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Parental Attitudes and Coping Strategies in Parents as Indicators of the Prognosis of Aggressive and Task-Oriented Coping Strategies in Adolescents in Situations of Social Conflict

Abstract. The aim of the study was to identify family-related factors connected with aggressive and task-oriented coping strategies in adolescent youth in situations of social conflict. The study was conducted on a sample of 893 adolescents aged 13 to 15. M. Plopa's Parental Attitude Scale (*Skala Postaw Rodzicielskich, SPR*), the Questionnaire for Coping Strategies in Parents in Situations of Social Conflict (*Kwestionariusz Strategii Radzenia sobie Rodziców w Sytuacji Konfliktu Społecznego, KSRwSK*) by D. Borecka-Biernat, and Questionnaire for Coping Strategies in Adolescents in Situations of Social Conflict (*Kwestionariusz do Badania Strategii Radzenia sobie Młodzieży w Sytuacji Konfliktu Społecznego, KSMK*) by D. Borecka-Biernat were used in the study. An analysis of the results of the study has indicated family discriminants of aggressive and task-oriented coping strategies in adolescents in situations of social conflict; those discriminants include the perceived parental attitudes in father, including the inconsistent, autonomous, and demanding attitude; the perceived aggressive strategy in mother and father in situations of social conflict, as well as the task-oriented strategy in mother in situations of social conflict. Identifying the determinants of aggressive and task-oriented strategies in youth might allow the caretakers of adolescents to better understand their behaviour in situations of social conflict and look at its roots from the young people's perspective. Understanding the determinants of these behaviours is a necessary step in designing strategies that can shape individuals capable of coping with conflicts in a mature manner.

Keywords: adolescent, family, coping strategies, situations of social conflict

Słowa kluczowe: adolescent, rodzina, strategia radzenia sobie, sytuacja konfliktu społecznego

INTRODUCTION

Social conflict as a difficult situation

Difficult situations are not exceptional occurrences in human life. On the contrary, they accompany us from early childhood; for this reason, it is important to expand knowledge on actions undertaken by individuals in order to cope in difficult situations and factors that determine those actions.

Difficult situations are a varied category that includes social interactions, such as social conflict. Conflict with another individual is considered one of the basic difficult social situations in each person's life. The possibility

of interpersonal conflict emerges in all social interactions and it is experienced by individuals of different ages and from different backgrounds. It is impossible to avoid them; they are caused by interaction between people with different personality traits, potentials, and abilities. Each individual has the right to express their stance on various issues, realize their personal goals, needs, and interests, and possesses a set of unique psychological characteristics. Thus, conflict is an expression of autonomy, identity, and individuality.

Conflict is a complex category. The concept of conflict is commonly associated with situations of incompatibility of views on a specific issue, values, clash of interests, or disagreement on the course of action (Borkowski, 2003). The word "conflict" is derived from the Latin word *conflictio/onis/*, which means "clash", "impact", "disagreement", "strife", "torment" (Plezia, 1959). In Polish, the word "conflict" means clash of interests, views, a collision, contention, or disagreement (Doroszewski, 1981). Thus, the root of interpersonal conflicts are broadly understood contradictions, incompatibilities of goals, views, attitudes, interests, values, tendencies, motives, aspirations, or desires that can emerge between individuals or groups (Tyrna-Łój, 2002).

Conflict can occur in many forms: from mild conflicts that are possible to solve amicably to antagonistic ones in which the resolution is achieved through elimination, destruction, or submission of one of the parties (Sikora, 1998). According to Henryk Białyszewski (1983), in practice all conflicts contain the element of both integration and disintegration, and constituents that are both beneficial and harmful to social relationships. One of these elements can, however, dominate the conflict process. Each conflict is a "certain game of strategy and how the problem is resolved depends only on the individuals involved" (Kozielecki, 1998, p. 127).

Strategy of aggressive and task-oriented coping in youth in situations of social conflict

During adolescence young people expand their social life and obtain more freedom and independence in decisions in various spheres of functioning, which increases the likelihood of conflicts (Obuchowska, 2000). A young person functions in several different environments, including school, classroom, peer group, and family, each of which contains the potential for conflict. Conflicts with teachers, arguments with schoolmates and romantic partners, and arguments with one or both parents and other relatives begin to emerge (Jarvis, 2000; Smetana, Daddis, 2002; Różańska-Kowal, 2004; Sikorski, 2015; Gurba, 2020). This means that the young individual, while creating and realizing specific plans, is exposed to the risk of conflict at school, in their peer group, or in family relationships. Conflicts in these spheres are an integral and common part of young people's lives and cannot be avoided.

Situations of social conflict contain elements of threat, such as the increased risk of failure to act and realize the goal in which the individual has become invested. There is no doubt that the experienced threats provoke, in young people, behaviours that communicate their interpretation of the situation (from the perspective of their needs and expectations) and whether it has attributes of a difficult situation. Adolescence is a period during which young people experience various, sometimes contradictory, aspirations and must cope with inconsistent social expectations. Young people's reactions in certain complex circumstances are interpreted, in specific situational contexts, as strategies of coping with the difficult situation they are currently experiencing (Heszen-Niejodek, 2000). The ability to cope with difficult situations of conflict involves destructive and constructive strategies (Donaldson et al., 2000; Deutsch, 2005; Krok, 2007; Balawajder, 2010; Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Kuśpit, 2015). Destructive coping strategies in situations of social conflict, such as defensive behaviours, are not oriented towards resolution and overcoming the situation of conflict, do not

lead towards achieving understanding, escalate hostile behaviours, and allow the individual to decrease the unpleasant emotional tension. The aspiration to achieve a specific goal is replaced by the desire to decrease the unpleasant tension and restore good mood. The process involves, among others, applying an aggressive strategy in the form of initiating a verbal attack (cursing, ridicule, criticizing, humiliation) and/or physical attack (fights, shoving) against specific individuals, that results in harm to their physical, mental, and social wellbeing (that is, causes pain, suffering, destruction, and leads to loss of valued principles).

