of self-worth (Tyszkowa, 1978). It is thought that a high self-awareness is also a characteristic feature of shy persons, which gives rise to excessive centring on oneself and worrying about what others think about them (Zimbardo, 2011). The following attributes of shy persons are also mentioned: difficulty in establishing new social relationships; disruptions in thoughts and unconstrained expression of views; and an aversion to speak and express own views in public (Harwas-Napierała, 1995; Zimbardo, 2011). Shyness is sometimes termed as the “interactive anxiety” or the “audience effect” due to these traits, which consist in the fear of social exposition (Harwas-Napierała, 1995).

In the concept of Arnold Buss and Robert Plomin (1984, quoted after: Oniszczenko, 1997), shyness refers to behaviours that occur in the presence of incidental or unknown persons and is a derivative of two temperamental traits: emotionality (a high level of anxiety), and low sociability. It is manifested by inhibition and awkwardness, accompanied by strong tension and striving towards withdrawal from a given social situation. In line with this approach, shyness is genetically determined.

However, with children and adolescents, shyness is also thought to have its sources in parental actions, role models presented by parents as well as features of emotional bonding with them (Harwas-Napierała, 1995). Excessive demands and domination on the part of the parents may affect the shyness of children, leading to anxiety and preventing the satisfaction of

the children’s need for autonomy (Kozielecki, 1976). This attitude of parents may also cause the child or adolescent to become dependent due to being isolated from certain stimuli and experiences. Andrzej Jaczewski (1974) adds that demanding parents sometimes instil excessive ambitions in their child, which facilitates the appearance of the fear of being laughed at and ridiculed (cf. Radomska, Tomczak, 2010). The strictness and severity present in the behaviours of parents may also lead to a low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and difficulties in the social adaptation of adolescents (Ziemska, 1972). The formation of shyness may also be supported (Bruch, 1989, quoted after: Hofmann, DiBartolo, 2010) by excessive control of adolescents, excessive protection and the insensitivity of parents to the problems of adolescents.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

Studies were undertaken to gain a greater psychological understanding of a shy adolescent. It was assumed, on the basis of available literature, that shyness may constitute a significant impediment in the comprehensive performance of developmental tasks. However, the effects of shyness that were considered by researchers usually concerned the social sphere of an adolescent, whereas no data can be found about the cognitive development of shy adolescents. It was acknowledged that this absence should be filled, particularly that the transformations in the cognitive sphere occurring during adolescence assume a decisive role in the development of other aspects of the psyche (cf. Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 1997) and allow for, like e.g. the personal fable and imaginary audience, explanation of numerous behaviours that are typical of adolescents (Galanaki, 2012). Thus, the question was posed as to the existence of a relationship between shyness and the level of egocentrism of adolescents.

The question concerning the probable role of parental attitudes in shaping shyness and egocentrism was also decided to be posed. It was assumed, in reference to the available data in

literature, that the negative attitudes of parents may be linked to the lack of self-confidence of adolescents and connected with the greater intensity of both aspects of egocentrism: the personal fable and imaginary audience. Thus, a question of whether a relationship exists between the parental attitudes of being over-demanding, overprotective, inconsistent and rejecting, and shyness and cognitive egocentrism was posed.

The following hypotheses were verified: 1) the attitudes: overprotective, overdemanding, inconsistent and rejecting are to a greater degree connected with a higher level of shyness in adolescents than the attitude of acceptance and autonomy; 2) the attitudes: overprotective, overdemanding, inconsistent and rejecting are to a greater degree connected to a higher level of adolescent egocentrism than the attitude of acceptance and autonomy, and: 3) there exists a positive relationship between shyness and the level of adolescent egocentrism.

METHOD

Three measuring instruments were used in the study: The Parental Attitude Scale of Plopa (2005) in the version for adolescents, the Stanford Shyness Survey of Zimbardo (2011), and the unpublished Adolescent Egocentrism Questionnaire of Wojciechowska and Żywek.

