

SPECIAL COMMUNICATES

New View on Aggression

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MANIFESTATIONS OF AGGRESSION AND PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES – COMPARATIVE STUDIES. CHANGES OVER TIME (NEW VERSION)

ABSTRACT

Results of some research performed in Poland have evidenced a relation between the aggressive behaviour of adolescents and the parental attitude perceived by them as improper. According to the results of the earlier studies of authors, significant differences were observed between the levels of aggression manifested by girls and boys and in certain dimensions the aggression of adolescent girls was higher than that of boys. Recently study was undertaken to check the stability of differences related to the sex and aggressive behaviour of adolescents.

The research was conducted twice. First in the year 2002 (stage I) and again after 10 years in 2013 (stage II). The data for analysis were collected in the Questionnaire of Perception of Parental Attitudes composed by Plopa and the Questionnaire on Aggressive Behaviour prepared by Wójcik. At the stage I the subjects were 86 young people (56 girls and 30 boys) aged 17–19, and in stage II, in 2013, the subjects of the study were 80 adolescents (40 girls and 40 boys) aged 17–19. The comparative analysis of the results from 2002 and 2013 has shown a limited stability of relation between the perception of parental attitudes as improper and aggressive behavior of adolescents as well as sexual differentiations of aggressive behavior.

Key words:

parental attitudes, aggressive behaviour, adolescents, family conditionings of aggression

1. Introduction

A multitude of manifestations of aggression in the young generation make us pose a question concerning their cause. Modern psychology assumes that aggressive behaviour is the outcome of combined genetic and environmental factors¹. Researchers, regardless of their preferred theoretical orientations, agree on one thing: the child acquires early experiences, including aggressive behaviour, in the family as the primary developmental and educational environment². The results of studies on the aetiology of aggressive behaviour of children and young people indicate the role of family structure (full family, single-parent family) and inappropriate parental attitudes³. It should be emphasized that a study on the causes of youth aggression should cover a wide spectrum of biological, social and psychological factors⁴. Such social phenomena as unemployment, alcohol abuse, poverty and social exclusion from the social and economic basis facilitating aggression not only in directly affected adults. The above-mentioned socio-psychological factor translates into the psychosocial sphere of functioning of the entire family⁵, including parents' attitudes towards their children.

The research results prove that the personality of a young person and his/her habits are shaped not that much under upbringing influences resulting from specific parental attitudes but under the influence of their perception by adolescents⁶. In the light of the above, empirical exploration of the relationship between the perception of parental attitudes by adolescent children and incidents of aggressive behaviour seems in place.

¹ E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R.M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna: serce i umysł*, Poznań 1997, pp. 153–168.

² L. Berkowitz, *Aggression*, New York 1993, pp. 35–47.

³ M. Ziemska, *Postawy rodzicielskie*, Warszawa 1973, pp. 15–23.

⁴ A. Frączek, *Z zagadnień psychologii agresji*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 17–19.

⁵ Z. Tyszka, *Rodzina we współczesnym świecie*, Poznań 2002, pp. 7–13.

⁶ M. Plopa, *Psychologia rodziny*, Kraków 2005, pp. 105–124.

That issue has already been explored by researchers such as D. Dominiak-Kochanek and A. Frączek⁷, H. Liberska and M. Matuszewska⁸, and L. Steinberg⁹ and others – however, their analyses have failed to take into consideration the significance of modern transformations of the life context, the change in parental attitudes and the connection of such attitudes with the behaviour of adolescent children.

2. The problem of study

Assuming that aggressive behaviour in childhood and adolescence is shaped in the course of socialization in which the key role is played by the family, the study has concentrated on recognising the relations between parent behaviour, being one of the components of parental attitudes, and the manifestations of aggression in adolescent children¹⁰.

Parental attitudes reflect parents' beliefs about the child and about the ways of treating him or her which they consider proper, and also define their influence on the child. Some studies on the family in Poland indicate on the one hand, relative durability of parents' expectations concerning the child's behaviour and development and, on the other hand, reveal vital differences among particular generations of the family in that respect¹¹.