Constructive coping strategies in situations of social conflict include task-oriented strategies in the form of active reactions to the situation of conflict, directed to resolving and overcoming the situation of conflict and assessed as adaptive. The core of the task-oriented strategy is its focus on solving the problem. It includes attempts to adapt one's activities through the effort of communicating with the other party, in order to find a mutually satisfying solution of the problematic issue. This strategy assumes assertive attitude towards goals and needs of all participants of the conflict (Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2009). The basic characteristic of the task-oriented strategy is the fact that it does not change the basic goal of the individual's activities, but rather adjusts the methods of achieving it. The individual is able to maintain the chosen course of action despite the emotional tension.

Coping strategies are always analyzed in the context of a specific difficult situation. As already mentioned, the school environment, especially conflicts with teachers and schoolmates as well as with the romantic interest and family members are particularly stressful for adolescent youth. It is important to observe how young people cope with situations of conflict that they engage in at school, in relationships with peers, or at home. Coping strategies applied by young people in difficult situations at school include, among others, aggressive behaviour towards others (shoving, yanking, kicking, name-calling, ridicule, and mocking). Data obtained by Grażyna Miłkowska (2012), Grażyna Poraj (2002) and Agata Woźniak-Krakowian, Grażyna

Wieczorek (2009) suggests that school lessons and breaks between lessons are situations that particularly increase the likelihood of aggressive methods of coping with unpleasant experiences and stress. During lessons, the aggressive strategy involves purposefully disrupting the lesson, rude comments, arrogant, impolite replies to the teacher, ignoring the teacher's instructions and criticism, writing vulgar comments on the desks, drawing the teacher's caricatures, damaging personal items left by the teacher on the desk, and expressing negative views on the teacher to the classmates and parents. Asked about the reasons for their aggressive behaviour, the students listed large amounts of homework, tests carried out by the teachers without prior announcement, tests used as punishment, worrying about the grades, fear of unpleasant comments from the teachers, and fear of losing reputation among the classmates and decreasing the quality of their relationship with them. The students admitted that they displayed aggressive behaviours also during breaks between lessons. Isolated areas, in which teachers usually do not monitor the students' activities, such as cloakrooms, corridors, and toilets, are especially likely to become locations where particularly aggressive attacks occur. Physical aggression (fights, shoving, pushing, kicking) dominates, and verbal attacks include name-calling, cursing, ridicule, and mocking (Miłkowska-Olejniczak, 2005). Asked about the reasons for aggression during breaks, the students named settling personal scores and conflicts.

Attempts to solve problems independently can also be observed as one of reactions to difficulties in relationships with others displayed by adolescents in the school environment. Their intellectual capacity is high enough to appropriately assess the situation and find ways to solve it. Thus, young people in difficult situations at school try to solve them through, among others, analyzing the problem, planning the resolution of the problem, choosing the best solutions, and confronting the stressor (Pisula, Sikora, 2008; Williams, McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000).

Conflicts between parents and children are common during adolescence (Gurba, 2020). Adolescent children want to become free from

parental supervision and their behaviour is aimed at obtaining more freedom than they have had so far. Young people display aggression when they feel that their autonomy is threatened by parental rules, orders, limitations and pressure. The rules and limitations provoke anger, expressed through arrogant talk, door slamming, sometimes crying, or through acts of direct physical aggression against objects (damaging equipment, slamming fists on the table, or throwing objects that are within reach) or people. Adolescents usually express their aggression towards their parents with words, ironic statements, ignoring instructions and prohibitions, or silence. In conflicts with parents that are perceived as situations threatening the individual's autonomy (limitation of freedom, orders, prohibitions), adolescents frequently display a high degree of ruthlessness, aggression, brutality, indifference, and even cynicism (Lachowska, 2010). Aside from aggressive coping strategies in family problems, adolescents do also reach understanding with the parents (Borowiecka, 2005; Filip, 2010).

To summarize, certain young people apply a destructive strategy and react aggressively to conflicts at school, with peers, or at home; others cope well in situations of conflict and treat them as challenges, which motivates them to use their resources to overcome the obstacles that prevent them from realizing their needs.

Family determinants of aggressive and task-oriented coping strategies in youth in situations of social conflict

Family is the first and a particularly important social environment that an individual experiences. It fulfills a broad spectrum of its members' needs and it is where the process of socialization of a young person occurs, including the development of their personality, education, and becoming a member of a specific community. The considerable impact of family on shaping the child's behaviour and its socialization is caused by the fact that family is the first group that the child belongs to at the moment of birth. It influences the individual's development in two ways: 1) through creating an environment in which the individual is able to gain experience and their character is formed, and 2) through setting examples that the child can follow, and providing cultural tools and mechanisms of processing experiences cognitively, emotionally, and through the lens of the values to which the family subscribes (Przetacznik-Gierowska, Tyszkowa, 2011). The intentional influence of the family expressed in their parenting style, and the unintentional influence connected with the emotional relationship and interactions between its members contributes to physical, mental, and social development of the child (Ziemska, 2009).