The Parental Attitude Scale (PAS) developed by Plopa allows for a separate study of the following attitudes of mothers and fathers in the perception of adolescents: Accepting – Rejecting; Overdemanding; Autonomy giving; Inconsistent, and Overprotective. The reliability of the Parental Attitude Scale is satisfactory. In order to measure it, the test-retest was applied and the absolute stabilities were calculated. Pearson correlation amounted to .81–.918 (the “My mother” version), and .791–.910 (the “My father” version). There are reliability coefficients (measured with α -Cronbach’s) for specific parental attitudes: Accepting: .883 (“My mother”), .898 (“My father”), Overdemanding: .918 (“My mother”), .876 (“My father”), Autonomy giving: .810 (“My mother”), .910

(“My father”), Inconsistent: .908 (“My mother”), .791 (“My father”), Overprotective: .876 (“My mother”), .812 (“My father”).

The Adolescent Egocentrism Questionnaire (AEQ) assesses the overall level of adolescent egocentrism and the intensity of two of its aspects: the personal fable and imaginary audience. The questionnaire contains 31 statements, to which the respondent relates by marking responses on a 5-point Likert scale, concerning how often they have similar thoughts, feelings and behaviours (never, seldom, sometimes, often, very often). For example, the following statement: “I like behaving in a way that others would call irresponsible”, measures the personal fable, while the statement: “When I put something unfashionable on, I think that others will notice it straight away”, measures the imaginary audience. The reliability of the AEQ was measured using Cronbach’s α and it was found to be satisfactory and amounts to: on the imaginary audience scale $\alpha = .802$, and on the personal fable scale $\alpha = .736$, while for the entire questionnaire it equals $\alpha = .770$.

The Stanford Shyness Survey by Zimbardo is used in the study in the version for adolescent respondents. It contains a scale concerning the intensity of shyness based on its signs, frequency, and the overall assessment of the intensity of one’s own shyness scale. The higher the result the respondent obtains, the greater their shyness is.

The study participants included lower secondary school pupils aged 13–14 years that attended a school in Warsaw. A total of 120 persons, 63 girls and 57 boys took part in the study. The shy group amounted to 84 persons, 43 of whom were girls, and 41 were boys. The absence of shyness was declared by 36 persons, 20 girls and 16 boys. Most of the parents of the respondents had completed secondary education (32.5% of mothers and 33.3% of fathers) or higher education (50.8% of mothers and 52.5% of fathers). The studies were conducted in mid-2013 and were anonymous. The average time for the completion of the tests amounted to 40–50 minutes.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for analysed variables

	Variables	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Parental Attitude Scale	Accepting mother	57.28	11.24	30	75
	Autonomy giving mother	52.67	14.57	19	75
	Overprotective mother	52.45	11.49	21	75
	Overdemanding mother	46.36	16.04	15	75
	Inconsistent mother	40.15	15.78	13	75
	Accepting father	54.73	12.65	17	75
	Autonomy giving father	54.89	14.52	17	75
	Overprotective father	46.54	12.57	19	73
	Overdemanding father	46.23	15.99	15	74
	Inconsistent father	38.59	14.70	10	71
Adolescent egocentrism Questionnaire	Personal fable	49.43	11.61	25	74
	Imaginary audience	46.28	10.64	21	70
	Adolescent egocentrism	95.72	20.11	55	139
Shyness Survey	Shyness	24.54	12.02	6	45

M – mean value; SD – standard deviation; min. – minimum value; max. – maximum value

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for analysed variables

The descriptive statistics were calculated for the given categories of parental attitudes, for egocentrism in general and for two of its aspects: the personal fable and imaginary audience, as well as for shyness. They characterise the entire study group, with the exception of the data on shyness, which only refer to shy adolescents, since Zimbardo's questionnaire excludes persons declaring that they do not possess such a trait at the very start of the study (table 1).

