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Parental modelling impact on young people’s aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations

Modelujący wpływ rodziców w kształtowaniu strategii agresywnego radzenia sobie młodzieży w sytuacji konfliktu społecznego

Abstract

Aim. The aim of the research was to search for a family etiology of aggressive strategies for coping with a social conflict situation by adolescents, which are inherent in the aggressive model of their parents’ responses to a social conflict situation.

Methods. Danuta Borecka-Biernat’s Questionnaire on parents’ strategies for coping with a social conflict situation (KSRwSK) and Borecka-Biernat’s Questionnaire on studying strategies for coping with a social conflict situation by adolescents (KSMK) were applied in our research. Empirical studies were conducted in junior high schools. They covered 893 adolescents (468 girls and 425 boys) aged 13-15 years.

Results. The analysis of the research material showed that the mother and father are perceived as those who use an aggressive strategy in situations which hinder the achievement of goals and contribute to the modelling of a strategy of aggressive behaviour in children, which is used by them in a social conflict situation.

Keywords: adolescents, behaviour modelling, aggressive coping strategy, social conflict situation

Abstrakt

Cel. Cel badań stanowi poszukiwanie rodzinnej etiologii agresywnej strategii radzenia sobie dorastającej młodzieży w sytuacji konfliktu społecznego tkwiącej w agresywnym wzorze reagowania rodziców na sytuację konfliktu społecznego.

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Metody. W badaniach posłużono się Kwestionariuszem strategii radzenia sobie rodziców w sytuacji konfliktu społecznego (KSRwSK) Danuty Boreckiej-Biernat i Kwestionariuszem do badania strategii radzenia sobie młodzieży w sytuacji konfliktu społecznego (KSMK) Boreckiej-Biernat. Badania empiryczne przeprowadzono w szkołach gimnazjalnych. Objęły one 893 adolescentów (468 dziewczynek i 425 chłopców) w wieku 13-15 lat. **Wyniki.** Analiza materiału badawczego wykazała, że matka oraz ojciec postrzegani są jako stosujący w sytuacjach utrudniających dążenie do celu strategię opartą na agresji i przyczyniają się do modelowania u dziewcząt i chłopców strategii polegającej na agresywnym zachowaniu, wykorzystywanej w sytuacji konfliktu społecznego.

Słowa kluczowe: dorastająca młodzież, modelowanie zachowania, strategia agresywnego radzenia sobie, sytuacja konfliktu społecznego

Young people in conflict situations at school, between peers and within families

A conflict situation involving another person has been recognised as one of the most fundamentally challenging social situations in anyone's life. Wherever there are interactions between people, there is a possibility of interpersonal conflict. It is an inevitable outcome of civilisation, since the goals and needs of individuals often collide with those of other individuals, and therefore, the occurrence of conflict among humans needs to be seen as natural (Freud in: Olearczyk, 2009). A significant proportion of conflicts between individuals or between an individual and a group result from contradictions, incompatibilities or discrepancies in views, attitudes, interests, and values, or motives, aspirations, expectations, desires, and goals that are pursued by the opposing parties (Balawajder, 2010; Shantz, 1987; Wojciszke, 2007). Many people associate conflict exclusively with direct physical and/or verbal aggression and animosity compounding the existing contradictions. This type of conflict is saturated with negative emotions and has a debilitating effect on the individual. In general, the destructive character of interpersonal conflicts is expressed through the interaction partners' use of various forms of open and disguised fighting, exacerbating the existing contradictions, giving rise to hostility and antagonism. It results in the individuals' inability or reduced ability to cooperate with each other and the perpetuation of dysfunctional relations with other people. It may lead to manipulation, misinformation, and the formation of negative attitudes towards each other.

Adults tend to underestimate how many difficult situations young people must face every day. For many young people, everyday life involves a variety of drama-inducing events and abounds in stimulating phenomena including elements of challenge, competition, conflict, and struggle. During adolescence, a young person is grounded in several environments: school, school grade peers, peer group, and family. The possibility of conflict can arise on any of these planes. Social contacts may

involve conflicts with teachers, quarrels with schoolmates and friends, and arguments with parents and other family members (Jaworski, 2000; Kobus, Reyes, 2000; Lohman, Jarvis 2000; Guskowska, Gorący, & Rychta-Siedlecka, 2001; Rostowska, 2001; Gawryś 2002; Smetana, Daddis, 2002; Różańska-Kowal, 2004; Jerzewska, 2006; Komendant, 2007; Woźniak-Krakowian, Wieczorek, 2009; Lachowska, 2010; Polak, 2010; Sikorski, 2010; Miłkowska, 2012; Gurba, 2020). This means that a young person, in making and implementing specific life plans, is exposed to conflict situations that are related to school, contacts with peers, and relationships within the family. Conflict played out on these three social levels is an integral part of a young person's life; it is prevalent and unavoidable.