Family is the environment in which the child functions at each stage of their life; it has the biggest impact on the quality of one's coping mechanisms in various difficulties. The habits connected with coping with obstacles are formed under specific conditions. In the family home, these conditions are established mainly by the attitudes of the parents (Tyszkowa, 1986). Children function in different conditions with parents who display different attitudes as a result of which either destructive, or constructive coping mechanisms are developed in young people.

The literature presents data indicating that aggressive reactions to various difficult social situations in a child's life are a consequence of inappropriate parental attitudes (Batool, 2013; Brown et al., 2007; Chang et al., 2003; Gurba, 2020; Januszewska, Jasik, 2018; Kuppens et al., 2009; Łukaszewicz, 2002; Minda, 2019; Poraj, 2002; Russel et al., 2003). These include: **excessive emotional distance** (avoidance, rejecting the child), manifesting as hostility towards the child, ignoring their needs, restrictive treatment, and punishments, as a result of which the child does not experience, during their ontogenetic development, open and warm relationships with significant individuals in their life. Rejection by the parents causes a strong sense of fear and anxiety in the child, as well as hostility that is reduced through aggression, resistance, and negative attitudes; in conflict, the child might tend to respond with physical aggression. The second inappropriate parental attitude is the **excessively demanding attitude**. The symptom of this attitude is pressuring the child to become similar to the ideal that functions in the parents'

minds and dismissing the developmental abilities of the child. The young person is not able to meet the continually growing expectations of the parents, for which they are punished. This type of treatment generates the sense of anxiety, threat, and harm in the child and leads, in consequence, to the tendency to release the emotional tension outside of home, through impulsive, violent, and often aggressive behaviour, to compensate for the strict atmosphere in the family. The third inappropriate attitude displayed by parents is the **excessively protective attitude**, which involves the parent's constant assistance, interpreted by the child as the communicate "you are not capable", "you cannot do this on your own." Overprotective parents reward dependent behaviour, through which they hinder the child's ability to gain the ability to independently cope with problems in various social contexts, and facilitate the development of a low tolerance to frustration. As a result of lack of independence and resourcefulness, excessively protected children perceive many situations as difficult, as a result of which they tend to display spiteful, nervous behaviour and a negative attitude towards their social environment, and solve conflicts through violence. The fourth attitude is **inconsistent**, in which the parent's attitude towards the child fluctuates, depending on the parent's mood and the state of personal issues connected with family and other spheres of life. The accepting attitude in which the parent is invested in the child's life is displayed interchangeably with controlling behaviour, shouting, and imposing various limitations and punishments. Lack of stability in the parent's behaviour leaves the child's important needs – in particular the need for close emotional connection, sense of security, autonomy, and independence – unfulfilled. As a result, frustration is generated in the child, which causes disorders in the emotional and social development, manifesting as increased aggression. Constructive coping mechanisms, which help the individual realize their goals despite the experienced emotional tension, develop in different conditions. Research (Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Januszewska, 2001; Węgłowska-Rzepa, 2010; Wolfrand et al., 2003) indicates that the development of task-oriented mechanisms of coping with difficult situations such as conflict is facilitated by the following parental attitudes: 1. **Accepting the child** the way they are, including their appearance, personality, and cognitive skills. The parent-child interaction is dominated by positive emotions, such as kindness, trust, and friendliness. The parents try to help the child in matters important to the child, but do not intervene excessively. They allow the child to be responsible for their own behaviour and show them that they expect them to make mature choices. If the child misbehaves, the parents use constructive arguments and persuasion. These conditions generate a sense of security in the child, who develops a positive attitude towards other people, is not afraid of the difficulties they encounter, and is able to cope effectively with various challenging situations. 2. **Sharing activities** in various types of house work as well as entertainment facilitates an exchange of views and discussions with the parents. The child and the parents discuss various daily matters and express their opinions, which contributes to the decision-making process. It builds the child's trust towards the parents, its willingness to cooperate as well as initiate independent activities, and increases the likelihood that the child will ask their parents for help and advice in various difficult situations. 3. **Giving the child a reasonable amount of freedom**, appropriately to their age. The extent of this freedom is increased as the child grows and develops psychological maturity. The parents create opportunities for the child to fulfill their need for activity and independence. The child makes their own decisions, within the functioning moral and social norms. These conditions facilitate the development of creativity, individuality, and the initiative to overcome obstacles. 4. **Acknowledging the child's rights**, including its developmental needs, and giving them the right to autonomy. The parents share their suggestions without imposing any ideas and forcing the child to do anything, which encourages the child to use their own initiative.