It is assumed that the processes of globalization, development of technology, educational reforms, easy access to the information stream, and also the reform of the labour market, migrations, and numerous other problems of the post-modern era contribute to changes in the family system, including parental beliefs related to child behaviour viewed as proper, admissible or inadmissible. However, psychological knowledge on the subject is very limited. Contemporary Polish literature includes reports on aggression in children and adolescents and on the relations

⁷ D. Dominiak-Kochanek, A. Frączek, K. Konopka, *Styl wychowania w rodzinie a aprobata agresji w życiu społecznym przez młodych dorosłych*, "Psychologia Wychowawcza", No. 1–2, pp. 66–85.

⁸ H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska, *Wybrane czynniki i mechanizmy powstawania agresji w rodzinie* [in:] *Agresja i przemoc a zdrowie psychiczne*, M. Binczycka-Anholcer (ed.), Warszawa–Poznań 2001, pp. 80–88.

⁹ L. Steinberg, *Familial Factors in Delinquency*, "Journal of Adolescent Research" 1987, No. 2, pp. 225–268.

¹⁰ B. Krahe, *Agresja*, Gdańsk 2006, pp. 35–37.

¹¹ M. Farnicka, *Przemiany realizacji zadań rozwojowych*, Zielona Góra 2011, pp. 145–148.

between youth aggression and parental attitudes¹², yet there are no reports on its stability or changes in subsequent generations. In the context of dynamic social and economic transformations that are taking place globally and the concern about growing aggression and violence among children and teenagers (at least as perceived by certain circles) it seems justified to undertake research on this problem, as it is important for the well-being of individuals, families and the entire society.

Our interest is focused on the manifestations and intensity of aggression in adolescents, the types of parental attitudes in the perception of teenage children and the relations between children's aggressive behaviour and parental attitudes perceived by children as inappropriate – at various points in time.

In view of the above, the following research question has been formulated: has the aggressive behaviour displayed by Polish adolescents changed over the last decade? Has the perception of parental attitudes by adolescent children evolved? Is there a current significant correlation between parental attitudes perceived as wrong by adolescents and aggressive behaviour of teenage daughters and sons – just like ten years ago?

Conclusions on the changes in aggressive behaviour displayed by adolescents and the perception of parental attitudes were drawn on the basis of comparing the results of the studies conducted in 2002 and 2013.

3. Methods and studied group

The basic tools used in the study were the Parental Attitude Scale developed by Mieczysław Plopa¹³ and the Aggressiveness Level Questionnaire developed on the basis of the tool created by Dobrochna Wójcik¹⁴.

The Parental Attitude Scale examines such parental attitudes as autonomous, protective, consequent, demanding and accepting and their intensity (high, average, low). The extremely high or extremely low intensity testifies to the strength of a given attitude, e.g. overprotectiveness or lack of parental care, too much control or lack of control, inconsequence or rigidity of the parent's standpoint, excessive autonomy or lack of it, excessive demands or no demands at all, etc. In the de-

¹² H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska, *Niektóre społeczne uwarunkowania agresji u młodzieży*, "Psychologia Rozwojowa" 2003, No. 2–3, pp. 97–107.

¹³ M. Plopa, *Skala postaw rodzicielskich*, "Psychologia Wychowawcza" 1987, No. 5, pp. 553–567.

¹⁴ D. Wójcik, *Środowisko rodzinne a poziom agresywności młodzieży przestępczej i nieprzestępczej*, Warszawa 1977, pp. 45–78.

scribed study most attention was devoted to results indicating extreme intensities of attitudes.

The Aggressiveness Level Questionnaire distinguishes the following aggression dimensions: hostility, intensity, control, frequency and adequacy of aggressive behaviour, as well as defiant behaviour. They are evaluated with the use of the 5-point Likert scale (from 1 to 5) indicating the intensity of a given state (1 – lack, 5 – very frequent occurrence of a given behaviour or condition or its very high intensity).

The studied group and the time of study. The first study, carried out in 2002, was performed on 86 adolescents aged between 17 and 18 (56 girls and 30 boys). The second study, performed in 2013, was performed on the group of 80 adolescents aged 17 to 18 (40 girls and 40 boys). In both cases the subjects came from urban community and they were all students of upper secondary schools. The subjects taking part in the study were anonymous.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of the results of studies of the dimensions and level of aggression in adolescent boys and girls

The first study (2002). The research results collected with the Aggressiveness Level Questionnaire allowed the recognition of differences in the level of manifestation of basic dimensions of aggression in the examined boys and girls. Detailed data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characterisation of aggressive behaviour of the young people studied

