

FULFILLMENT OF SELECTED FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY AND ADOLESCENTS' STYLES OF COPING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

LUKASZ WIRKUS

Uniwersytet Gdański

ANNA BABICKA-WIRKUS

Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku

Introduction

Family is one of the highest values in human life. For several years it has occupied first place in the axiological system of the vast majority of Polish people (CBOS, 2013, p. 2). As a basic unit of society, it is sensitive to all social changes. However, the processes taking place in this unit are also reflected in the supraindividual sphere, which makes this category particularly important in pedagogical and sociological reflection.

The study of the Public Opinion Research Centre¹ (CBOS, 2013, 2012) indicates that it is common for Polish people to think that one needs family in order to be truly happy. In 2013, more than a half of the people surveyed (55 per cent) perceived marriage with children as the most suitable family model, whereas more than a quarter (29 per cent) wanted to

live in an extended family. Almost all Polish adults wished to have children, and every fifth Pole (10 per cent) had plans to start their own family in the coming years. Moreover, the launch of the 'Family 500+'² program has positively verified the perception of the government's policy towards family because, in the earlier CBOS studies (conducted in the years 1996–2013), the actions of the state in relation to family were assessed as sufficient or insufficient (CBOS, 2017).

The changes occurring in Polish families are still a subject of interest of the scientific community which is trying to determine the size and directions of the transitions taking place in the family structure. Researchers are

¹ The Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) established in 1982, is a publicly funded independent research centre. It is one of the largest and most renowned public opinion research institutes in Poland.

² In April 2016, the Polish government launched the programme "Family 500+" (Rodzina 500+) to boost birth-rates and reduce child poverty by improving living conditions of large families. The programme covers an estimated 55 per cent of all children in Poland under the age of 18. Data show that more than 3.82 million children up to the age of 18 were covered by the programme by the end of February 2017. The initial results suggest that the programme has positive effect on the number of births.

trying to answer the question: 'Is the family, as an institution, still needed?' and are presenting a new proposal, saying that it is a group 'satisfying the need of closeness and based on the emotional relations of the individuals that comprise it' (Sikorska, 2012, p. 28). Mirosław Maroda and Anna Giza-Poleszczuk suggest that it is impossible to say if the family survives and how it will function in the future based on the comparison of divorce rates and the analysis of individual examples and experiences. The authors propose placing the family in the context of 'the functioning of the entire social system' (Maroda, Giza-Poleszczuk, 2004, p. 216) and the conditions relating to it. The available statistical analyses (Wirkus, 2018, pp. 778–821) and test reports (Jedynak, 2015, pp. 13–34) show that there are crisis situations in Polish families caused by various circumstances. This situation is a global trend with which families around the world have to face (Rosino, 2016; Moloney, 1994). However, for proper physical and emotional development, every child needs a family that will provide it with safety and love, as well as fulfill its needs (Taranowicz, Grotowska, 2015).

The latest CBOS study shows some interesting trends in the changes of Polish youth's attitudes concerning, among other things, the reduction of the peer group role in the life of young people and the growing importance of parents as their role models. Data shows that parents are more frequently mentioned as the ones whose appreciation young people seek. CBOS studies also show new trends in youth's perception of their parents' expectations and requirements towards them. Parents' attitude changes observed in a few CBOS studies are consistent with the trends visible in the studies conducted on representative samples of adult Poles. In 2013, adolescents reported that they experience stress at school more often than they experience satisfaction. However, in 2016, the results indicate a change of this tendency in the way that young people feel appreciated more often (CBOS, 2016, pp. 5–49). Studies so far have confirmed that discourag-

ing situations experienced in childhood can determine the level of school achievements, health and other aspects of psychosocial development (cf. Uhlenberg, Mueller, 2006).

The following article presents young people's ways of coping with difficult situations. This issue is examined in the context of the fulfillment of selected functions by the family, especially sociological and psychosocial functions such as socialization-education function and expressive-emotional function (Tyszka, 2003, pp. 24–25).

Functions of the family, crisis in the family

A literature review on the topic of the family reveals a wide variety of definitions relating to this concept as well as many function typologies of this basic unit of social life (Price, Bush, Price, 2017; Berger, 2017; Seltzer et al. 2005; Grudniwski, 2000; Dyczewski, 1994). Our study adopts the function typology developed by Zbigniew Tyszka, one of the most prominent Polish experts on the sociology of the family. He identified four main functions of the family: biopsychological, economic, social control and sociopsychological, which comprise groups of more detailed functions. We have chosen this typology because we found it capacious and still valid. The article focuses only on two functions falling within the group of sociopsychological functions, namely the socialization-education function and the expressive-emotional function, which are closely linked (Tyszka, 1991, p. 70).