In numerous difficult situations, human behaviour depends not only on the nature of the situation to which the individual reacts, but also

on the behaviour of other people in the same situation. Family is the environment which creates natural conditions that facilitate the development of mechanisms of coping with difficult situations, and the parents are frequently the first models from who the child learns specific coping strategies. The parents' behaviour in emotionally tense situations and the way they react to the difficulties and failures experienced by the child become the matrix for the child's developing patterns of coping (Tyszkowa, 1986). Studies show that the majority of children are born in families in which one or both parents have a tendency towards aggressive behaviour (Cywińska, 2008; Lewandowska, 2000). The aggression displayed by children in their conflicts with peers is a reflection of the patterns that they have observed during conflicts in their families. Children who frequently witness rows, fights, destruction of property and hear harsh speech and slamming doors accept this reality as normal and displays the same behaviours not only towards their parents and siblings, but also at school, in arrogant attitude towards teachers, aggression towards schoolmates, and the tendency to use force to solve conflicts, particularly when they notice beneficial outcomes of this behaviour for themselves (Aronson et al., 2012; Lopez et al., 2006; Zimbardo, Gerrig, 2012). Aggressive mothers and fathers are, unquestionably, a source of aggression in children, who follow their pattern of aggressive interaction with others (Rostowska, 1996). Thus, children who see their parents participate in violent scenes copy their model of solving conflicts through aggression. It should be concluded that transmission of aggressive behaviour occurs when the child adopts this style of behaviour from their family environment and perceives it as an efficient method of coping with situations of social conflict.

The task-oriented styles of coping, however, require, in order to develop, the appropriate models of coping with difficulties, such as perseverance in overcoming the obstacles and tolerance to emotional tension. In situations which hinder the realization of their goals, children behave in the way that they have previously learnt from their parents' behaviour in similar circumstances. If the parents have displayed constructive reactions to difficulties, the children tend to react in a similar manner. Faced with obstacles, they choose to analyze the situation for a second time and put more effort into finding the solution independently. Social activity of the parents and their lack of inhibitions in social situations facilitates the formation of task-oriented styles of coping with difficult situations (Barani, Szmigielska, 2012; Borecka-Biernat, 2006).

To summarize, it would be difficult not to notice that the patterns of reacting to difficulties, which act as regulators of coping strategies, develop in children on the basis of specific parental attitudes (Tyszkowa, 1986). Long-term influence of negative attitudes in the parents may contribute to the emergence of aggressive coping behaviours which children display in situations that provoke such reactions and signal danger.

The appropriate parental attitudes, however, contribute to the development of task-oriented coping strategies in children, which are favourable for the realization of one's goals and overcoming obstacles. Moreover, the family is a sphere which socializes the individual by presenting models of reacting to difficult situations containing an element of threat to one's goals. There is basis for the assumption that in children, the aggressive strategy and the task-oriented strategy of coping in situations of social conflict are behaviours learnt as a result of observation and frequent contact with individuals displaying these specific behaviours, usually the parents.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The empirical research was focused on the role of the family-related factors in the development of aggressive and task-oriented strategies in youth in situations of social conflict, that is, the role of the parental attitudes and the modeling influence of the parents.

The following basic research question was formulated for the studied problem:
1. Which combination of family variables differentiates strategies of aggressive and

task-oriented coping in youth in situations of social conflict?

The presented overview of the literature on the subject allows to formulate the following hypothesis, which will be verified through an analysis of the results of the conducted empirical study.

H1. Considering the variety of coping strategies in young people in situations of social conflict, the combination of variables will have value differentiating the aggressive and the task-oriented strategy. The combination of the parents' attitude and their strategy of coping in situations of social conflict is a factor differentiating the aggressive and the task-oriented coping strategies in youth in situations of social conflict.

METHOD

The studied sample

The study was conducted on a sample of 468 girls and 425 boys aged 13 to 15. Overall, 893 individuals participated in the study. The study was conducted on a sample of the first, second, and third grade students of middle schools from Wrocław and the surrounding towns. The schools were selected randomly, but not all selected schools agreed to participate in the study; therefore, in several cases other schools were contacted and expressed willingness to participate. The study was conducted on a group and the participation was voluntary. The study was conducted in accordance with the norms of psychological scientific research. The questionnaires were distributed and completed by the students during form period. The students signed the questionnaires with their initials or nicknames. Before participating in the study, the students, who obtained their parents permission for participation, were given detailed instructions. The participants were allowed to ask questions about any elements of the questionnaires that they found unclear. It should be emphasized that the participants displayed a positive attitude towards their participation in the research, expressing interest and actively answering the questions.

The basic criterion for the selection of the participants was age. The impact of age on the choice of coping strategies in situations of social conflict was analyzed in the group of participants aged 13 to 15 (early adolescence). Adolescence is important in each person's life, since it is considered to be a transitory period between childhood and adulthood. It is also described as the time of resistance and rebellion. Numerous biological, psychological, mental, motivational, and social changes occur during this time, as a result of which young people frequently find it difficult to adapt their behaviour to the new situations they encounter as well as the tasks and social roles which they are given (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 2015). Due to the development of critical assessment of the individual's surrounding reality and the increase in the focus on shaping one's own image of oneself, the supremacy of the emotional sphere over the other aspects of one's psychological identity, as well as new forms of social contacts and tendency towards direct behaviour, adolescents in the age range of 13 to 15 appear to be an appropriate subject for research on aggressive coping strategies in emotionally tense situations, such as social conflict.

Methods

The Parental Attitudes Scale (*Skala Postaw Rodzicielskich, SPR*) designed by Mieczysław Plopa (2015), the Questionnaire for Coping Strategies in Parents in Situations of Social Conflict (*Kwestionariusz Strategii Radzenia sobie Rodziców w Sytuacji Konfliktu Społecznego, KSRwSK*) by Danuta Borecka-Biernat (2013), and the Questionnaire for Coping Strategies in Adolescents in Situations of Social Conflict (*Kwestionariusz do Badania Strategii Radzenia sobie Młodzieży w Sytuacji Konfliktu Społecznego, KSMK)* by D. Borecka-Biernat (2012) were used in the study.