Parental attitudes of mothers and fathers and the level of shyness of their offspring

The hypothesis was posited that the occurrence of shyness in adolescents is more probable when the parents manifest such attitudes

as being overdemanding, overprotective, inconsistent and rejecting, while in the situation of showing the attitudes of acceptance and autonomy, it is more probable that the adolescents will not be shy.

The first step aimed at verifying Hypothesis 1 was to identify the parental attitude profiles manifested by the mothers and fathers of the adolescent respondents. Thus, the intensity of the given attitudes of mothers and fathers was subjected to a cluster analysis using the k-means method, which enabled four clusters to be identified. The final cluster centres are presented in figure 1.

Cluster No. 1 ($n = 19$) consisted of adolescents whose mothers were characterised by increased inconsistency, whereas the level of the parental attitudes of fathers was average. Cluster No. 2 ($n = 21$) included persons whose both mothers and fathers were characterised by a greater inconsistency and lack of acceptance. In Cluster

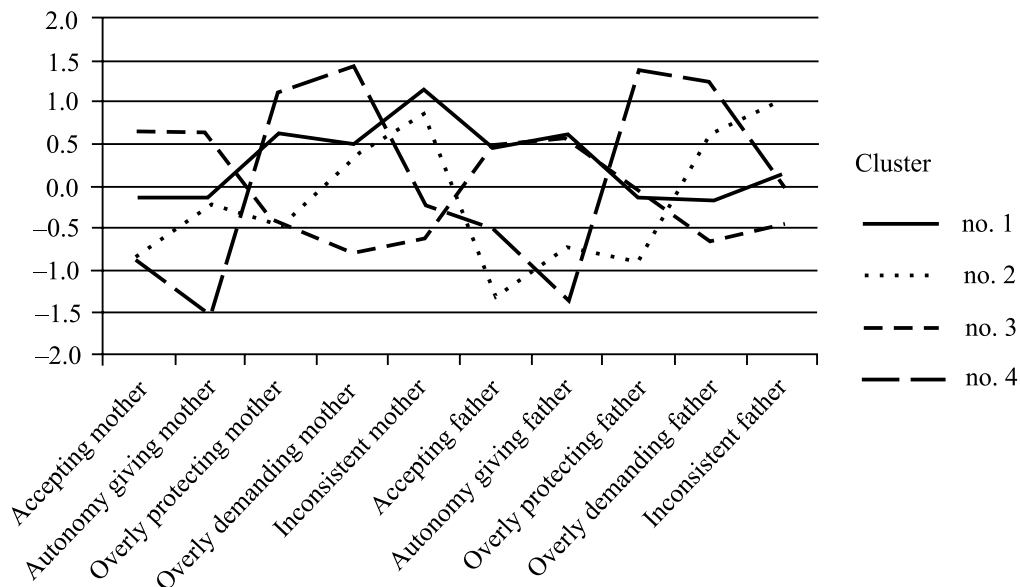


Figure 1. The mean values of parental attitudes in the identified clusters

Table 2. The incidence of the problem of shyness in the identified clusters

Cluster							
No. 1		No. 2		No. 3		No. 4	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
14	73.7	13	61.9	36	63.2	21	100

n – number of persons; % – group percentage

No. 3 (n = 57) there were persons whose parents were characterised by a somewhat higher than average intensity of the accepting and autonomy giving attitude. Cluster No. 4 (n = 21) included persons whose parents were characterised by high results on the overprotective and overdemanding scale, a somewhat lower than average intensity of acceptance and low results on the autonomy scale. Table 2 presents the distribution of the incidence of shyness in the identified clusters.

Based on the chi-squared test (χ^2), a statistically significant dependency was found between belonging to the compared clusters and the occurrence of the problem of shyness,

$\chi^2(3) = 11.23$, $p < .05$. This problem also occurred in all the persons from Cluster No. 4, thus, significantly more often than in the remaining three clusters.