School is not only a place where students learn in a systematic way and teachers' workplace but is a living environment encompassing a rich variety of human characters and an even richer web of events in which human emotions, sympathies and animosities, knowledge and experience, views and beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices emerge. Most teachers and students are aware that school nowadays is full of conflicts and disputes. Zofia Plewicka (1977), Monika Guskowska, Alicja Gorący, and Jolanta Rychta-Siedlecka (2001), Maria Gawryś (2002), Joanna Różańska-Kowal (2004), Bogdan Stańkowski (2009), Agata Woźniak-Krakowian, and Grażyna Wieczorek (2009), Dorota Domińska-Werbel (2010) and Krzysztof Polak (2010) studied school conflict situations that involved adolescent students. These included conflicts with teachers and peers at school. According to school conflict descriptions, 68% were fights with teachers (Plewicka, 1977). Students consider this type of conflict to be endemic in school life and describe it as 'age-old' or 'inter-generational' (Bielawska, 1995). The most controversial situations in student-teacher relationships involve issues related to school grades, tactless behaviour by teachers and the overbearing insistence and rigidity of the teacher's demands.

Conflicts are an inevitable element of any community, including in the classroom. A study by Dorota Bielawska (1995) showed that 28% of young respondents observed conflict situations between groups of students, while 34% had also seen conflicts between individuals. Similar descriptions of conflicts between peers accounted for 32% of the research material collected by Z. Plewicka (1977). The main reasons were teasing, ridiculing, false accusations, detraction, betrayal, indiscretion, competition for grades, competition for attention from peers of opposite sex, competition for group leadership, competition for power over peers, for the status of a class president, for prestige related to sports, or rude behaviour. Furthermore, in her observations of students' behaviour, she noted that conflicts between girls mainly arose in terms of rivalry related to appearance and physical attractiveness, the boys' attention, and academic performance. Conflicts between boys involved competition involving strength and physical performance, as well as sport results.

Conflicts are inherent in the functioning of any social group, and thus also in the family, as a community of persons particularly close to each other, where conflicts are an expression of opposing needs of individual family members. A family including an adolescent child stands at the threshold of major changes and conflicts. During adolescence, as the young person considers his or her life plans and is busily discovering his or her own self, misunderstandings and conflicts within the family usually intensify. According to Czesław Matuszewicz (1997), disagreements and conflicts with the mother and father occur in about 55-65% of primary and secondary school student populations, with boys being more prone to conflict than girls. 40% of family conflicts are of high intensity. Research by Brett Laursen (1990 in: Collins, Laursen, 1992) demonstrated that adolescents report an average of seven conflicts per day. The majority of these conflicts involve mothers, followed by conflicts with siblings, friends, romantic partners, fathers, and other peers and adults. Conflicts with family members stem from the young person's need to assert himself or herself. Young people tend to demonstrate their maturity by wearing specific outfits, often behaving nonchalantly, by smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, *etc.* Such individuals are then formed within a sphere of constant conflict between what they want and what their parents expect of them. Many of such conflicts emerge in everyday situations – due to differing views, tastes, *e.g.*, in matters related to clothing, music, television watching, computer use, schoolwork, the ways of spending pocket money, household chores, contacts with peers, leisure time, and the timing of outings (Garstka, 2011; Gurba, 2020; Filipczuk, 1987; Collins, 1990; Jaworski, 2000; Krzyśko, 1999; Lachowska, 2010; Łosiewicz, 2002; Montemayor, 1983; Riesch *et al.*, 2000; Rostowska, 2001; Smetana, Yau, Restrepo, & Braeges, 1991; Sikorski, 2010).

Another source of conflict between parents and adolescent children is the adolescent's need for independence, seeking autonomy, decision-making in matters related to them, determination of their own way in life (Jerzewska, 2006; Smetana, Daddis, 2002). The young person wishes to feel they are able to achieve important goals on their own, without adult interference. A strong need for autonomy results in conflict with the parents' desire to control their child's behaviour. There is a tension between an adolescent's increasing need for autonomy and parents' tendency to control and supervise the life and behaviour of their children, as they approach adulthood. There is a confrontation between two worlds of the young and independent self and the parent-controlled self.

Another cause of conflicts between parents and their adolescent children is an increasingly critical attitude adopted by young people and their critical assessment of family members' views or behaviours (Przybył, 2005; Trylińska-Tekielska, 2007). In the process of socialisation, young people confront their innate vision of the world with what is transmitted to them by the older generation and start to perceive some

incompatibilities. Young people disagree with their parents on many issues, they may challenge parental competences and decisions. Many of their parents' actions and statements annoy and irritate adolescents, which leads to tensions and conflict. Moreover, adolescence is a stage when people tend to discover new influences, new needs, and their value systems may change (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 2015). Therefore, the emergence of intergenerational conflict also stems from the distinctiveness of the value systems preferred by the adult world and by young people respectively (Gurba, 2020).