The Parental Attitudes Scale (*Skala Postaw Rodzicielskich, SPR*) (Plopa, 2015) is used to study parental attitudes as perceived by children; it comprises 75 statements, in separate versions for the mother and the father. The participant responds to each statement by choosing one of four possible

answers: "true", "mostly true", "difficult to say", "mostly untrue", and "not true" (corresponding to 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 point, respectively). The questionnaire contains 5 scales, each of which consists of 15 statements. These include the following: Acceptance/Rejection Attitude (I), Autonomy Attitude (II), Protective Attitude (III), Demanding Attitude (IV), and Inconsistent Attitude (V). The Questionnaire is characterized by sufficient construct validity and reliability (Cronbach's α ranges between .81 and .92 for "My Mother" and between .79 and .92 for "My Father").

The Questionnaire for Coping Strategies in Parents in Situations of Social Conflict (*Kwestionariusz Strategii Radzenia sobie Rodziców w Sytuacji Konfliktu Społecznego, KSRwSK*) by D. Borecka-Biernat (2013) consists of two versions: "My Mother" and "My Father". It studies coping strategies applied by parents in situations of social conflict as perceived by their adolescent children. The tool contains 16 descriptions of situations of social conflict in both versions ("My Mother" and "My Father"). Each situation presented 4 behaviours expressing a way of coping with a situation of social conflict. The first behaviour presented the aggressive coping strategy ("A") which manifests as initiated verbal and/or physical attack against of the partner, and the second presented an avoidant strategy ("AV") in which the individual engages in activities that absorb their attention and distract them from the situation of conflict and seeks contact with other people. The third behaviour was submissive strategy ("S") in which the individual abandons their goals in a situation of conflict and prioritizes the interests and needs of the partner in order to maintain a good relationship between them, and the fourth presented the task-oriented strategy of coping with social conflict ("T"), in which the individual makes efforts oriented towards communicating with their partner in order to find a solution to the conflict. Each of four possible responses has been assigned a figure (0 to 1). The sum of the collected points indicates the frequency with which the particular strategy is applied. The higher the figure, the more the parents are perceived as likely to choose a specific strategy. The study used the Aggressive Coping Scale ("A") and the Task-Oriented Scale ("T") for mothers/fathers in situations of social conflict. The Questionnaire is characterized by sufficient reliability (Cronbach's alpha for "My Mother" and "My Father" is approximately, or above, .70) and diagnostic validity.

The Questionnaire for Coping Strategies in Adolescents in Situations of Social Conflict (*Kwestionariusz do Badania Strategii Radzenia sobie Młodzieży w Sytuacji Konfliktu Społecznego, KSMK)* by D. Borecka-Biernat (2012) has been designed to study coping strategies applied by adolescent youth in situations of social conflict. It consists of 33 descriptions of situations of social conflict. Each situation presented 4 behaviours expressing a way of coping with a situation of social conflict. The first behaviour presented the aggressive coping strategy ("A") which manifests as initiated verbal and/or physical attack against specific persons, and the second presented an avoidant strategy ("AV") in which the individual engages in activities that absorb their attention and distract them from the situation of conflict and seeks contact with other people. The third behaviour was submissive strategy ("S") in which the individual abandons their goals in a situation of conflict and prioritizes the interests and needs of the partner in order to maintain a good relationship between them, and the fourth presented the task-oriented strategy of coping with social conflict ("T"), in which the individual makes efforts oriented towards communicating with their partner in order to find a solution to the conflict. The results are obtained separately for each scale after summing the behaviours marked by the participant in the 33 listed situations. Since the scales consist of 33 items, the participants can obtain from 0 to 33 points. The Avoidant Strategies Scale ("A") and the Task-Oriented Strategies Scale ("T") were used in the present study. The questionnaire is characterized by good reliability (Cronbach's alpha is .73 for "A", "S" and "T" and .694 for "AV") and diagnostic validity.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0.0.2. software was used to perform the calculations. The analysis of the empirical data was initiated with calculating

the descriptive statistics for particular variables and checking the normal distribution. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the tested sample meets the requirements of the normality of distribution. Discriminant analysis was used to determine the family indicators of predictivity of aggressive and task-oriented coping strategies in youth in situations of social conflict, in the context of the results obtained from the five scales of the SPR questionnaire (versions "My Mother" and "My Father"): Acceptance/Rejection Attitude, Autonomy Attitude, Protective Attitude, Demanding Attitude, and Inconsistent Attitude, as well as from the two scales of the *SRwSK* questionnaire (versions "My Mother" and "My Father"): the aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict (strategy "A") and the task-oriented coping in situations of social conflict (strategy "T"). It allows to identify family differentiations of the studied individuals according to the coping strategies they apply in situations of social conflict. The family determinants, as elements of the prognosis, identified on the basis of fourteen family variables, provide a basis (at a specific percentage) for accurate classification of the studied individuals in one of the two established groups (Brzeziński, 2004). In the present study these groups include youth with a high level of aggressive strategy and youth with a high level of task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict, divided by gender. The highly aggressive group and the group with a high level of the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict were identified based on the high results they obtained in the scales "A" and "Z" of the *SRwSK* questionnaire.

The data in Table 1 below presents figures for youth (overall) who cope with conflict by applying the aggressive strategy and youth (overall) who apply the task-oriented strategy in situations of conflict (see Table 1).