The next step involved comparing the identified clusters in terms of the level of shyness of adolescents using a one-way analysis of variance. A statistically significant result was obtained, $F(3.80) = 20.34$, $p < .001$. Gabriel's test, used as a post-hoc test, allowed for showing that there occurred statistically significant differences in the scope of the level of shyness between the group of persons from Cluster No. 4 (high intensity of the overprotective and demanding attitudes, rejection and

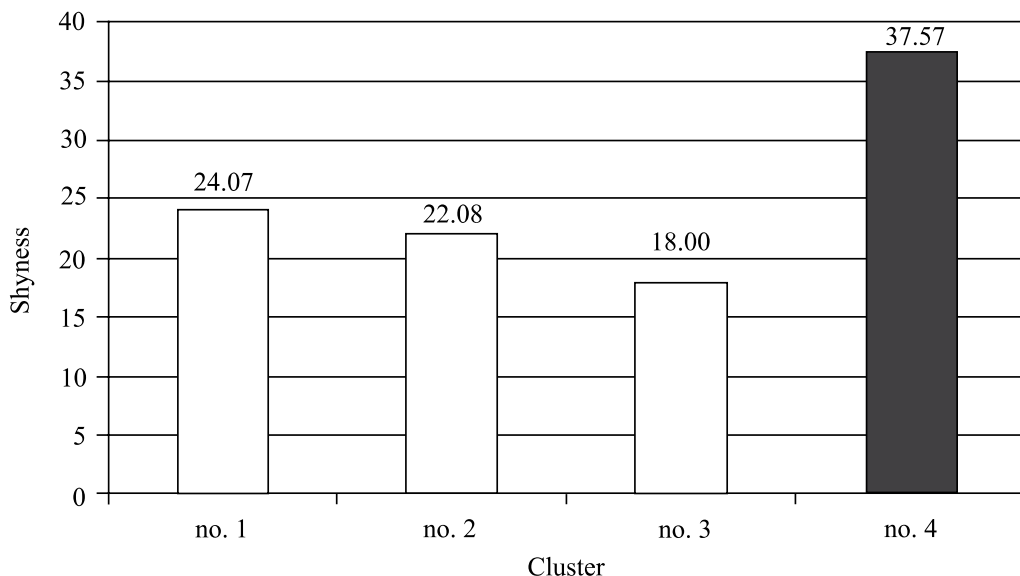


Figure 2. The mean values of the intensity of shyness in the identified clusters in terms of the attitude of the respondents' parents

low autonomy) and the remaining respondents, namely, persons from Cluster No. 1 (intensified inconsistent attitude of the mother), persons from Cluster No. 2 (raised inconsistency and lack of acceptance on the part of both parents) and persons from Cluster No. 3 (acceptance and autonomy on the part of both parents). All the comparisons turned out to be significant on the level of $p < 0.001$. The intensity of shyness was higher in the group of persons from Cluster No. 4 than in the remaining identified groups (cf. figure 2). It is interesting that the inconsistent attitude, which can be considered to be a negative one, turned out to be significantly more weakly related to the shyness of adolescents than the setup of attitudes from the fourth cluster.

The cited calculations were complemented by a stepwise regression analysis where the predictors were the parental attitudes and the explained variable was shyness. It turned out that the intensity of the demanding attitude on the part of the mother, and the intensity of the protective attitude on the side of the father, have the greatest impact on the level of shyness of the respondents. Standardized regression coefficients were $Beta = .54$, $p < .001$ for the moth-

er's demanding attitude and $Beta = .24$, $p < 0.01$ for the father's protective attitude.