In general, we may assume that conflicts within the family are generated through the child-parent relationship and stem from the intense desire of adolescent girls and boys to achieve independence - not always properly construed - and from their changing attitude towards their parents, marked with criticism and a tendency to undermine parental authority.

The above considerations clearly indicate that a young person, making and implementing specific life plans, is exposed to situations of conflict that involve school, peers, and relationships within the family. For young people, conflict played out on these three social planes constitutes a daily, unavoidable, and natural situation.

Aggressive coping strategies in social conflict adopted by young people

Adolescence is a period in which young people experience different, often conflicting drives and need to cope with inconsistent social expectations expressed towards them. Their actions within complex circumstances are considered in a specific situational context as coping strategies used in ongoing difficult situations (Heszen-Niejodek, 2000; Wrześniewski, 1996). A strategy is how an individual reacts to any difficult situation, in response to changing conditions, in order to cope with a particular situation in a spontaneous, previously unplanned way. A strategy is thus a way of achieving a goal in a specific situation. The ability to cope with a social situation considered to be conflictual involves strategies of both destructive and constructive action (Balawajder, 2010; Borecka-Biernat, 2012; Deutsch, 2005; Donaldson, Prinstein, Danovsky, & Spirito, 2000; Frączek, 2003; Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2009; Krok, 2007; Kuśpit, 2015; Pisula, Sikora, 2008; Rostowska, 2001; Różańska-Kowal, 2004; Rubin, Pruitt, & Sung, 1994; Thomas, 1976). Destructive coping strategies in social conflict situations in the form of defensive behaviour are not aimed at resolving and overcoming the conflict situation, they do not lead to an agreement, instead escalating animosity, solely enabling the release of some of the unpleasant emotional tension felt by an individual. The goal that the individual originally pursued is replaced by another one - to feel good. Construc-

tive coping strategies, on the other hand, involve all kinds of behaviour that aims to actively influence the conflict situation, solve, and overcome it, and that are seen as adaptive. At their core, there is an effective focus on solving the problem. They include attempts to bring about change of action by making an effort to communicate with the partner in order to find a common solution to the contentious issue. They involve an assertive recognition of the goals and needs of other conflict participants, where nothing happens at the expense of the other party and no party's needs are overlooked (Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2009).

Human coping strategies are always analysed as grounded within a specific difficult situation. For adolescents, the school environment is particularly stressful, especially situations of conflict with teachers and schoolmates, with romantic partners, as well as quarrels with one or both parents, and other family members. It is therefore useful to pay attention to how adolescents deal with conflict situations that occur in school, with peers, or in the family home. Numerous studies and simple day-to-day observation suggest that adolescents have a considerable repertoire of coping strategies for difficult social situations, including social conflict situations. These include destructive and constructive strategies (Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Donaldson, Prinstein, Danovsky, & Spirito, 2000; Honess *et al.*, 1997; Frączek, 2003; Lachowska, 2010; Polak, 2010; Sikora, Pisula, 2002; Trylińska-Tekielska, 2007).

For young people, conflict situations that involve teachers and peers at school can cause strong, and rather negative, emotional arousal. Research results have demonstrated that adolescents use a variety of coping strategies to deal with school problems. Among the coping strategies reported by young people in the context of difficult school situations we can discern aggressive behaviours towards others (poking, pushing, kicking, calling names, ridiculing, mocking). Verbal aggression tends to be prevalent at school. Students may threaten to hit each other, call each other names, ridicule each other, argue. Crude verbal behaviour and inability to control emotions lead students to resolve their tensions through verbal attacks. The incidence of physical aggression is slightly lower. Fights between peers, aggressive games, bullying, forceful removal or destroying other people's property are typical scenes from the school life as experienced by children and adolescents. The data collected by Grażyna Poraj (2002), J. Różańska-Kowal (2004), A. Woźniak-Krakowian, and G. Wiczorek (2009), Grażyna Miłkowska (2012) demonstrate that school periods and breaks between them are situations particularly conducive to aggressive relieving of unpleasant experiences and stress. During school periods, the students' aggressive behaviour may consist of deliberately obstructing and disturbing teachers, *e.g.*, making noise using chairs, threatening, insulting, mocking the teacher, vulgar expressions, arrogant, rude answers, disregarding the teacher's instructions and comments, writing abusive content on the tables, drawing caricatures of teachers, destroying personal items left

on the teacher's desk, expressing bad opinions about the teacher to colleagues and parents. In situations of an increasing opposition between students and teachers, the conflict may become a rebellion manifested by buffoonery, inappropriate jokes, or open disputes in the classroom (McLaren, 1991).