Table 1. Family discriminants differentiating youth who apply aggressive ("A") and task-oriented ("T") strategy of coping with situations of social conflict, by gender

Studied individuals	Discriminatns	Wilks' lambda	F removed.	P	1-Toler. (R sq.)
Overall	Inconsistent Att. in the father	.74	5.03	.03	.75
	"T" in the mother	.74	7.45	.007	.44
	"A" in the father	.73	4.14	.04	.42
Wilks' lambda ; .72; approx. F (13.236) = 7.08; p < .0001					
Girls	Autonomy Att. in the father	.65	6.41	.01	.73
	„A" in the mother	.66	7.29	.008	.52
Wilks' lambda: .62; approx. F (13.128) = 5.99; p < .0001					
Boys	Demanding Att. in the father	.77	4.93	.03	.81
	"T" in the mother	.76	4.43	.04	.41
Wilks' lambda: .73; approx. F (13.94) = 2.68; p < .003					

Note: Att. – parenting attitude, "T" – task-oriented strategy in situation of social conflict, "A"– aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict

Source: own elaboration.

The conducted discriminant analysis on a sample divided into two groups allowed to distinguish three (out of fourteen) discriminants: the inconsistent attitude perceived in the father and the perceived coping strategies of the parents in situations of social conflict: the task-oriented strategy in the mother and the aggressive strategy in the father (see Table 1). The configuration of the average results: a higher level of the inconsistent attitude in the father ($M = 44.89$), a lower level of the task-oriented strategy in the mother in situations of social conflict ($M = 7.81$), and a higher level of the aggressive coping strategy in the father in situations of social conflict ($M = 3.87$) significantly determine the young people's tendency to apply the aggressive strategy in situations of social conflict.

A lower level of the appropriately oriented inconsistent attitude in the father ($M = 38.07$), a higher level of the task-oriented attitude in the mother in situations of social conflict ($M = 10.79$), and a lower level of the aggressive strategy in the father in situations of social conflict ($M = 2.34$) determine the adolescents' tendency to choose the task-oriented strategy in situations of conflict.

The three variables presented in Table 1 explain, in total, 28% of the variance. The accuracy of the categorization of various individuals in the aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict or in the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict, based on those three discriminants, is moderate (80.80%); the accuracy of classification in the category of adolescents who apply the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict is higher (93.71%) than the accuracy of classification in the category of adolescents who apply the aggressive strategy in situations of social conflict (50.67%). Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The percentage of the factual accurate classification of the studied adolescents who apply the aggressive ("A") and the task-oriented ("T") strategy in situations of social conflict, based on the family discriminants

Studied individuals	Actual classification	Predicted classification		Overall
		"A"	"T"	
Overall	"A"	38 50.67%	37 49.33%	75 100%
	"T"	11 6.29%	164 93.71%	175 100%
Girls	"A"	19 48.72%	20 51.28%	39 100%
	"T"	4 3.88%	99 96.12%	103 100%
Boys	"A"	16 89.39%	20 10.61%	36 100%
	"T"	8 11.11%	64 88.89%	72 100%

Note: "A" – aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict; "T" – task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict

Source: own elaboration.

The question worth asking is which combinations of family variables are characteristic for girls and boys who choose the aggressive strategy and those who choose the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict? It is important to determine the specific collection of family variables which differentiate the comparison of whose participants (in groups divided by gender) who tend to apply the aggressive strategy in situations of social conflict and those who choose the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict.

The conducted discriminant analysis of all fourteen family variables, performed on girls divided into two groups, allowed to distinguish two discriminants: the autonomy attitude perceived in the father and the aggressive strategy in situations of social conflict perceived in the mother (see Table 1). The results show that a lower level of the autonomy attitude in the father (M = 56.67) and a higher level of the aggressive strategy in the mother (M = 4.44) significantly determines the adolescent girls' tendency to choose the aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict. The combination of the family variables in which a higher level of autonomy in the father (M = 59.12) co-occurs with a lower level of the aggressive coping strategy in the mother in situations of social conflict (M = 1.45), however, determines the task-oriented coping strategy in situations of social conflict in girls.

The two variables presented in Table 1 explain in total 38% of the variance. The accuracy of classification of individual girls in the category of the aggressive strategy in situations of social conflict and in the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict, based on two discriminants, analyzed together, is 83.10%. The accuracy of classification of girls in the task-oriented strategy is very high (96.12%), and the accuracy of classification of girls in the aggressive strategy is -48.72% (see Table 2).

Let us now examine which family variables are part of the equation differentiating boys who in situations of social conflict apply the aggressive strategy and those who apply the task-oriented strategy. The answer to this question is provided by the data presented in Table 1. Among the fourteen studied family variables, two were included in the discriminant equation: the demanding attitude perceived in the father as well as the task-oriented strategy in mothers in situations of social conflict, perceived by sons. The following combination of the family discriminants: a higher level of the demanding attitude in the father (M = 44.00) and a lower level of the task-oriented attitude in the mother in situations of social conflict (M = 8.31) determines the aggressive strategy in the boys in situations of social conflict. The follow-ing combination of the variables: a lower level of appropriately oriented demanding attitude in the father (M = 40.35) and a higher level of task-oriented strategy in the mother in situations of social conflict (M = 10.82) determines the placement of boys in the category of individuals who choose the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict.