The greater the intensity of the demanding attitude manifested by the mother and the protective attitude shown by the father, the higher the level of shyness of the adolescent respondents. The model that was based on these two predictors explained 46% of the variances in the scope of the intensity of shyness, where the intensity of the attitude of the mother explained 41.1% of the variances, and the intensity of the father's attitude – only 4.9% of the variances. It is worth adding that somewhat different results were obtained in the group of girls than in the group of boys. The demanding attitude of the mother was of greater significance for the level of shyness of girls. **The level of shyness in girls increased with the greater intensity of the demanding attitude of their mothers.** The model based on this predictor explained 50.4% of the variances in the scope of the intensity of shyness among girls. In the group of boys, however, the attitude of autonomy presented by the father was of the greatest significance for the level of shyness. It was found that **the higher the intensity of the autonomy attitude shown by fathers, the lower**

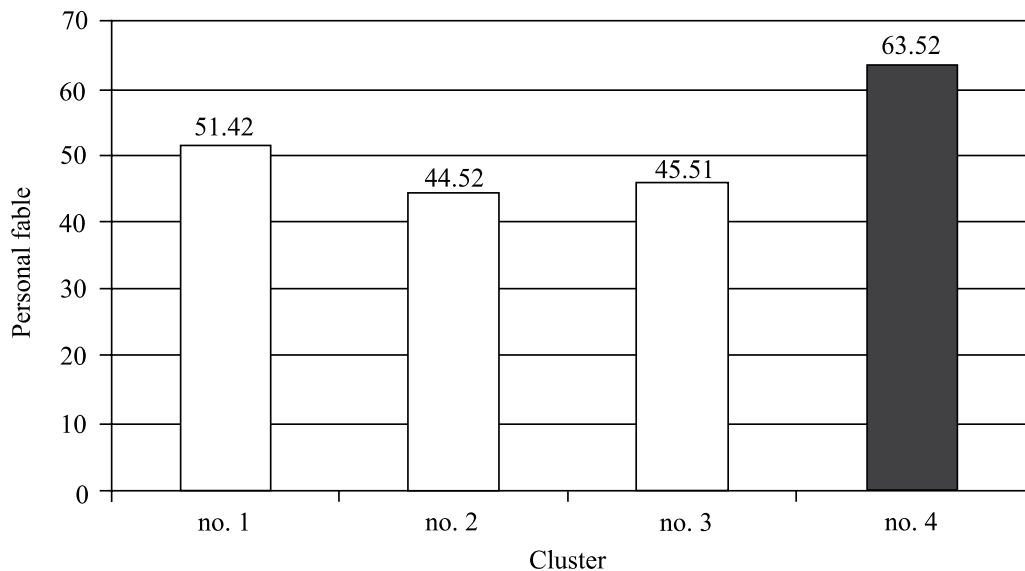


Figure 3. The mean values of the intensity of the personal fable in the identified clusters due to parental attitudes