The socialization-education function is about introducing the child to a typical culture of a given society. It takes place through a number of intended and planned practices which can be described as intra-family upbringing. Apart from these mechanisms that shape a socialized individual, the family influences the child through spontaneous practices such as unintended quarrels of the parents. 'Socialization of the offspring includes transferring knowledge of the natural and social world, transferring instrumental skills [...], introducing to culture [...], implementing a spe-

cific system of values which, in turn, stimulates motivation, behavior and action, sets out individual and social goals, suggests the means to achieve them' (Tyszka, 1991, p. 65).

The expressive-emotional function meets one's most essential emotional needs as well as the need to express one's personality. According to Tyszka, the fulfillment of this function cannot be excluded beyond the family, among friends. However, it is in the family where one gets a total intimate psychological response (Tyszka, 1991, p. 68). The family also provides support and safety, which is especially important for adolescents.

Disorganization of the family life and lack of parents' support determine family malfunctions, weaken the ability to cope with difficult situations, and can cause behavioral disorders and psychosomatic symptoms (Koprowicz, 2015, p. 121). According to Plopa, "[...] marital stress and conflict can have a negative impact on the quality of the whole family system, including the presented models of parent-child interaction" (Plopa, 2007, p. 249). Dobkowska (1986) emphasizes that the conflict between the parents impacts their relations with the child and results in family disintegration. A child who doesn't get adequate emotional support may experience a feeling of overload (Czerederecka, 2010; Hines, 1997) which often affects the eldest of the siblings. On the other hand, teenagers who observe positive interactions between their divorced parents may go through their anger phase and adapt to the new situation more quickly (Beisert, 2008). People who experienced their parents' divorce during childhood have difficulties undergoing a proper psychosexual development and building satisfying relationships, as well as have a disrupted image of the family, which manifests itself through ill-considered decisions of starting a relationship, lack of commitment in maintaining it, or emotional distancing conditioned by fear and inadequate perception of marriage (Czerederecka, 2010). Such individuals have an ambivalent attitude towards the family – they declare strong at-

tachment to it or they experience fear resulting from any occurring crisis (Piotrowska, 2012). Alicja Czerederecka (2010) also mentions other consequences, for example, that divorced parents present a number of improper attitudes in the sphere of their child's cognitive stimulation, negatively impact the child's relation with the other parent, and instrumentally exploit the sense of injustice. Błażek emphasizes that 'inconsistence in the system of parental interactions forces the child to develop different strategies in their relations with their mother and father, and worsens the child's emotional functioning' (Błażek, 2015, p. 351). It is likely relevant in choosing the style of coping with difficult life situations. It is dangerous in a way that young adults who experienced their parents' divorce in childhood may copy their parents' negative experiences and traumatic choices in coping with relationship crisis situations in the family (Błażek, p. 347).

It is worth stating that forming a new family is sometimes particularly difficult (Berger, 2017) for all of its members because they are in a so-called formative period (Day, 2010, p. 60). During this stage, the newly formed family becomes more complex and differentiated from its former members and functioning. It is a period of building new means of understanding each other and living together (Day, 2010), which is linked to a family crisis (Demo, Fine, 2017). Its correct resolution leads to a proper constitution of the new family, whereas inability to deal with this situation causes dysfunctions at different levels of the family life which also impact the lives of their members, especially the children.

In his concept of psychosocial development, Erik Erikson puts a lot of emphasis on adolescence (period between the age of 13 and 22), which is particularly difficult because this is when the transition from childhood to adulthood takes place. What happens at this stage is of great importance for one's adult personality (Hall, Lindzey, 1998, p. 91). In Erikson's concept, the phase of early adulthood ends around the age of 35. Today, it is difficult to determine its boundaries, which results in placing it be-

tween the ages of 20 and 40 (Bee, 2004, p. 402). Helen Bee outlines the significance of this period as follows: "In early adulthood, each of us assumes a position in the society. For most of us it means adopting, learning and playing three main roles of the adult life: a worker, a spouse and a parent" (Bee, 2004, p. 433). The multifaceted process of entering adulthood requires young people to make a lot of important decisions concerning various spheres of life (Heinz, 2009, p. 7). Additionally, present and past relations with their parents as well as their parental attitudes and competencies, which may determine their styles of coping with difficult situations, are also relevant.