The two variables included in the discriminant equation explain, in total, 27% of the variance. The accuracy of the classification of particular boys in the categories of the aggressive strategy and the task-oriented strategy of coping in situations of social conflict, based on the discriminant function (therefore, with consideration of the two discussed discriminants), is 74.07%. A slightly higher accuracy has been observed in classification of boys in the category of the aggressive coping strategy (89.39%) than in the category of the task-oriented coping strategy (88.89%). Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

On the basis of the results presented above, a higher result can be observed for inappropriate attitudes in the fathers of adolescents (overall, with consideration of gender) who apply the aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict in comparison with adolescents (overall, with consideration of gender) who apply the task-oriented strategy. It has also been observed that the aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict, particularly when it is heightened, is characteristic for the mothers of girls who display a high level of the aggressive coping strategy in situations of social conflict. It is worth noting the father's preferences of the influences that facilitate the aggressive coping strategy in adolescents (overall).

An analysis of the results obtained from adolescents (overall, divided by gender) who in situations of social conflict apply the task-oriented strategy, in comparison with adolescents (overall, divided by gender) who apply the aggressive strategy, has revealed a higher occurrence of the appropriate parenting attitudes in the father. It has also been shown that adolescents (overall, boys) who in situations of social conflict choose the task-oriented coping mechanisms perceive their mothers as

displaying a higher level of the task-oriented strategy in situations of social conflict.

To summarize, in the light of the conducted statistical verification, it should be concluded that a specific combination of family variables constitute the discriminants which to a moderate degree (74.07–83.10%) predict the aggressive strategy and the task-oriented strategy in adolescents (overall, divided by gender) in situations of social conflict: parental attitudes (inconsistent, autonomy, and demanding. This combination is as follows: the inconsistent, autonomy, and demanding attitude in the father and the, perceived by the adolescent, aggressive strategy in the mother and the father in situations of social conflict, as well as the task-oriented strategy in the mother in situations of social conflict. The distinguished family variables are an important category of psychological indicators that allow for a sufficiently accurate prediction of the aggressive strategy and the task-oriented strategy in youth in situations of social conflict. The conducted analysis of the empirical material has confirmed the presented hypothesis H.1.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The discriminant analysis has revealed that inappropriate and appropriate parental attitudes, as well as the parents' preference for aggressive or task-oriented strategies in situations of social conflict, are connected with the tendency towards aggressive or task-oriented strategies in young people in situations of social conflict.

The family-related source of the coping strategy young people choose in situations of social conflict is an unstable attitude of the father – dependent on his mood and personal problems connected with both family life and external issues – towards the adolescent child. It has been determined that the father displays emotional coldness and does not express love towards the child; simultaneously, he is perceived as able to prevent various dangers that the adolescent might encounter and invested in protecting the child from disappointment, anxiety, and harm. This type of father is not always interested in the adolescent child's problems and infrequently

expresses affection. Occasionally, he remembers that he is a father and becomes excessively focused on the child, limiting his or her contacts with peers and relieving the child from obligations. An accepting attitude in which the father is invested in the adolescent's problems is displayed simultaneously with intervening in the child's life, a tendency to shout, and imposing various restrictions and punishments. The distinct emotional reserve coexisting with the focus on the adolescent child indicates lack of consistency in the father's parenting style. The parent's inconsistency leads to the failure to fulfill the significant needs of the adolescent, in particular the need of close emotional connection, a sense of security, autonomy, and independence. The emotional instability experienced in the young person's relationship with their father is a distinct frustrating factor which may contribute to the adolescent's increased hostility to the environment and aggression towards others in situations of social conflict (Bares et al., 2011; Batool, 2013; Farnicka, Liberska, 2014; Juroszek, 2017; Łukaszewicz, 2002; Plopa 1983).

The results of the statistical analysis suggest that, due to the excessively demanding attitude in the father, adolescent boys tend to choose aggression as a method of solving conflicts. The excessively demanding attitude in the father frequently collides with the need for independence, particularly in boys, or the boy's identification with the cultural stereotype of masculinity. A symptom of this attitude is pressuring the boy into the ideal that functions in the parent's imagination and ignoring his actual developmental potential. The father's disproportionate expectations fail to acknowledge the adolescent's factual skills and abilities. The excessively demanding father expects the boy to be the best at everything, regardless of his real ability. The parent's behaviour towards the adolescent is characterized by domination and despotic tendencies. He limits the boy's freedom in many spheres of his activity: he intervenes in his interests, free time activities, contacts with peers, hobbies, etc. In this way, the excessively demanding attitude in the father collides with the boy's needs, in particular with the need for affiliation, autonomy, independence, and

cooperation. The parent believes that this attitude is beneficial for the wellbeing of the adolescent. The adolescent, however, is unable to meet the constantly growing expectations of the father, for which he is harshly punished. From a child's perspective, punishment is interpreted as a form of aggression or hostility and it provokes, in the punished individual, a sense of threat, anxiety, uncertainty, and the reactions of anger, rebellion, protest, and the need for retaliation. The father is perceived as an aggressor, as the frequent punishments become, to the child, a model of aggressive behaviour (Aronson et al., 2012; Dutkiewicz, 2003; Wolfrand et al., 2003; Wolińska, 2000). The parent treats physical violence as a means of realizing his own goals and as a strategy of solving situations of conflict (Ratzke et al., 1997). The father uses the argument of power and does not offer the boy other models of coping with difficulties, as a result of which the adolescent displays the tendency to choose the same coping mechanisms, believing that this is the correct way of influencing other people's behaviour and solving conflicts.