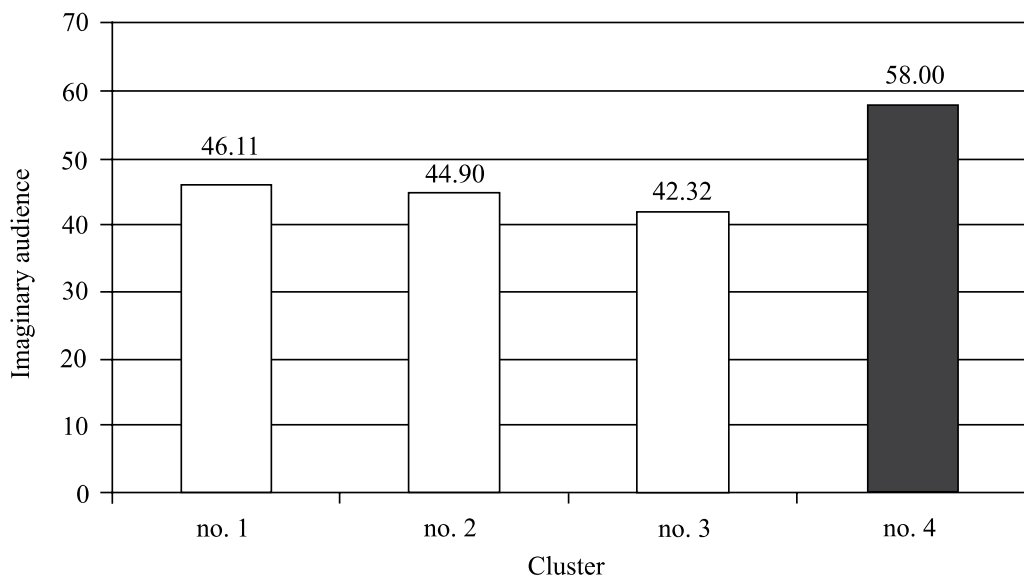


Figure 4. The mean values of the intensity of the imaginary audience in the identified clusters

the level of shyness in boys. The model based on this predictor explained 39% of the variances in the scope of the intensity of shyness among boys.

Parental attitudes and the level of adolescent egocentrism

A hypothesis was postulated that the occurrence of a higher level of adolescent egocentrism is more probable when the parents manifest such attitudes as being overdemanding, overprotective, inconsistent and rejecting, while in the situation of presenting the attitudes of acceptance and autonomy, a lower level of egocentrism is more probable in adolescents.

In the identified clusters described above, which were created in accordance with the intensity of the parental attitudes, the level of adolescent egocentrism in the “personal fable” and “imaginary audience” dimensions was analysed.

Gabriel’s test, used as a post-hoc test, allowed for finding that the statistically significant differences in the scope of the intensity of the personal fable occurred between the persons from Cluster No. 4 and the remaining persons, namely, from Cluster No. 1 ($p = .001$), Cluster No. 2 ($p = .001$) and Cluster No. 3 ($p = .001$), respectively (cf. figure 3).

Analogous calculations were performed in relation to the other aspect of adolescent egocentrism, namely, the imaginary audience (cf. figure 4). Similar results were obtained. It turned out that statistically significant differences in the scope of the intensity of the imaginary audience occurred between the group of persons from Cluster No. 4 and the remaining respondents – from Cluster No. 1 ($p = .001$), Cluster No. 2 ($p = .001$), and Cluster No. 3 ($p = .001$). The inconsistent attitude proved to be significantly more weakly related to shyness than the setup of parental attitudes in Cluster no. 4, just as it was in relation to egocentrism. The intensity of the differences in relation to the overall level of egocentrism was also verified and, as expected, similar results were obtained. They are not mentioned in this study. It was also decided to exclude the inter-sex differences from the discussion about egocentrism due to the extensiveness of the data.

The above calculations were complemented with a stepwise regression analysis, where the predictors were the parental attitudes and the explained variables – two aspects of adolescent egocentrism: the personal fable and imaginary audience. It was established that the intensity of the protective attitude shown by the mother, the intensity of the protective attitude of the father and the intensity of the demanding attitude of the mother are of the greatest significance as regards the level of the personal fable of adolescent respondents. The standardized regression coefficients were Beta = .20, $p = .063$ for the mother’s protective attitude, Beta = .24, $p < .01$ for the father’s protective attitude and Beta = .24, $p < .05$ for the mother’s demanding attitude.

The higher the level of intensity of the mother’s and father’s protective attitude, and the mother’s demanding attitude, the higher the level of the personal fable. The model based on these three predictors explained 34.5% of the variation in the scope of the intensity of the personal fable of which the intensity of the protective attitude of the mother explained 22.3% of the variance, and the demanding attitude of the mother – 3.6% of the variance, while the intensity of the protective attitude of the father – 5.6% of the variance.

The stepwise regression analysis, where the predictors were the parental attitudes and the explained variable was the imaginary audience revealed that the intensity of the mother’s demanding attitude, and the father’s protective or autonomy giving attitude have the greatest significance for the intensity of the imaginary audience. The standardized regression coefficients were Beta = .22, $p < .05$ for the mother’s demanding attitude, Beta = .28, $p < .01$ for the father’s protective attitude and Beta = $-.24$, $p < .05$ for the father’s autonomy giving attitude.