During breaks between school periods, the vast majority of the student participants admitted to engaging in aggressive behaviour (Miłkowska-Olejniczak, 2005). When faced with conflicts, adolescents tend to spontaneously resort to the use of force, as they are not yet able to control their emotions sufficiently. Manifestations of physical aggression predominate (fights, poking, pushing, kicking), while common forms of verbal aggression are: insults, swearing, ridicule, and mockery. Particularly dangerous situations during breaks occur in isolated areas - in the changing room, in the school corridor, in the toilets - where students are least often supervised by a teacher. When asked about the reasons for aggression during breaks, students reported *e.g.*, settling scores and conflicts.

Conflicts in child-parent relationships are a common phenomenon during adolescence (Gurba, 2020; Jaworski, 2000). Adolescent children wish to liberate themselves from parental supervision, and through their behaviour, they demand more rights than previously. Young people resort to aggression when their sense of autonomy is under threat, which may involve restriction of freedom, orders, prohibitions, and pressures. The injunctions and restrictions imposed by parents result in expressions of anger, manifesting as arrogant replies, slamming doors, sometimes crying or direct aggression against objects (destroying objects, slamming a hand on the table, throwing objects that are close at hand) or against persons. Most often, adolescent children's aggression towards their parents manifests in speech, in ironic statements, ignoring commands and prohibitions, or in silence. In conflicts with parents, perceived as situations that threaten the child's sense of autonomy (restriction of freedom, orders, prohibitions), adolescents often show a lot of ruthlessness, aggression, brutality, indifference, and even cynicism.

The above research review focusing on the ways in which adolescents try to cope with social conflict situations demonstrates that some adolescents, when confronted with a dispute at school, in peer relationships or in the family home, tend to adopt a destructive strategy in the form of aggressive response to the conflict.

The pattern of aggressive coping adopted by parents when facing a difficulty

The formation of a particular habit of behaviour in the face of difficulties is impacted not only by what creates the conditions for the acquisition of experiences of action and their proper organisation, but also the patterns of responding to difficulties. The

family is an environment that creates natural conditions for learning how to respond to difficult situations. Through its systematic and long-lasting influence on the child, as the first place of socialisation, the family plays an extremely significant role in teaching the child patterns of social functioning. Many social behaviours and problem-solving are developed by the child through observation of parental behaviour. Daily interpersonal transactions between adult family members constitute the child's first model of social interaction. The parents' behaviour towards each other in various situations, especially during conflicts, is subject to careful observation and then modelling on the part of the child. By observing their parents, children learn how to resolve conflicts. The parents, being the first model of social behaviour, thus lay a foundation for the formation of basic models of social behaviour (Rostowska, 1993). We should also note that the pattern of behaviour provided by the parents - due to its early incidence and long-term exposure - makes the strongest impact on the child's consciousness and behaviour.

Maria Tyszkowa (1986) found that the main patterns of the child's response to difficulties can be discerned in the parents' behaviour in situations of emotional tension and in the parental attitude to the child's difficulties and failed actions. In addition, research by Teresa Rostowska (1997) confirmed the existence of a parent-child interdependence in terms of the most, and least, preferred ways for parents and children to cope with difficult situations. In the majority of the families that took part in the research, there was a complete or partial similarity in the ways of coping with difficult situations, and thus manifestation of intergenerational transmission.

The influence of parents presenting - mostly unconsciously - as role models is not always positive for the child. It is often undesirable; it interferes with the child's development and leads to the development of challenging behaviour. Numerous experiments involving modelling have focused on problems related to aggression (Wojciszke, 2007). The modelling process is significant in terms of aggression in children. Aggression inherent in the family environment is caused by the presence of an aggressive family member, especially if this person is perceived as competent, powerful, and agentive. Research has shown that most aggressive children come from families where one or both parents are aggressive. Undoubtedly, family patterns are the most impactful - aggressive children grow up within aggressive families. The child's main patterns of aggressive response to difficulties are found in the parents' behaviour in situations involving an element of threat to aspirations or achievement of goals (Bryłka, 2000; Cywińska, 2008). Most definitely, children who watch aggressive scenes involving their parents adopt an aggressive model of conflict resolution. Aggressive forms of behaviour in conflicts between children are derived from the ways in which family conflicts play out, which provide children

with a negative role model (Barlóg, 2001; Cywińska, 2005; Lewandowska, 2000; López, Olaizola, Ferrer, & Ochoa, 2006; Wolińska, 2000). In conflicted families, frequent brawls, unkind words, insulting each other, scenes of physical tackling, destroying or throwing objects and slamming doors are adopted by the child as his/her own, he/she applies them not only in his/her contacts with parents, siblings, but also in school, by behaving arrogantly towards teachers, aggressively in contacts with peers, by learning to solve conflicts by force, especially when it produces a favourable outcome (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2012). Aggressive mothers and fathers are the undisputed cause of their children's aggressiveness, with children replicating the pattern of aggressive interactions (Rostowska, 1996). Children who watch aggressive scenes involving their parents are also bound to adopt an aggressive model of conflict resolution. We should note the fact revealed in the work by Rollin Glaser (1995), indicating that people who tend to attack in conflict, use open or disguised aggressive behaviour towards other people on a daily basis.