Dimensions of aggressive behaviour	Level of aggression	Frequency (%)	
		girls	boys
Intensity of aggressive reactions **	High	32.1	13.3
	Low	67.9	86.7
Hostility*	High	28.6	13.3
	Low	71.4	86.7
Lack of control over aggressive behaviour	High	50	46.7
	Low	50	53.3
Adequacy of aggressive behaviour	High	17.9	13.3
	Low	82.1	86.7

Dimensions of aggressive behaviour	Level of aggression	Frequency (%)	
		girls	boys
Frequency of physical aggression	High	0	6.7
	Low	100	93.3

* – statistically significant at $p = 0.01$; ** – statistically significant at $p = 0.001$

On the basis of the questionnaire responses, the following dimensions of aggression in adolescents were distinguished: the ability to control own aggressive behaviour, intensity of manifested aggressive responses, adequacy of aggressive reactions, frequency of aggressive reactions, and manifestation of hostility in social situations.

Statistical analysis of the responses revealed that the intensity of the distinguished manifestations of aggressive behaviour in girls did not differ significantly from that in boys ($c^2 = 11.21 > c_a^2, \alpha = 0.001$). However, comparative analysis of the data proved that the aggressive behaviour of high intensity are more frequent in girls (32.1%) than in boys (13.3%), while the aggressive behaviour of low intensity occurs much more frequently in boys (86.7%) than in girls (67.9%).

Statistical analysis of the responses related to the dimension *hostility* has shown that hostile behaviour in social situations is manifested by girls (28.6%) twice more frequently than in boys (13.3%). The difference proved to be statistically significant ($c^2 = 7.72 > c_a^2, \alpha = 0.01$). Analysis of the results concerning the other three dimensions of aggressive behaviour has indicated that almost half of the persons studied do not control their aggressive reactions (48.35%). The majority of the adolescents questioned (84.4%) have evaluated their aggressive behaviour as inadequate. Physical aggression of high intensity was met only in boys and in a rather small percentage of them (6.7%). The definite majority of the adolescents questioned (all girls and 93.3% of boys) admitted to use physical aggression of low intensity only. No statistically significant differences were found between girls and boys in the following dimensions of aggressive behaviour: the ability to control own aggressive behaviour, adequacy of aggressive reactions, and frequency of aggressive reactions.

Analysis of all results points out a significantly higher level of aggressive behaviour in girls than in boys ($c^2 = 36.16 > c_a^2, \alpha = 0.001$). The difference is particularly pronounced in the *intensity of aggressive reactions* and *hostility in social situations*.

The second study (2013). Study results collected with the Aggressiveness Level Questionnaire allowed the recognition of differences in the level of manifestation of basic dimensions of aggression in the examined boys and girls in 2013. Detailed data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Characterisation of aggressive behaviour of the young people studied in 2013

Dimensions of aggressive behaviour	Level of aggression	Frequency (%)	
		Girls	Boys
Intensity of aggressive reactions **	High	3	21
	Low	97	79
Hostility*	High	21	12
	Low	79	88
Lack of control over aggressive behaviour	High	21	0
	Low	79	100
Adequacy of aggressive behaviour	High	6	0
	Low	94	100
Frequency of physical aggression	High	6	12
	Low	94	88

* – statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, ** – statistically significant at $p < 0.001$

Statistical analysis of the manifested aggressive responses related to the dimension *hostility* has shown that girls manifest more intense *hostile behaviour* (in social situations) more frequently (17.9%) than boys (12.8%). Hostile behaviour of low intensity is more often revealed in boys (51.3%) than in girls (28.6%). That difference proved statistically significant ($z = -2.24$, $\alpha = 0.01$), ($c^2 = 7.51 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$).

A comparison of results related to the general intensity of aggressive reactions showed significant differences between girls and boys ($z = -3.21$, $\alpha = 0.001$). Higher intensity of aggressive reactions is significantly more often found in boys (21%) than in girls (3%).

No statistically significant differences were found between girls and boys as regards: (1) control of aggressive reactions, (2) frequency of physical aggression, and (3) adequacy of aggressive reactions.

The analysis of all collected results points out to a higher level of aggressive behaviour in girls than in boys ($c^2 = 36.16 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$). The difference is particularly pronounced in two dimensions: *hostility* and *intensity of aggressive reactions*.