The higher the intensity of the demanding attitude of the mother and the protective attitude of the father, and the lower the intensity of the autonomy giving attitude of the father, the higher the level of the imaginary audience. The model based on these three predictors explained 34.5% of the variance in the scope of the intensity of the imaginary au-

dience, where the intensity of the demanding attitude of the mother explained 22.1% of the variance, while the intensity of the protective attitude of the father explained 7.7% of the variance, and the intensity of his autonomy giving attitude – 3.8% of the variance.

The level of shyness and the level of adolescent egocentrism

For the purpose of verifying Hypothesis 3, a hierarchical regression analysis was computed. In the first block the level of shyness was used as the predictor of adolescent egocentrism. In the second block the interaction terms for the participants' sex by shyness were added. The personal fable, imaginary audience and general level of adolescent egocentrism were analysed in three separate models. The standardized regression coefficients along with significant tests are presented in table 3.

Shyness predicted the level of the personal fable, imaginary audience and overall level of adolescent egocentrism. It explained 41.7% of the personal fable variance, 29.3% of the imaginary audience variance and 42.4% of the general level of adolescent egocentrism variance. The higher the level of shyness, the higher the level of the personal fable, imaginary audience and overall level of adolescent egocentrism, respectively.

Since there were no statistically significant interaction terms, the above conclusion applies equally to boys and girls.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study that were obtained allowed for the positive verification of **Hypothesis 1**. It turned out, based on the cluster analysis, that shyness in adolescents occurs significantly more often if the parents manifest an extensive amount of overprotective and over-demanding attitudes, and a low degree of the accepting and autonomy giving attitudes. In the cluster with parents that manifested such attitudes, all the children, that is, 100% of the studied cases, revealed shyness. More precise data based on the stepwise regression analysis show that the arrangement of the intensified demanding attitude of the mother and intensified protective attitude of the father correlates with the shyness of adolescents. However, on the basis of the coefficient of determination values, it can be acknowledged that the attitude of the mother plays the most dominant role in this arrangement (explaining 41.1% of the variance, while the attitude of the father only explained approx. 5% of the variance). On the basis of further analysis that took the sex of the children into account, the over-demanding attitude of the mother was mostly connected with the shyness of daughters (which explains 50.4% of the variance), whereas the low level of shyness in boys was connected with the high intensity of the autonomy giving attitude of the father (which explains 39% of the variance).

Table 3. Results of regression analysis

		Beta	t	p
Personal fable	Shyness	.64	7.58***	.001
	Shyness*Participant's sex	-.01	-.13	.899
Imaginary audience	Shyness	.53	5.73***	.001
	Shyness*Participant's sex	-.07	-.75	.455
Adolescent egocentrism	Shyness	.65	7.66***	.001
	Shyness*Participant's sex	-.04	-.50	.615

Beta – standardized regression coefficient; t – test of significance; p – statistical significance; Tolerance – collinearity diagnostic measure

The results obtained seem to support what Maria Tyszkowa (1978) pointed out, namely, that excessive demands on the part of parents lead children to setting high standards for themselves and developing the structure of their “ideal self” too extensively, which, after not being able to cope with the internal and external demands of the mother, gives rise to the fear of failure and fear of being judged negatively by the mother and by the broader environment, which actually indicates the syndrome of shyness. The reason for having high expectations of daughters is connected with the stereotypically understood socialisation process of girls consisting in the dependence training (while boys are subjected to the independence training) (Burns et al., 1989, quoted after: Renzetti, Curran, 2005). It follows that subordination to the demands of the mother, even if they surpass the capabilities of the daughter, is part of the natural process of shaping dependence in girls. Instead of going against the mothers, an attitude of withdrawal as well as a process of constructing an inner world (including the personal fable and imaginary audience) appear. On the other hand, as was shown in the study, the occurrence of shyness in boys is related to the intensity of the autonomy giving attitude manifested by the father. This means that the attitude of the fathers who restrict autonomy and independence and manifest excessive control over their sons, which makes the process of shaping the socially desirable traits in boys more difficult, may lead to an inner conflict of values, difficulty in relating to the peer group and, ultimately, social anxiety.