It should be noted that the effectiveness of modelling aggressive behaviour intensifies when parents use punishment as negative reinforcement (Domaradzka, 2002; Zimbardo, & Gerrig, 2012). Parents of aggressive children tend to use physical punishment in their parenting approach. Their children perceive them as aggressive, as for the child frequent punishment provides a model of aggressive behaviour (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2012; Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey, & Brown, 1986; Dutkiewicz, 2003; Patterson, 1982; Rostowska, 1996; Wojciszke, 2007; Wolińska, 2000). Moreover, if the child is beaten by people they love, the child may start to believe that if something is important, if they care about something, they may use physical force (Piekarska, 1991; Straus, 1991). Physical violence is regarded by parents as a means of enforcing their own wishes and as a strategy for solving conflict situations (Ratzke, Sanders, Diepold, Krannich, & Cierpka, 1997). All conflicts are thus quickly and effectively resolved by means of corporal punishment. Children perceive their parents as successful in this regard, and are thus inclined to imitate their parents' aggressive behaviour. It follows that children learn aggressive behaviour by observing their parents' behaviour and its outcome. They develop a conviction that this actually constitutes an appropriate way to influence the behaviour of others, to solve interpersonal conflicts.

If children display such aggressive behaviour and it is rewarded, it can become entrenched and transformed into a habit of attacking. When the observed aggressive behaviour is shown to be effective and rewarding for the model (*i.e.*, the parent) and it seems to lead to the satisfaction of the model's needs, it is quite likely that the observer (the child) will imitate it, in the hope of experiencing similar gratification (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2012; Ostrowska, 2008; Schaffer, 2006; Wojciszke, 2007). This means that when the child sees that the model receives specific rewards for his or her

aggressive behaviour - for example, the model gets what he or she wants, there are no (or few) consequences and there is no clear disapproval from the parents - this encourages the child to replicate similar behaviour. As a result, aggression is perpetuated as an effective way of behaving. The child, observing the reliable outcome of aggression, develops the belief that it constitutes a guaranteed way of obtaining some kind of gratification, of solving problems or an available means of achieving goals. The child may incorporate this belief into the context of social interactions, which is reflected in his, or her, own aggressive behaviour. At the same time, the observed aggression, when it leads to the desired goal, impacts the child's personality, generating the view that this is the way things work and that one is either a conqueror, with the conquest facilitated by aggression, or a victim. Therefore, the child forms not only habits of aggressive behaviour, but also beliefs whereby aggression is acceptable. This may trigger a natural process of learning aggression as a way of solving conflict situations and removing a state of frustration. Thus, the transmission of socially conditioned aggressive behaviour takes place when the child adopts aggressive forms of behaviour from within the family environment and considers them to be effective ways of solving problems, achieving goals, or dealing with conflict.

Based on the above, the family is the locus of social learning of ways to respond to difficult situations that contain an element of threat to the aspirations or the achievement of goals – *i.e.*, learning through modelling. Behaviour presented by a significant other, most often the parent, is more easily developed by the observing adolescent child, especially when the model is competent (or so perceived) in terms of that particular action, there is a system of reinforcements at the model's disposal and family members approve of the outcome. There are grounds to believe that an adolescent's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations is a learned form of behaviour stemming from observation and frequent contact with persons displaying such behaviour, *i.e.*, through influence of models, usually parents.

Research question and hypothesis

The present research aimed to answer the following research question:

- Is there, and if so, what is the relationship between the aggressive strategy used by adolescents in situations of social conflict and the presented model of aggressive coping strategies used by their parents (one or both) in such situations?

Thus formulated, the research question enables a following hypothesis, to be verified through an analysis of empirical data:

H1. The contact of adolescent children with the model of aggressive coping strategies presented by their parents (one or both) in social conflict situations promotes learning aggressive coping strategies in adolescent children.

Research method

Participants and Procedure

The research participants consisted of a group of 468 girls and 425 boys aged 13-15 years. A total of 893 people took part in the study. The respondents were students of the first, second, and third grades of junior high school. Schools were selected randomly, but not all the originally selected schools agreed to participate in the project, and additional schools were approached and included in this research. Research activities were mostly carried out during homeroom periods with the main class teacher. The research involved groups of students, participating on a voluntary basis. In written comments, students used pseudonyms or initials. Before the study, participants were given detailed instructions. Researchers presented tools for measuring individual variables, but did so in a general way, to avoid social desirability bias. Young people were provided with an opportunity to ask questions during research, in case they found some questions incomprehensible or ambiguous.