Additional analyses conducted revealed also significant correlations (Kendall tau) between particular aspects of adolescent aggressive behaviour. The results obtained for girls indicate positive relations between aggressive behaviour control and its adequacy ($r = 0.564$, $\alpha = 0.05$) as well as between aggression intensity and frequency ($r = 0.866$, $\alpha = 0.001$). The results obtained also show that the higher the frequency of aggressive behaviour, the higher its intensity. Meanwhile, in the group of boys a larger number of significant correlations between studied variables was

revealed. The adequacy of aggressive reactions in boys is predominantly linked to the control they have over them ($r=0.479, \alpha=0.001$), frequency of manifesting them ($r=0.358, \alpha=0.05$) and the hostility level ($r=0.468, \alpha=0.001$). It has been found that the intensity of boys' aggressiveness increases along with the increased frequency of defiant behaviour ($r=0.361, \alpha=0.001$) and the frequency of displaying physical aggression ($r=0.331, \alpha=0.05$), and together with the increase of controlling power over one's own aggressive behaviour ($r=0.479, \alpha=0.001$). The revealed correlations indicate and emphasize the connection of hostility with the remaining tested aggressiveness dimensions. Thus, that dimension appears to be crucial for specifying and forecasting the behaviour of adolescent boys.

4.2 Comparison of results of two studies of aggressiveness levels in young people (2002 and 2013)

Both studies revealed significant differences in the level of aggressiveness displayed by girls and boys.

Table 3. Girls and boys: Comparison of levels of aggressive behaviour: 2002 and 2013

Dimensions of aggressive behaviour	Level of aggression	Frequency (%)			
		Girls		Boys	
		2002	2013	2002	2013
Intensity of aggressive reactions **	High	32.1	3**	13.3	21*
	Low	67.9	97	86.7	79
Hostility	High	28.6	21	13.3	12
	Low	71.4	79	86.7	88
Lack of control over aggressive behaviour	High	50	21**	46.7	0
	Low	50	79	53.3	100
Adequacy of aggressive behaviour	High	17.9	6*	13.3	0
	Low	82.1	94	86.7	100
Frequency of physical aggression	High	0	6	6.7	12
	Low	100	94	93.3	88

* – statistically significant at $p=0.05$ ** – statistically significant at $p=0.001$

A comparison of the results obtained in the studies conducted at the interval of 11 years revealed certain differences in intensity of selected manifestations of aggression in young people. Significant changes have been observed related to the intensity of aggressive reactions, both in girls and in boys. In 2013, a significant drop

was observed in the frequency of occurrence of highly adequate aggressive reactions in girls as compared to 2002. The frequency of the lack of control over one's aggressive behaviour increased both in boys and in girls, and also the frequency of occurrence of strongly aggressive behaviour in boys. The frequency of strong aggressiveness in girls has lowered, unlike for boys, for whom no such change has been noted. The frequency of demonstrating strong aggressive reactions has also increased for both boys and girls, although that change is not significant.

4.3 Parental attitudes as perceived by girls and boys

The first study (2002). The data collected in the part of the questionnaire on the Scale of Parental Attitudes provided the information on the perception of parental attitudes by the adolescents. From among improper parental attitudes perceived the most frequently indicated were the lack of consequence (74.5%), overprotective attitude (62.8%), and overdemanding attitude (62.8%). A rather large subgroup of the youth studied (39.5%) perceive in their parents the actions restricting their autonomy. The subgroup feeling the lack of acceptance by their parents was the least numerous (6.7%). The way of perception of parental attitudes as improper was significantly different in girls and boys ($c^2 = 45,91 > c_{\alpha}^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$). The daughters perceive in a different way such improper parental attitudes as the lack of acceptance, the lack of autonomy, overprotection, excessive demands, and lack of consequence in educating activity. A detail analysis of the results also revealed that daughters and sons perceive in different way the attitudes of their mothers and fathers (Table 4).