The literature distinguishes two categories of interpreting the concept of coping style or related terms. The first one includes definitions which consider style a single dimension, disposition or characteristic of an individual, e.g. definitions of Suzanne M. Miller and Heinz Walter Krohne (Heszen-Niejodek, 1996, pp. 12–43). The second category includes definitions which present style as specific constellations of dispositions or characteristics of an individual. Such a way of seeing style is characteristic to the concept of Norman S. Endler and James D.A. Parker. One's behavior in a certain situation is a result of a mutual interaction between this situation and the preferred style of coping with it, in a conscious manner. Lazarus (1993, pp. 234–247) gives two ways of coping – the first one is task-oriented, focused on solving the problem, while the other one is focused on reducing emotional tension. James Parker and Norman Endler (Parker, Endler, 1992, pp. 321–344) considered these proposals insufficient and added a third form of behaving in stressful situations, that is avoidance. Thus, they distinguished the following:

- 1) task-oriented style – involves taking actions aimed at solving the problem or changing the existing stressful situation by using cognitive processes,
- 2) emotion-oriented style – focuses on one's own emotional experiences, such as anger,

guilt, tension, and is characteristic to people who prefer wishful thinking and fantasizing instead of effective and rational actions aimed at eliminating or minimizing the stressor; the main goal of the undertaken measures is to reduce emotional tension resulting from the stressful situation; not taking any real measures to solve the stressful situation may often lead to unintended consequences, causing further increase of mental stress and negative emotions,

- 3) avoidance-oriented style – involves rejecting thoughts about the main problem, preventing oneself from living through it or engaging in resolving the stressful situation; in a way, one escapes from the problem by performing substitutive activities, such as going shopping, cleaning, sleeping, watching television, or seeking social contact.

Irena Heszen-Niejodek (1996, p. 19) suggests defining a coping style as 'a set of strategies and ways of coping that is at the disposal of and characteristic to the individual, part of which is activated in the process of coping with a specific stressful situation'.

For research purposes, we assumed that difficult situations are" [...] such situations in which there is a discrepancy between one's needs and tasks, and the possibility to satisfy these needs or fulfill these tasks" (Tomaszewski, 1984, p. 134). The author identifies a few types of difficult situations, e.g. overwhelming tasks, complex tasks of variable and unclear structure in varying conditions, obstacles, conflicts, pressure. However, according to Tomaszewski, the most important ones are situations of deprivation, overload, emergency and difficulty (Tomaszewski, 1963, pp. 120–135).

Methods

The study: '*The functioning of youth living in reconstructed families. Pedagogical, psychological and sociological perspective*' was conducted in years 2015–2017. The following article presents only a fragment of this research concerning the ways of coping with difficult

situations by young people brought up in complete and broken (through divorce) families.

The aim of this work was to analyze the link between the psychosocial functioning of young people from complete and broken families, and their styles of dealing with difficult situations. This study was also focused on determining whether men and women differ in terms of those styles, and whether their age is of any importance to their style of coping with problems.

On the basis of respective literature, it can be concluded that divorce contributes to a worsening of parents' and children's psychophysical state. Therefore, the following research questions were formulated:

- Which style of coping with difficult situations do adolescents and young adults from complete and broken families display?
- How does the sex determine the choice of the style of dealing with problems?
- Is there a link between the age of adolescents and young adults and the styles of coping with difficult situations displayed by them?
- What is the relationship between the preferred style of coping with difficult situations and the use of punishment and rewards in the upbringing?

From the rich repertoire of functions that the family has, only the functions within the frame of the socialization-education activity and the expressive-emotional activity were taken into consideration because they play a key role in the social and individual development of adolescents. Their proper fulfillment fosters adequate development of self-esteem and the ability of coping with problems. Any dysfunction at these levels of family activity can lead to irreversible consequences for the one's psychosocial development (Łuczak, 2008). Family situation also reflects in the preferred style of dealing with difficult situations.

Research tools

In order to collect empirical material, the authors used a self-designed survey questionnaire 'The quality of fulfilling social-

ization-education function and emotional-expressive function in the family' and *Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations* questionnaire created by Endler and Parker (Polish adaptation by Piotr Szczepaniak, Jan Strelau, Kazimierz Wrześniewski) (Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski, Szczepaniak, 2005). The survey questionnaire consisted of 41 questions, two of which were sociodemographic questions³. The questionnaire for diagnosing the level of performance of the aforementioned functions by the respondents' families included closed-ended, open-ended and semi-open-ended questions. Due to its limited length, the article presents an analysis of the results that are most significant to the discussed issue.

The authors of the Polish version of the CISS questionnaire claim that 'the state of stress and the state of coping with stress are inseparable phenomena'. Research shows that effective coping through a balanced choice of requirements and capabilities causes stress to reduce, whereas ineffective coping in stressful situations leads to progression in one's level of stress. Research based on understanding coping as a style (characteristic) serves the purpose of identifying individuals whose resources in terms of the ability to deal with stressful situations are inadequate (Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski, Szczepaniak, 2005, pp. 8–15). CISS questionnaire is a tool used in Poland mostly for diagnosing the ways of coping with difficult situations (Heszen, 2013; Jabłońska, 2015).