The primary factor in the selection of student participants was their age. The impact of age on the choice of coping strategies in social conflict situations was analysed in the group of 13- to 15-year-olds (within a sub-period of early adolescence). Adolescence is an important stage in everyone's life, it is considered to be a transition between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence is a period when adolescent's behaviour presents instability, a period characterised by conflict with the surrounding environment, with oneself, and often accompanied by a sense of being misunderstood (Obuchowska, 1996). It is also referred to as a period of tumultuous rebellion. Many biological, psychological, mental, motivational, and social changes take place at this time, often making it difficult for young people to adapt their behaviour to new situations, tasks, and social roles (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 2003). Due to the critical appraisal of the surrounding reality and increased formation of self-image, supremacy of the emotional sphere over other areas of mental life, as well as new forms of social contacts and directness in behaviour, adolescents aged 13-15 seem to be valid research subjects for studies focusing on the development of aggressive coping strategies in situations of strong emotional tension, such as social conflict.

Measures

In this research we used the following methods:

A questionnaire focusing on the coping strategies adopted by young people in social conflict situations (KSMS) Danuta Borecka-Biernat (2012) used to explore the coping strategies in social conflict situations presented by adolescents. The form includes descriptions of 33 social conflict situations. For each situation, the researchers provide four different kinds of behaviour used as responses to social conflict – the first one refers to aggressive coping (“A”), the second one to evasive coping (“E”), the third one to submissive coping (“S”) and the fourth one to task-based (constructive) coping in social conflict situations (“T”). After recalling a real-life situation similar to the one being described, or imagining it, the subject’s task was to select a behaviour from the four above, which would be closest to what they would do in a given situation. Scores were obtained for each scale separately, by adding up the marked behaviours in the 33 situations belonging to the scale. As the scales consist of 33 items, respondents can score from 0 to 33 points on each of them. For the purposes of this research, we used the Aggressive Coping Scale (“A”) for adolescents in situations of social conflict. The questionnaire proved to be reliable. Cronbach’s internal consistency coefficients α are satisfactorily high for the scale of aggressive coping “A” (0.73), submissive coping “S” (0.73) and task-based coping in situations of social conflict “T” (0.73). The reliability of the evasive coping scale “E” (0.694) is below the value of 0.70 but can nevertheless be considered satisfactory for the present research purposes. The questionnaire also presents a satisfactory level of diagnostic accuracy and the way in which answers are provided prevents social desirability bias. The norms were based on the results from 1877 students, including 975 girls and 902 boys aged 13-15, from first, second, and third grades of junior high schools, located across all sixteen provinces in Poland, where we conducted our research in 2009-2012.

The questionnaire focusing on the coping strategies in social conflict situations presented by parents (SRwSK) Danuta Borecka-Biernat’s (2013) consists of two versions: “My mother” and “My father”. It is designed to study the coping strategies of parents in social conflict situations, whereby these behaviours are explored as perceived by their growing children. The tool includes descriptions of 16 social conflict situations in the “My mother” version and the same number of descriptions in the “My father” version. Four behaviours expressing the parents’ coping in social conflict situations as perceived by their child are given for each situation - the first refers to aggressive coping (A), the second to evasive coping (E), the third to submissive coping (S), and the fourth to task-based coping in social conflict situations (T). Each of the four possible responses was assigned a numerical value from 0 to 1. The sum of the scores was a numerical index indicating the degree of intensity

of each strategy. The higher the numerical value of the index, the more the child perceives his or her parents as using a particular strategy. For the purposes of our study, we used the Aggressive Coping Scale ('A') of parents in situations of social conflict. The questionnaire presents satisfactory reliability coefficients in terms of internal consistency (Cronbach's α). The internal consistency coefficients are high for the mother's (M), and father's (F), versions for both the scale of parents' aggressive coping in social conflict situations as perceived by the child "A" (M:0.71; F:0.71) and the scale of parents' task-based coping in social conflict situations as perceived by the child "T" (M:0.71; F:0.70). The reliability of the scale of evasive parental coping in social conflict situations as perceived by the child "E" (M:0.66; F:0.66) and the scale of submissive parental coping in situations of social conflict as perceived by the child "S" (M:0.65; F:0.65) is just below the value of 0.70. The diagnostic accuracy of the method was confirmed by comparing the results obtained from adolescents in the SRwSK Questionnaire in the versions "My mother", and "My father", with the results obtained from their parents in other questionnaires assessing similar variables (Conflict Resolution Style Questionnaire developed by T. Wach, Conflict Behaviour Style Test by K. Balawajder). Sten scale scores norms were developed using a sample of 811 students (414 girls, 397 boys) aged 13-15 years, from first, second, and third grades of junior high schools in Wrocław and the surrounding towns, having both parents.