Table 4. Perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate/improper by daughters and sons

Type of attitude	Perception by			
	Daughters		Sons	
	Mother's attitude	Father's attitude	Mother's attitude	Father's attitude
Inconsequent	42.9	39.3	26.7	66.7
Overdemanding	50	17.9	20	33.3
Overprotective	46.4	14.3	26.7	40
Restricting autonomy	35.7	17.8	0	13.3
Lack of acceptance	21.4	21.4	6.7	0

($c^2 = 45.91 > c_{\alpha}^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$)

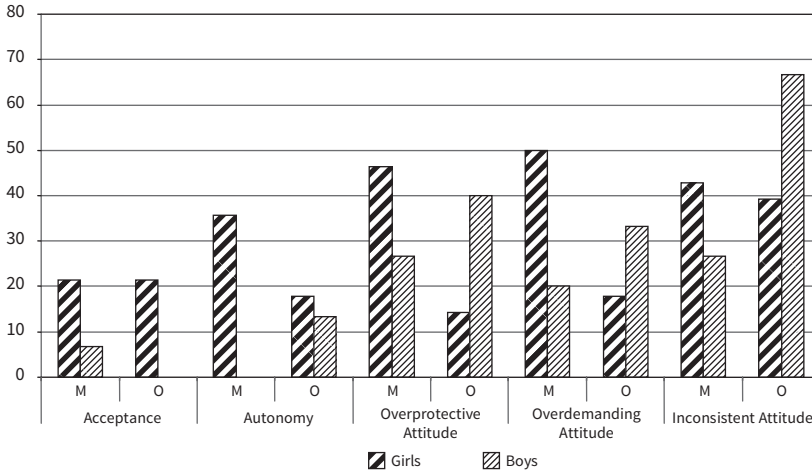


Figure 1. Frequency of perception of mothers’ and fathers’ parental attitudes as inappropriate (%)

The most pronounced differences were noted in the perception of the lack of consequence, overdemanding and overprotective attitudes (Figure 1).

As has been found, almost half of girls find their mothers to assume improper attitudes: overdemanding, overprotective and inconsequent. The other two attitudes, restricting of autonomy and lack of acceptance, are perceived rarer. In fathers the most frequent improper attitude is inconsequence, the lack of acceptance, overdemanding attitude and rarely restriction of autonomy. The smallest group of girls declared that they feel overprotected by their fathers. As follows from the above, daughters more often perceive the attitudes of their fathers as proper, in contrast to the attitudes of their mothers which by almost half of the girls are evaluated as improper.

As to the boys, about 20% of the sons find their mothers to be overprotective, inconsequent and overdemanding. A small number of sons feel unaccepted by their mothers and none feels that mothers restrict their autonomy. The perception of fathers’ attitudes by boys is different, a definite majority of sons perceive their fathers as inconsequent. The other often mentioned improper attitudes of fathers to sons are overprotective and overdemanding ones. All sons feel accepted by their fathers and only a few feel that fathers restrict their autonomy. According to the results, daughters more often find the attitudes of their mothers as improper, while sons more often find their fathers to show improper attitudes. The differences

between boys and girls in perception of all improper attitudes proved statistically significant; acceptance ($c^2 = 5,90 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.02$), restricting autonomy ($c^2 = 19,00 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$), overprotective ($c^2 = 17,29 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$), overdemanding ($c^2 = 16,00 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$) and inconsequent ($c^2 = 10,12 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$).

In general, the adolescent girls perceive the attitudes of their parents more negatively than the adolescent boys in 2002.

The second study (2013). The analysis of the results collected through the Scale of Parental Attitudes in 2013 shows that, of the perceived inappropriate parental attitudes perceived by adolescents the inconsistent attitude has the highest intensity and among the positive ones the accepting attitude. They are more intense in the perception of boys. Adolescent boys perceive more inconsistent attitude in their fathers than in mothers, but also fathers are perceived to be more accepting than mothers (Table 5). However, adolescent girls perceive mothers to be more inconsistent than fathers (unlike boys). Also, they perceive a lower intensity of accepting attitudes in mothers than in fathers.

Table 5. Perception of parental attitudes versus the sex of the studied teenagers

Type of attitude	Girls		Boys		W. Wilcoxon Test (z)
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	
Inconsistent	100	75	94	84	Mother = -0.053, $\alpha = 0.958$ Father = -2.052, $\alpha = 0.04$
Overdemanding	100	85	100	84	Mother = -0.146, $\alpha = 0.884$ Father = -0.097, $\alpha = 0.923$
Overprotective	100	82	94	82	Mother = -0.471, $\alpha = 0.638$ Father = -0.367, $\alpha = 0.713$
Lack of autonomy	3.6	17.9	5.1	12.8	Mother = -1.144, $\alpha = 0.252$ Father = -1.606, $\alpha = 0.108$
Unaccepting	100	78	94	87	Mother = -2.038, $\alpha = 0.04$ Father = -1.042, $\alpha = 0.29$

Statistical analysis showed that boys and girls differ significantly in the perception of mother's accepting attitude and father's inconsistent attitude. Although girls more often indicate mothers as accepting, they rate the level of this acceptance lower than boys ($z = -2.04$, $\alpha = 0.04$). Whereas boys more often than girls perceive inconsistent attitude in their father and more frequently show significantly stronger intensity than their peers ($z = -2.052$, $\alpha = 0.04$).