CISS is characterized by great accuracy and reliability in terms of diagnosing the styles of coping with stress. The questionnaire consists of 48 simple statements relating to various behaviors which people display in stressful situations. Next to each

³ There were few sociodemographic questions because in other tools used in the study entitled 'Functioning of youth living in reconstructed families. Pedagogical, psychological and sociological perspective', there were questions regarding demographics. From the point of view of this paper, the most important variables are sex and age, thus only they were taken into consideration in the analysis.

statement, there are numbers from 1 to 5 which the respondents use to determine the frequency of undertaking certain actions in difficult situations. CISS is created by three scales consisting of 16 statements, and the respondents can get 16–80 points in each of them (Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski, Szczepaniak, 2005, p. 16).

The *task-oriented style* scale (TOS) shows the way of dealing with stressful situations on the basis of the performance of tasks. High scores obtained in this scale show that the respondent aims at cognitively changing their situation or at least at trying to do so.

The *emotion-oriented style* scale (EOS) determines the way of resolving difficult situations on the basis of focusing on one's own emotional experiences. Wishful thinking and fantasizing aimed at reducing emotional tension resulting from a stressful situation are typical here. Concentrating on this style can often give opposite effects, namely it can cause an increase of the emotional tension.

The *avoidance-oriented style* scale (AOS) characterizes people who try to deal with difficult situations by withdrawing from thinking about them, experiencing them, and living through them. This style can take two forms: *engaging in substitutive activities* (ESA) or *seeking social contact* (SSC), which are two subscales of the AOS scale. The ESA subscale consists of 8 statements and the respondents can obtain 8–40 points, whereas the SSC scale consists of 5 statements and gives a score of 5–25 points.

The interpretation of the results obtained by the respondents in each scale and subscale depends on their age. In this study, the respondents were between 16 and 24 years old.

Statistical calculations were made with the use of the SPSS program. In order to determine the significance of the differences between the groups, mainly methods of statistical analysis, such as Kruskal-Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U test, were used. Chi-squared test was also used in the analysis. The relation between the variables was estab-

lished on the basis of Pearson correlation coefficients. The materiality level was $p = 0.05$. For the materiality level lower than 0.05 it was assumed that the difference between the groups or variables was significant.

Characteristic of the respondents

The investigated group consisted of 233 people studying at upper-secondary schools and higher education institutions in Słupsk. As already mentioned, the respondents represented the age range of 16–24 years old. For the purpose of analyses, the respondents were divided into two age groups: those of 16–18 years of age, which matches the legally defined maximum age for being a child, and those of 19–24 years of age, that is the age of young adulthood⁴. The first age group constituted 24.7% of the respondents, whereas the second group – 75.3%.

Differentiation of the group by sex is as follows: 72% of the respondents are women, 28% of them are men. Data presented in Figure 1 shows that men were dominant in the younger age group, whereas women dominated in the older age group.

A significant variable characterizing the respondents is the type of the family they grew up in. The largest group were people brought up in complete families (73%). Every third respondent was brought up in a broken family.

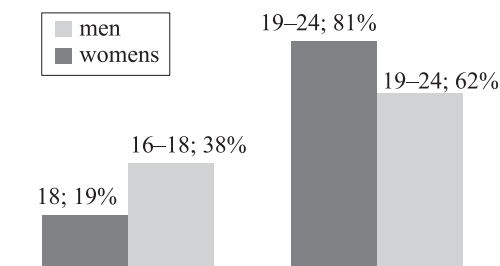


Figure 1. Age groups according to the respondents' sex
Source: own research.

⁴ The article uses the words 'respondents', 'participants', 'adolescents' and 'young adults' interchangeably.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the study participants considering the three variables discussed above. Data analysis shows that in both age groups most men and women were brought up in complete families. However, almost twice as many women than men in the younger age group came from broken families. The situation is slightly different in the older age group where 7% more men than women were brought up in broken families.

Analysis of study results

The analysis of the study results starts with presenting the obtained data in the context of the respondents' family situation. Atmosphere in the family is an important issue. Table 2 presents how this variable is distributed, considering the type of family the respondents grew up in.