Research results analysis

The goal of the analysis is to determine whether the mother's, and father's, aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations, as perceived by adolescents, determines the adolescents' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. The two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with the median divided into high ($me >$) and low ($me \leq$) values.

Table 1 includes the two-factor analysis of variance related to the assessment of the relationship of adolescents' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations to the mother's aggressive coping strategy and the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations.

Table 1

A two-way interaction analysis of the mother's (A M) aggressive coping strategy and the father's (A FAT) aggressive coping strategy in a social conflict situation and the adolescent's (A Og.) aggressive coping strategy in a social conflict situation.

Parental aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A)		Father (F)		STATISTICS	
		me≤	me>	Aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A)	
				Mother (M)	Father (F)
Mother (M)	me≤	2.99 n=343	4.52 n=233	F=98.18 p=0.0000001	F=31.70 p=0.0000001
	me>	5.85 n=105	7.80 n=190	Interaction between A M, A F, and A Og F=0.46; p=0.50	
Total group		4.80 n=871			

Source: Author's own research.

The results obtained for adolescents' aggressive coping strategies, on the basis of the two-way analysis of variance, do not indicate the existence of an interaction for the variables: mother's aggressive coping in a conflict situation and father's aggressive coping in social conflict versus adolescents' aggressive coping strategy in a social conflict situation, with the mean score for adolescents' aggressive coping strategies in a social conflict situation having the highest value when there is a high level of mother's aggressive coping strategy and a high level of father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. This means that a high value of mothers' aggressive coping strategies and a high value of fathers' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations results in an increase in adolescents' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations. The result analysis also revealed that the mother's aggressive coping strategy and the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations influences the adolescents' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations, although they are independent factors. It follows that the mother's (father's) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations influences the adolescent's aggressive coping strategy presenting in a social conflict situation and is, at the same time, an independent factor in relation to the father's (mother's) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. Thus, adolescents with a high level of aggressive coping strategy used in social conflict situations, regardless of whether or not their fathers (mothers) cope aggressively with social conflict situations, have mothers (fathers) who use an aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations.

Table 2 shows the two-way analysis of variance for assessing the relationship of girls' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations to mothers' and fathers' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations.

Table 2

Two-way interaction analysis of mother's (A M) and father's (A F) aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations and girls' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations (A G).

Parental aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A)		Father (F)		STATISTICS	
		me≤	me>	Aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A)	
				Mother (M)	Father (F)
Mother (M)	me≤	2.63 n=177	3.74 n=117	F=65.21 p<0.0000001	F=17.12 p<0.00004
	me>	5.39 n=62	7.73 n=100	Interaction between A M, A F, and A G F=2.18; p<0.14	
Total group		4.41 n= 456			

Source: Author's own research.

The two-way analysis of variance for the girls' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations, against the level of the mother's and father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations indicates that there is no statistically significant interaction between the variables. However, a relationship can be observed between the girls' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations and the mother's aggressive coping strategy and, separately, the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict, with the highest mean value for the aggressive strategy used by the girls in social conflict occurring at high levels of the mother's aggressive coping strategy and high levels of the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. The mother's (father's) aggressive coping strategy influences the girls' aggressive coping strategy presenting in a social conflict situation and is, at the same time, an independent factor in relation to the father's (mother's) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. Thus, both the mother's aggressive coping strategy and the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations influence the girls' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations, although they are independent factors. These results indicate that girls with high levels of aggressive coping strategy used in social conflict situations, regardless of whether or not their fathers (mothers) cope aggressively in social conflict situations,

have mothers (fathers) who use aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations.

Further analysis of research results related to the assessment of the relationship of the coefficients of the boys' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations to the mothers' and fathers' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations (cf. Table 3).

Table 3

A two-way interaction analysis of mother's aggressive coping strategy (A M) and father's aggressive coping strategy (A F) in social conflict situations and boys' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A B).

Parental aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A)		Father (F)		STATISTICS	
		me \leq	me $>$	Aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations (A)	
				Mother (M)	Father (F)
Mother (M)	me \leq	3.37 n=166	5.31 n=116	F=38.62 p<0.0000001	F=12.94 p<0.0004
	me $>$	6.51 n=43	7.88 n=90	Interaction between A M, A F, and A B F=0.39; p<0.54	
Total group		5.22 n=415			

Source: Author's own research.