In the light of the statistical analysis it turned out that the way of perception of parental attitudes by girls as inappropriate is significantly different from the way

of perception of parental attitudes by boys ($c^2 = 45.91 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$). Daughters in a significantly different way perceive the intensity of two inappropriate parental attitudes of their mothers and fathers, namely the lack of acceptance and inconsistency of educational activity.

4.4 Recapitulation of results of studies on the perception of parental attitudes in the years 2002 and 2013

Both studies revealed significant differences between boys and girls in perception of parental attitudes. Daughters more often perceived the attitudes of their mothers as inappropriate, and sons more often perceived the attitudes of their fathers as inappropriate. In 2002, significant differences were found for all types of inappropriate parental attitudes: acceptance ($c^2 = 5.90 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.02$), autonomy ($c^2 = 19.00 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$), overprotective ($c^2 = 17.29 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$), overdemanding ($c^2 = 16.00 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.001$), and inconsistent attitude ($c^2 = 10.12 > c_a^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$). The distribution of results related to the perception of parental attitudes by young people with taking into account the sex variable for both children and parents, reveals that daughters are harsher in judging their mothers and sons in judging their fathers. In general, sons are noticeably milder in the evaluation of parental attitudes than daughters. All the boys consider themselves accepted by their fathers and do not feel that their need of autonomy is restricted by their mothers.

The 2013 research has revealed that daughters perceive significantly differently the intensity of two inappropriate parental attitudes in their mothers and fathers, namely the lack of acceptance and inconsistency of educational attitudes. From a qualitative analysis it follows that adolescent girls perceive in a very negative way the attitudes of their mothers. What is particularly painful for the girls is the lack – or shortage – of consistency in the behaviour of their mothers. This results in intensifying the level of aggression in contemporary girls.

4.5 The level of aggressiveness in girls and boys and their perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate

The basic research question pertained to the relations between highlighted categories of aggressive behaviour of adolescent girls and boys and parental attitudes perceived by them as inappropriate.

The first study (2002). The results of the statistical analysis indicate a significant correlation between the aggressiveness level and the perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate only for girls ($c^2=6.44 > cc_a^2$, $\alpha=0.02$). Among boys, this correlation was statistically insignificant. In the light of the results of the correlation analysis it was found that girls aggressive behaviour is positively correlated with their perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate ($r=0.77$, $t=2.77 > t_\alpha$, $\alpha=0.01$). For boys this correlation proved statistically insignificant and negative in relation to fathers ($r=-0.23$, α at the statistically insignificant level).

The second study (2013). Results of statistical analysis point to a significant correlation between the level of aggressiveness and perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate by both girls and boys. Perception of parental attitudes by sons and daughters is different, the differences are statistically significant in perception of inconsequent behaviour and acceptance. Parental attitudes perceived by adolescent children were found to be significantly correlated with the intensity of hostility and adequacy of aggressive behaviour. In the group of girls a significant correlation was noted between the perceived by them attitude of autonomy given by their father and adequacy of aggressive behaviour ($r=0.37$, $\alpha=0.05$) and manifested by them hostility ($r=0.34$, $\alpha=0.05$). There was a positive although weak correlation between the intensity of protective attitude perceived in the fathers and the adequacy of aggressive behaviour in daughters ($r=0.38$, $\alpha=0.05$) and a negative correlation between the daughters hostility and the intensity of the demanding attitude of fathers ($r=-0.39$, $\alpha=0.05$) and the frequency of inconsequent attitude of fathers ($r=-0.47$, $\alpha=0.01$).