There is a correlation between the type of family the respondents grew up in and the home atmosphere ($\chi^2 = 10.834$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.04$). The respondents that grew up in broken families report almost 2.5 times more often than the respondents from complete families that their family home was characterized by the atmosphere of arguments, misunderstandings, chaos. In most cases, the atmosphere in complete families was assessed as happy, warm and cheerful. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that in both types of families there is a positive or a negative emotional charge. The respondents from both groups reported sadness, depression and emotional coldness in their family homes least often. Such situation may be a moderator for using the emotion-oriented style of coping with problems by the respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of the study participants considering sex, age and type of family

age categories			type of family		overall	
			complete	broken		
16–18	sex	woman	number	22	9	31
			%	71,0%	29,0%	100,0%
		man	number	19	4	23
			%	82,6%	17,4%	100,0%
	overall		number	41	14	55
			%	74,5%	25,5%	100,0%
19–24	sex	woman	number	97	32	129
			%	75,2%	24,8%	100,0%
		man	number	26	12	38
			%	68,4%	31,6%	100,0%
	overall		number	123	44	167
			%	73,7%	26,3%	100,0%
Total	sex	woman	number	119	41	160
			%	74,4%	25,6%	100,0%
		man	number	45	16	61
			%	73,8%	26,2%	100,0%
	overall		number	164	58	222*
			%	73,9%	26,1%	100,0%

*One of the respondents did not specify their sex.

Source: own research.

Next significant variable shaping the family atmosphere is the appreciation that the parents show to their children. Table 3 shows the distribution of this variable in the context of the type of family.

There is a correlation between these variables ($\chi^2 = 14.256$, $df = 2$, $p = .001$). Young adults from broken families experience lack of appreciation from their parents ten times more often than those from complete families. In the case of complete families, almost all children were appreciated due to their achievements, actions or behaviors.

The situation is similar in the analysis of the 'acceptance and understanding' variable ($\chi^2 = 16.196$, $df = 2$, $p = .000$). In this case, the respondents from complete families experienced understanding and acceptance from their parents more frequently than their peers from broken families. Less than one per

cent of the participants from complete families did not experience any parental approval.

The data presented above shows that the respondents from complete families enjoy more positive home atmosphere, which is a result of their parents' attitude towards them. In such nurturing environment, the children are shown greater respect, approval and understanding than the ones from broken families. The issue of punishment and reward as a commonly used pedagogical measure is also interesting in this context. Figure 2 shows which person from the family most frequently rewarded the child.

In the vast majority of cases, biological parents are the ones who reward the child. The situation is not dependent on the type of the respondent's family. The results are only slightly different in the case of punishing for improper behaviors (Figure 3).

Table 2. Type of family and its atmosphere

type of family	atmosphere			total
	happy, warm, cheerful	sad, depressing, emotionally cold	argumentsative, misunderstanding, chaotic	
complete	83,5%	3%	13,4%	100%
broken	63,8%	3,4%	32,8%	100%

Source: own research.

Table 3. Parents' appreciation of their children in complete and broken families

type of family	appreciation of children			total
	rather yes	sometimes	rather no	
complete	82,2%	16,6%	1,2%	100%
broken	79,3%	8,6%	12,1%	100%

Source: own research.

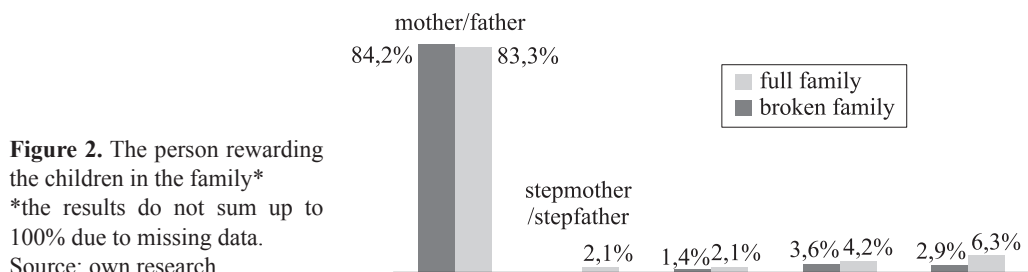


Figure 2. The person rewarding the children in the family*
*the results do not sum up to 100% due to missing data.
Source: own research.

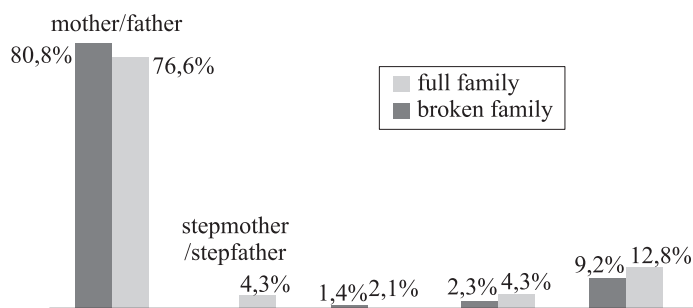


Figure 3. The person punishing the children in the family*
* the results do not sum up to 100% due to missing data.
Source: own research.