The two-way analysis of variance for the boys' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations against the variables – mother's aggressive coping strategy, and father's aggressive coping strategy, in social conflict situations - did not yield a statistical interaction between the variables. However, there is clearly a relationship between the boys' aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations and the mother's aggressive coping strategy and, separately, the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. The mother's (father's) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations influences the boys' aggressive coping strategy presenting in a social conflict situation and is at the same time an independent factor in relation to the father's (mother's) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. On this basis, it can be concluded that boys with high levels of aggressive coping strategies used in social conflict situations, regardless of whether or not the fathers (mothers) cope aggressively in situations of social conflict, have mothers (fathers) who use aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations. The highest mean value of the boys' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations can be ob-

served with a high level of the mother's aggressive coping strategies and a high level of the father's aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations. This suggests that a high value of the mother's aggressive coping strategy and a high value of the father's aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations results in an increase in boys' aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations.

In short, the results do not demonstrate the existence of an interaction for the variables: mother's aggressive coping in social conflict situations and father's aggressive coping in social conflict situations versus adolescents' (girls and/or boys) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. At the same time, we have observed a relationship between the aggressive coping strategy of adolescents (girls and/or boys) in social conflict situations and the aggressive coping strategy of the mother (father) in social conflict situations; however, the value of the father's (mother's) aggressive strategy in social conflict situations alone, did not directly influence the level of the girls' and/or boys' aggressive strategy in social conflict situations. The results allow us to conclude that a high level of the mother's (father's) aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations, regardless of whether or not the father (mother) presents aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations, results in an increase in the value of aggressive coping strategies for girls and/or boys. The mean score for adolescents' (girls and/or boys) aggressive coping strategies in social conflict situations has the highest value when there is a high level of mother's aggressive coping strategy, and a high level of father's aggressive coping strategy, in social conflict situations. The results presented in this study support hypothesis H1.

Conclusion

The parents' behaviour towards each other in different situations, especially during conflicts, is subject to close observation and subsequent emulation by the child. Our data analysis demonstrated that perception of the mother and father as using aggression-based strategies in situations where it is difficult to pursue a goal, contribute to the modelling of a strategy involving aggressive behaviour in social conflict situations in girls and boys (Bryłka, 2000; Rostowska, 1996; Van Lissa, Hawk, & Meeus, 2017; Wolińska, 2000). Parents provide their adolescent children with aggressive patterns of response to conflict situations. Daughters and sons learn these patterns by observing their mothers' and fathers' behaviour when their own aspirations are threatened. This tendency seems consistent with the statement that aggressive children come from aggressive families (Bandura, 1973; Wolińska, 2000). The impact of such models depends on the observed outcomes of such behaviour. If the model's aggressive behaviour is rewarded, there is an increase in aggression in the observer's behaviour

(Wojciszke, 2000). By subjecting their children to violence, parents are rewarded for their aggressive behaviour by achieving a direct goal - their child's obedience. Aggression is considered by parents to be an effective way of coping with difficulties and a means of achieving their own objectives at all costs (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2012). This seems to suggest that adolescents adopt aggressive forms of behaviour from the family environment and see them as effective ways of solving problems, achieving goals, or dealing with conflict situations (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2012; Filip, 2010; Obuchowska, 1990; Patterson, 1986; Rostowska, 1996; Urban, 2005; Wojciszke, 2007). Thus, the belief that aggression is an effective way of coping with difficulties, that one can pursue one's goals at all costs, may be formed from the birth onwards (Obuchowska, 2001).

The present research demonstrated that under modelling conditions, a specific characteristic of the model may facilitate identification – *i.e.*, gender. Thus, the emergence of an aggressive strategy in girls (boys) is influenced by the mother (father) figure. The children identify with their mother (father) and most often there is a specific identification with the aggressor and copying of his/her behaviour patterns. We should also note another preference having an impact on aggressive coping strategies adopted by girls (boys) in adolescence who may to be influenced by the parent of the opposite sex. We may refer here to the principles of the sociocultural theory of identification, stating that the influence on the socialisation of girls and boys is exerted by the personality traits of the parent with whom the children identify, which may not require gender conformity of the model and the person identifying with them (Rychlak, Legerski, 1967).

The results reported here confirmed the similarity of coping strategies in social conflict situations in parents and their adolescent child. The modelling process may play an important role in the genesis of aggressive coping in social conflict situations. Aggression may be recognised by parents as a means of pursuing their own wishes and as a strategy for resolving conflict situations (Ratzke, Sanders, Diepold, Kranich, & Cierpka, 1997). The adolescent child learns an aggressive way of coping in social conflict situations, among other things, by observing and modelling parents who manifest this way of coping in social conflict situations and through frequent contact with them, *i.e.*, through social learning. Aggressive coping strategies used by parents in coping with conflict situations, as observed by their children, promotes the emergence of an aggressive coping strategy in conflict situations in adolescent children (Cywińska, 2005; Filip, 2010).

In conclusion: our research has demonstrated that aggressive coping in social conflict situations adopted by adolescents is socially determined, and one of its sources is the influence of parents (models), also using an aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations. It is thus reasonable to state that the family home teaches young people to apply an aggressive coping strategy in social conflict situations.

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