As follows from the above results, the more autonomy fathers give to daughters and the greater care the daughters perceive from the fathers, the more adequate are the aggressive behaviours of daughters. On the other hand, the intensity of hostility manifested by daughters increased with increasing autonomy their perceived from fathers and decreased with increasing demanding attitude and inconsequent attitude of fathers as perceived by daughters. Statistical analysis also reveal a significant correlation between the level of hostility of daughters and intensity of the attitudes of acceptance and inconsequence of mothers as perceived by daughters. A moderate correlation was found between the inconsequent attitude of mothers ($r=-0.56$, $\alpha=0.01$) and the level of acceptance of mothers as perceived by daughters ($r=-0.30$, $\alpha=0.05$) and the intensity of hostility in daughters. Hence, the attitude of mothers was significantly correlated with the intensity of hostility manifested by daughters.

In the group of boys the correlations between the parental attitudes as perceived by sons and the sons aggressive behaviour were weaker. However, significant correlations were noted between the fathers acceptance and autonomy given to sons and the manifestations of aggressiveness in four dimensions. Positive correlations were revealed between the intensity of fathers acceptance and (1) the adequacy of aggressive behaviour ($r=0.29$, $\alpha=0.05$), (2) intensity of sons hostility ($r=0.39$, $\alpha=0.01$), (3) intensity of aggressive behaviour ($r=0.30$, $\alpha=0.05$) and (4) frequency of physical aggression ($r=0.37$, $\alpha=0.01$). Also the attitudes of mothers have a significant influence on manifestations of aggression in their sons, that is on (1) the level of control of aggressive behaviour, (2) intensity of aggressive behaviour, and (3) its adequacy. The acceptance of mothers is significantly positively correlated with the adequacy of aggressive behaviour ($r=0.32$, $\alpha=0.05$), control of aggressive reactions ($r=0.26$, $\alpha=0.05$) and intensity of aggressive behaviour ($r=0.280$, $\alpha=0.05$). The level of autonomy given to sons from mothers is significantly positively correlated with the sons adequacy of aggressive behaviour ($r=.29$, $\alpha=0.05$). Negative correlations were established between the inconsequent attitude of mothers and the sons adequacy of aggressive behaviour ($r=-0.322$, $\alpha=0.05$) and degree of control of aggressive behaviour ($r=-0.258$, $\alpha=0.05$).

Statistical analysis revealed that the greatest number of significant correlations were found between the intensity of parental attitudes perceived by young people as inappropriate and the hostility manifested by sons and daughters. No significant correlation was found between the parental attitudes perceived by sons and daughters and the aggressive behaviour of the young people. The only exception was the acceptance shown by mothers, the correlations between the mothers acceptance were significant with the intensity of aggressive behaviour ($R=0.606$, R^2 corrected = 0.367 , $R^2=0.163$, standard deviation 0.681).

5. Conclusion

Results of the study confirmed a significant correlation between the perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate and the level of aggression in adolescent girls. Comparative analysis of the results collected from the first and second studies provided grounds for the conclusion about a limited stability of correlations between the parental attitudes perceived by adolescents as inappropriate and the aggressive behaviour of adolescents and the sex differences in such behaviour. The results from 2002 showed that girls in the second phase of adolescence (16–18 years old) perceiving the attitudes of their parents as inappropriate manifest a high

level of aggressive behaviour. In boys at the same developmental phase no such correlation was observed. According to the results from 2013, the greatest number of significant correlations was found between the intensity of parental attitudes perceived by adolescents as inappropriate and the level of hostility and adequacy of aggressive behaviour manifested by both boys and girls. The most significant for the level of aggressive behaviour proved to be the attitude of mothers.

6. Discussion

The perception of parental attitudes as inappropriate may lead to conflicts and frustration of adolescents. In consistence with the conception of Dollard and Miller, a consequence of frustration is aggression¹⁵. The appearance of aggressive behaviour in a situation of conflict is the more probable as the adolescents have not developed yet the mechanisms of cognitive control of emotions¹⁶. Different treatment of sons and daughters follows from the standards and conventions of our culture (see more: Ramirez et al.¹⁷). The restrictive and demanding attitudes of parents apply to a greater degree to daughters than sons. Consequently, the socialisation pressure of parents exerted on daughters is greater than on sons. Parents are more permissive towards sons and thus the probability of conflicts between parents and sons is smaller. According to the results, daughters notice the difference in parental attitudes towards them and the boys. Girls start the phase of adolescence at least two years earlier than boys, girls at this age are more mature in the cognitive and social-emotional development than boys at the same age. It is thus reasonable to suppose that not only the socialisation pressure or model of upbringing in a given culture (culture trend) but also faster mental development of girls awakens in them a more critical evaluation of parental behaviour¹⁸. Parents easily perceive anatomical and physiological changes in their children but often fail to perceive psychological changes, among others changes in the system of needs. One of the most important needs of adolescents is that of autonomy and emo-

¹⁵ A. Bandura, R.H. Walters, *Agresja w okresie dorastania*, Warszawa 1968, pp. 87–92.