Biological parents prove to be the ones making the decision. There is a slight decrease of 6% in the number of biological parents punishing their children in broken families compared to the parents that reward their children. In addition, more respondents declared that there was no one in their family who would punish them in comparison to the respondents that claimed that there was no one who would reward them. The frequency of answering „no one” among the respondents from complete families was three times higher in this matter, whereas in the case of the participants from broken families, it was two times higher.

The following table shows data concerning the frequency of punishments in complete and broken families.

Based on the data presented in Table 4, a trend of less frequent punishments can be observed in complete families in comparison to broken families. Therefore, the frequency of punishments was slightly higher in broken families than in complete ones. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a trend of more frequent punishments in broken families, which result from the tension in these environments

related to the adjustments in the newly-formed family and/or trying to deal with the new family situation.

The research considered age as a variable that could differentiate the preferred style of coping with difficult situations. As a result of the application of correlation procedure, the obtained results prove that there is a low correlation between the respondents' age and their styles of coping with problems. Positive correlations were observed between age and TOS ($r = 0.199$, $p = 0.003$) and EOS ($r = 0.146$, $p = 0.029$). Negative correlation was found between age and ESA ($r = -0.165$, $p = 0.013$). There is an interesting correlation between women's age and the style of coping concentrated on engaging in substitutive activities ($\chi^2 = 9.481$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.09$). Women aged 16–18 tend to undertake substitutive activities which do not lead directly to solving the problem almost three times more frequently than women from the older age group (38.7% and 14.6%, respectively). There is no such correlation in the group of men diversified in terms of age. As shown in Huber's research conducted in Poland, in which one of the studied groups was aged 16–24 years old, the most common

Table 4. Frequency of punishments in complete and broken families

type of family	frequency of punishments					total
	very often	often	sometimes	seldom	never	
complete	1,3%	8,6%	23,2%	44,4%	22,5%	100%
broken	3,5%	14,0%	28,1%	26,3%	28,1%	100%

Source: own research.

style used by the participants was the emotion-oriented one (32%), whereas 24% preferred the avoidance-oriented style. The author explains that the dominating model of emotional response to the problem may be justified by lack of life experience and lack of a developed reaction method which means that emotions outweigh rational approach to the problem. On the other hand, engaging in substitutive activities was preferred by more than half of the surveyed people (52%). While discussing the results between different age groups, the author states that one of the determinants of the style of coping may be the respondents' social groups (family, professional environment, belonging to other groups), which are a significant reference group for them (Huber, 2010, pp. 268–275).

In order to determine the existence of differences between the respondents' sex and their styles of coping with difficult situations, the Kruksal-Wallis test was conducted for independent samples. On the basis of the results obtained, it can be assumed that there are statistically significant differences between men and women in the distribution of the results obtained on the AOS scale ($p = 0.43$) and SSC scale ($p = 0.03$). There were no significant differences between the groups for other scales and subscales.

However, there were interesting differences in the intercorrelations of the CISS scales. In the women's group, the task-oriented style does not correlate with other scales, apart from the SSC subscale. This correlation indicates that women who have task-based approach to coping with difficult situations seek support in interpersonal contacts. This type of correlation is also visible in the group of men. It is worth emphasizing that the TOS correlates with all scales, except the ESA subscale, in men's group, unlike in the women's group. Lack of correlation in this regard gives an indication of concentrating on finding an effective way of dealing with problems, not engaging in activities that may postpone their resolution. In both groups, there was no cor-

relation between the EOS and SSC, which leads to a conclusion that the respondents try to cope with difficult situations on their own. This may result from the individualization of social life and from living in a lack of trust culture (Riesman, 2011).

As follows from the gathered empirical material, men and women who cope with stress by means of avoidance (AOS) also use the emotion-oriented style. It is interesting since, by avoiding thinking of and living through a difficult situation, these people concentrate on reducing emotional tension caused by this particular situation. Men and women who resolve difficult situations by using the EOS also engage in substitutive activities. Both groups who prefer avoidance as a way of dealing with problems also seek social contacts in these situations. Such correlation indicates the need to transfer the burden of dealing with a difficult situation onto other people.

Table 5. Matrix of correlations between the CISS scales and subscales, considering classification by sex

	TOS	EOS	AOS	ESA	SSC
TOS	1	–	–	–	.315**
EOS	.386**	1	.278**	.274**	–
AOS	.422**	.569**	1	.849**	.672**
ESA	–	.442**	.663**	1	.272**
SSC	.333**	–	.578**	.389**	1

Results for the group of women are above the diagonal, for the group of men – below the diagonal. Source: own research.

In both groups, the strongest correlation is between the avoidance (AOS) and ESA, as the preferred method of dealing with problems. This indicates the use of mechanisms of repression and not engaging in resolving the difficult situation.