Reference should be made, at this point, to the role of the inconsistent attitude, which was not significantly related to shyness in adolescents. This can be explained by the fact that the inconsistent attitude is comprised of a number of attitudes and it is only upon a closer analysis of the complexity and nature of the parents’ inconsistency that the aspects of the attitudes that it contains can be determined.

The verification of **Hypothesis 2**, similarly to Hypothesis 1, was successful. The analysis of the manifestations of adolescent egocentrism, namely, the personal fable and the imaginary

audience, within the identified clusters of parental attitudes showed that the constellation of attitudes characterised by the fourth cluster (high results on the overprotective and overdemanding scale, below average intensity of the attitude of acceptance and low results on the autonomy giving scale), is most strongly related to the level of egocentrism compared to the remaining clusters. Therefore, it may be assumed with a high probability that similar aspects of the upbringing situation may be responsible for shaping the psychological dispositions that are manifest in adolescent shyness and egocentrism. A more detailed analysis using stepwise regression showed a somewhat different picture. It turned out that the protective attitude of the mother is crucial in explaining the intensity of the personal fable (explaining 22.3% of the variance), although the demanding attitude of the mother and protective attitude of the father also exert an impact. The existence of a significant relationship between the protective attitude and the intensity of the personal fable may result from the fact that over-protectiveness is also shown in exerting excessive control, limiting exposure to new experiences, not permitting independent functioning and attempting to prevent independent roles being tried out, as well as substituting in solving difficult problems. The lack of possibilities in which such adolescents can try out and test their potential, facing failures, and a restricted contact with reality may be conducive to the formation of a false image of the Self, a sense of power, uniqueness, indestructibility and difficulty in moving on to the stage of rational assessment of oneself and the milieu (Elkind, 1967, 1985).

The stepwise regression analysis, where the predictors were the parental attitudes and the explained variable was the imaginary audience, showed that the demanding attitude of the mother explained its occurrence most strongly (22.1% variance), although it should be mentioned that the autonomy giving attitude explained a small percentage of the variance. As previously indicated, when analysing the relationship between excessive demands and shyness, in the case of high demands set by parents, the criteria for assessing the child are sometimes ex-

cessive, which consequently leads to the adolescent striving to achieve an idealised model. When coming across a negative assessment of their achievements, and the mother increasing the level of expectations, they may seek recognition for themselves, or at the very least, try to be noticed by the milieu. They may even go as far as to use certain form of provocation in order to confirm their conviction that they are in the milieu's centre of attention, particularly the attention of their peers, and not only because of their achievements but also due to their appearance, which is especially important during adolescence.

The verification of **Hypothesis 3**, referring to the relationship between shyness and adolescent egocentrism, allows for a statement to be made that the personal fable and imaginary audience coexist with adolescent shyness. The data demonstrate that shyness explains as much as 41.7% variability in the scope of adolescent egocentrism in the group of shy adolescents. This result may be explained by the fact that shy persons often have a low

self-esteem and sometimes function worse in social situations, thus, they cope with certain shortcomings by creating their own inner world and building a personal fable and imaginary audience.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It was established that the overdemanding attitude on the part of the mother is most strongly related to shyness in adolescents.
2. It was found that the overprotective attitude manifested by the mother is the attitude most strongly connected with the "personal fable" dimension of egocentrism.
3. It was determined that the mother's attitude of excessive demands is most strongly related to the "imaginary audience" dimension of egocentrism.
4. A positive relationship was found to exist between shyness in adolescents and the level of adolescent egocentrism.

NOTE

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