Research has also shown that mothers and fathers perceived as applying aggressive coping strategies contribute to the adolescents (overall and girls) developing strategies based on aggressive behaviour, chosen in situations of social conflict. The adolescent child finds aggressive patterns of reacting to difficulties in the parents' behaviour in emotionally tense situations and in their attitude towards the difficulties and failures experienced by the child. This tendency appears consistent with Albert Bandura's statement (1973) that "aggressive children come from aggressive homes." The adolescent absorbs the aggressive patterns of behaviour present in their home and treats them as an efficient way of solving problems or as an available means of achieving one's goals. As quoted above, A. Bandura (1973) claims that susceptibility to the model's influence on the individual depends on the consequences of their behaviour. If the model's aggression is rewarded, their aggressive behaviour increases. It may be suspected that parents who are cruel towards their adolescent children are rewarded for this behaviour by the realization of their

direct goal: the child becomes obedient. This suggests that adolescent children copy their parents' behaviour and in this way, learn how to solve problems, realize goals, or cope with conflict using force, in particular when they have previously observed a positive effect of aggressive behaviour (Bryłka, 2000; Cywińska, 2008; Lewandowska, 2000; Van Lissa et al., 2017; Wolfrand et al., 2003). The belief that aggression is an efficient method of coping with difficulties and that goals can be realized at any cost may be developed from birth (Obuchowska, 2000). It is worth noting that a high level of aggressive coping strategies in mothers in situations of social conflict contributes to the increase of aggressive coping strategies in adolescent girls. Attention should also be paid to the fact that in a natural environment, the gender of the model plays an important role and facilitates identification with the model. It is girls who identify with the mother and thus, with the aggressor and copy their behavioural patterns (Liberska, 2002).

The task-oriented approach to coping with situations of conflict in youth is developed in different conditions; the goal of this approach is to ensure the realization of the individual's goal despite the experienced emotional tension. Research indicates that, particularly in girls, the task-oriented coping mechanisms are facilitated by the father's attitude of autonomy, in which the parent's behaviour is compatible with the developmental needs of the adolescent. The father understands the adolescent's need to establish social relationships, including with the opposite sex, and is reasonably tolerant towards these needs. The father tries to help girls in matters that are important to them, but does not intervene excessively; he offers suggestions, but does not pressure the adolescent to follow them, allowing the child to actively take initiative. In situations of conflict the father does not impose his own opinions on the child, but is able to consider their arguments and look at issues from their perspective. He expresses approval of the child's attempts to independently solve problems in situations where the father's and the child's (especially girls') aspirations are different. As can be seen, a parent who can sat-

isfy the adolescent child's need for security and autonomy, helps them increase their resilience to real and potential threats and facilitates the development of the ability to react to situations of social conflict through actively seeking the resolution of the disparity of aspirations (Bhattacharyya, Pradhan, 2015; Januszewska, 2001; Juroszek, 2017; Klink et al., 2008; Rodrigues, Kitzmann, 2007; Wolfrand et al., 2003). Overall, it can be concluded that the father shapes the sphere of closeness and support while simultaneously respecting the child's independence and giving them a sense of security that appears to facilitate the task-oriented coping strategy in girls in situations of social conflict.

An analysis of the results of research has also revealed that the preference for the task-oriented strategy in adolescent youth (overall, boys) in situations of social conflict is influenced by the adolescent's perception of the mother's concentration on the problem, applied during the situation of social conflict, her activity connected with finding a solution to the problem, and her persistence in the attempts to solve it. It has been observed that the increase in the development of task-oriented strategy in youth, particularly in boys, is significantly influenced by the boy's perception of the mother's concentration on the problem, applied during the situation of social conflict, her activity aimed at solving the problem, and persisting in attempting to solve it. Attention should be paid to the opposite gender parent's preferences for the influences facilitating the task-oriented coping strategy in boys. It indicates that the task-oriented coping with situations of social conflict in boys is primarily shaped by the personality traits of the parent

that the adolescent identifies with, rather than gender (Rychlak, Legierski, 1967). Based on these results, a conclusion can be drawn that the development of the task-oriented style of reacting to situations of social conflict in boys is significantly impacted by the patterns of task-oriented coping to situations of social conflict in mother. Adolescent boys copy these behaviours and treat them as efficient ways of solving problems, achieving goals, or coping with conflict (Barani, Szmigielska, 2012; Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Liberska, 2002; Rostowska, 1997).

In the light of the obtained results it is worth noting that the aggressive coping strategy, whose objective is to regulate the unpleasant emotions and self-tranquilize rather than solve the conflict, can be prevented by teaching adolescents task-oriented coping strategies. It is crucial that the parents teach the adolescents the patterns of active behaviour focused on solving the conflict. It is necessary that the parent expresses approval of the adolescent's attempts to solve their own problems by themselves and that the young people are acknowledged as individuals whose autonomy needs to be gradually increased, and who need to have the possibility to learn to make decisions independently. Consistently with the adolescent's expectations, the parent supports them when they make particularly important decisions, simultaneously respecting their independence and allowing them to actively take initiative. The parent avoids excessive interference and, by encouraging the adolescent to develop their autonomy and accept responsibility for their own actions, they teach their children to apply task-oriented coping mechanisms in situations of social conflict.

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