The type of family in which the respondents grew up does not differentiate the styles of coping with stress in the researched group. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples gave no support for rejecting the

null hypothesis. However, the internal correlations of the CISS questionnaire for people growing up in complete families as well as for those growing up in broken families are particularly interesting. Their analysis captures the correlations in the styles of coping in those groups.

The strongest correlations in both groups are between the AOS and its subscales (ESA and SSC). Similarly as in the case of sex, young people mainly concentrate on not engaging in difficult situations. They prefer to wait and undertake an activity aimed at taking the attention away from the existing problem or transferring the burden of dealing with it onto other people.

Both groups display correlations between the EOS and the AOS. Therefore, there is an emotional response, which leads to withdrawal from any attempts to resolve a difficult situation.

Table 6. Matrix of correlations between the CISS scales and subscales, considering division into complete and broken families

	TOS	EOS	AOS	ESA	SSC
TOS	1	–	.193*	-	.279**
EOS	.335*	1	.363**	.340**	-
AOS	.346**	.453**	1	.813**	.630**
ESA	–	.275*	.738**	1	.336**
SSC	.500**	.333*	.735**	-	1

* Correlation is significant on the level 0.05 (two-sided).

** Correlation is significant on the level 0.01 (two-sided).

Results for the group from complete families are above the diagonal, for the group from broken families – below the diagonal.

Source: own research.

The table below presents the styles of coping with difficult situations which occur in complete and broken families.

The TOS involves taking actions that aim at solving the problem or changing the existing stressful situations by the use of cognitive processes. The respondents from complete families obtain higher scores (22%) which means that they are focused on cognitive transformations and attempts to change the

situation they are in. The existing differences are quite interesting and may prove the influence of family functioning on the styles of coping. In their report, Czapiński and Panek indicate that the frequency of using the task-specific strategy has increased since 2005. In addition, the latest measurement shows a decrease in the use of the emotional strategy as compared to previous years. The strategies of coping with stress differentiate the level of mental well-being regardless of the intensity of stress: “individuals who use an active task-oriented strategy have better well-being indicators than those who use emotional strategies or give up when faced with problems, regardless of the intensity of stress” (Czapiński, Panek, 2015, pp. 251–253). Therefore, despite the overall trend, there is a difference between the respondents which allows to verify one of the research questions and to confirm the link between having a complete family and having better skills of coping with difficult situations.

Table 7. Types of families and styles of coping with difficult situations

Type of family	TOS		
	stems 1-3	stems 4-7	stems 8-10
complete	17.1%	61.1%	22%
broken	22.4%	62.1%	15.5%
EOS			
complete	14.1%	59.5%	26.4%
broken	8.6%	69%	22.4%
AOS			
complete	21.5%	61.3%	17.2%
broken	20.7%	67.2%	12.1%
ESA			
complete	20.7%	61.6%	17.7%
broken	19%	63.8%	17.2%
SSC			
complete	20.9%	63.8%	15.3%
broken	27.6%	63.8%	8.6%

Source: own research.

The EOS is also more frequently displayed by people from complete families (26.4%). However, the difference between the researched groups in terms of high sten scores is not substantial and only amounts to 4%. The EOS specifies the way of solving difficult situations by concentrating on one's own emotional experiences, which is to contribute to reducing the emotional tension resulting from a stressful situation. Occasionally, concentrating on this style can have opposite effects, meaning that it can lead to the increase of emotional tension. Irena Heszen-Niejodek's research also shows that 'emotions impact the strategies of coping rather than are the result of the used strategies' as well as they influence cognitive assessment, which is a key element in the process of coping with stress (Heszen-Niejodek, 2004, pp. 260–261). Lazarus and Folkman claim that the aim of the emotion-oriented style of coping is to regulate emotional reactions caused by a situation, whereas problem-oriented coping is focused on controlling the source of stress (Folkmann, Lazarus, 1980, pp. 219–239).

Małgorzata Guzowska claims that people with a repressive style of coping engage in activities that aim at minimizing emotional reactions. Reasons for such behavior include conviction about one's lack of vulnerability to negative emotions and deliberately manifesting control over one's own emotions to the surrounding. The author gives many examples of scientific studies which show that "excessive suppression and concealment of emotions is linked to adverse health effects, both psychological and somatic" (Guzowska, 2004, pp. 132–133). The avoidance-oriented style helps the respondents deal with difficult situations by the means of withdrawing from thinking about them as well as experiencing and living through them. Choosing the AOS is also characteristic to the respondents from complete families (17.2%). The participants from this group choose the SSC method much more frequently than those from broken families (15.3%). Such style of coping with stressful sit-

uations helps them avoid experiencing and living through such situations as well as thinking about them. These results correspond with the results of the study by Heszen-Niejodek's, who claims that the characterization of the style of coping in terms of information and cognition requires the application of the dimension responsible for collecting and using information, called confrontation, and the dimension aiming at redirecting one's attention, called avoidance. The author emphasizes that moderate use of the avoidance strategy protects from excessive focusing on one's own health and fear. In the presented approach, to a certain extent, people are able to adjust situational coping however the situation requires them to, regardless of the characteristics of the available coping style. Heszen-Niejodek (2004, pp. 260–261) indicates that confrontational strategies are used in controlled conditions, whereas evasive strategies are used in uncontrolled conditions. The results obtained by the respondents from complete families show that they usually prefer the styles of coping with difficult situations which generate a broader repertoire of active measures that protect from the effects of psychological stress, which can be linked to the quality of functioning of the respondents' families at an earlier stage of socialization.

Conclusion

The respondents' choice of an adequate style of coping is of great significance for the quality of life at large. The effect of stress and difficult situations on the quality of life is empathized by the perception of the quality of life as a function of one's resourcefulness. In this approach, the ability to cope with dangerous situations may contribute to improved well-being and quality of life of young adults. The existing studies indicate that in the links between stress and the quality of life, there are significant differences regarding the use of different styles of coping with the same difficult life situations (Ratajczyk, 2005, pp. 233–241).

On the basis of the research results, it can be concluded that the quality of functioning of the family environment is an important determinant for choosing the style of coping with difficult situations by adolescents and young adults. There are differences between young adults from complete families and those from broken families. In most cases, the atmosphere in complete families is described as happy, warm and cheerful, and those growing up in them experience understanding and acceptance from their parents. On the other hand, the frequency of punishment is higher in broken families. In crisis situations, the respondents from complete families tend to engage in solving the problem and focus on their own emotions which allows them to be less exposed to the adverse effects of stress than in the case of people from broken families. However, the participants from broken families mainly prefer the emotion-oriented style and avoiding the problem by engaging in substitutive activities.

The sex variable differentiates the researched group in the case of using the style of avoiding the resolution of the problem and seeking social contact. There are statistically significant but weak correlations between the respondents' age and their coping styles. There is a link between age and choosing the task-oriented style and the emotion-oriented style. In this case, the negative correlation applies to the

subscale of engaging in substitutive activities.

Information on the effectiveness of the styles of coping with difficult situations may be useful in pedagogical and therapeutic work. Research on functioning of adolescents and young adults from complete and broken families can help determine the trends of changes in families from the perspective of their effect on the situation and the prospects of the development of young adults as well as the country and its citizens. From the point of view of psychology, the task-oriented style is the most effective and the healthiest one. Identifying of the source of mental stress, choosing an effective way of solving the problem, and active measures optimally reduce burden on the psyche. Focusing on solving problems may have expected results, meaning that the problematic situation will not happen again or that another crisis situation will be better dealt with. The formulated assessments can be used to create strategies and programs supporting individuals living in broken families aiming at improving their coping abilities and, most importantly, at binding the family affected by crisis. Complete and stable family seems to be conducive to the harmonious development of children and it shapes their self-esteem and competencies, whereas the interrelations and family conditions become a scheme of cognitive guidelines on how to cope with conflicts and crises.

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REALIZACJA WYBRANYCH FUNKCJI RODZINY A STYLE RADZENIA SOBIE MŁODYCH DOROSŁYCH W SYTUACJACH TRUDNYCH

Abstrakt

Współczesna rodzina podlega intensywnym przeobrażeniom społeczno-kulturowym, co skutkuje nawarstwieniem problemów w jej wewnętrznym funkcjonowaniu i nie pozostaje bez znaczenia dla indywidualnego i społecznego rozwoju jej członków. W artykule poruszona została problematyka realizacji funkcji socjalizacyjno-wychowawczej i emocjonalno-ekspresyjnej w rodzinach pełnych i rozbitych i ich znaczenie dla wyboru przez młodych dorosłych stylu radzenia sobie w sytuacjach trudnych. Badaniem objęto 233 osoby w przedziale wiekowym 16–24 lata. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych analiz stwierdzono, że osoby wychowujące się w rodzinach pełnych częściej stosują styl skoncentrowany na zadaniu oraz na emocjach, podczas gdy badani pochodzący z rodzin rozbitych preferują styl skoncentrowany na emocjach i angażowanie się w czynności zastępcze. Istnieją także różnice między płcią i wiekiem osób wychowujących się w rodzinach pełnych i rozbitych a wybieranymi przez nie stylami radzenia sobie z problemami. Wyniki badań omówione w artykule mogą być przydatne w praktyce edukacyjnej oraz profilaktycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: adolescenti i młodzi dorośli, style radzenia sobie, rodzina