¹⁶ H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska, *Wybrane czynniki i mechanizmy powstawania agresji w rodzinie* [in: *Agresja i przemoc a zdrowie psychiczne*, M. Binczycka-Anholcer (ed.), Warszawa–Poznań 2001, pp. 80–88.

¹⁷ J.M. Ramirez, J.M. Andreu, T. Fujihara, Z. Musazadeh, S. Saini, *Justification of Aggression in Several Asian and European Countries with Different Religious and Cultural Background*, "International Journal of Behavioral Development" 2007, No. 31, pp. 9–15.

¹⁸ J. Miluska, *Rola płci w sposobie funkcjonowania małżeństwa i rodziny* [in: *Małżeństwo: męskość, kobiecość, miłość, konflikt*, H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska (eds.), Poznań 2001, pp. 47–74.

tional independence from parents¹⁹. A consequence of the delay in the changes in parental attitudes with respect to developmental changes in adolescents, the parental attitudes do not match the personality changes of the children. This gap is particularly pronounced between parents and daughters. It can be the grounds for conflicts in the family and for growing emotional distance between children and particularly daughters from parents. As mentioned above, in such a situation a mechanism generating aggression is triggered: conflict-frustration-aggression. On the other hand, aggressive behaviour of young people can lead to further conflicts and frustrations in the parent- children relations (see: M. Sitarczyk²⁰, R. Tremblay²¹).

The above presented results indicate that the reasons for the aggressive behaviour of adolescents should be searched for in the family environment and in the social context in a broad sense. In the last two decades the contents of the message on the hierarchy of values, standards and admissible modes of behaviour in social situations (cf. Bauman²², Giddens²³, Tyszkowa²⁴). A consequence of these changes are those in aggressive behaviour of adolescents clearly evidenced by the results of these studies. The recognised changes include an increase in the frequency of strong physical aggressive acts performed by boys and girls, increase in the frequency of events caused by the lack of control over aggressive behaviour in both boys and girls and the frequency of intense aggressive reactions in boys. A decrease was noted in the frequency of intense hostility in girls but it did not change in boys and in the frequency of strong aggressive reactions. Moreover, the frequency of adequate aggressive reactions in boys and girls also decreased. As far as the perception of parental attitudes is concerned, in 2002 the differences between boys and girls concerned all types of inappropriate parental attitudes and the daughters were harder on mothers while sons were harder on fathers. In general, daughters were much harder on parents than sons. In 2013 the differences between boys and girls manifested in the fact that daughters perception of two types of inappropriate parental attitudes: lack of acceptance and inconsequent behaviour was significantly

¹⁹ I. Obuchowska, *Agresja wśród dzieci w perspektywie rozwojowej* [in:] *Agresja i przemoc a zdrowie psychiczne*, M. Bińczycka-Anholcer (ed.), Warszawa-Poznań 2001, pp. 45–60.

²⁰ M. Sitarczyk, *Środowisko rodzinne nieletnich sprawców zabójstw* [in:] *Wokół wychowania. Rola rodziny i szkoły w procesie socjalizacji dziecka*, T. Rostowska, J. Rostowski (eds.), Łódź 2006, pp. 209–216.

²¹ R. Tremblay, *The Development of Physical Aggression from Early Childhood to Adolescence*. Wykład przedstawiony podczas 7th Biennial Conference of the EARA, Jena, Gerany, 31.05–04.06.2000.

²² Z. Bauman, *Etyka ponowoczesna*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 16–21.

²³ A. Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 5–7.

²⁴ M. Tyszkowa, *Zachowanie się dzieci szkolnych w sytuacjach trudnych*, Warszawa 1986, p. 135.

different. Nevertheless, the most important contextual analysis indicates that similarly as in 2002, daughters are harder on mothers than sons.

Analysis of the data on the correlation between the parental attitudes and specific patterns of aggressive reactions in adolescents has revealed a limited significance of this relation and its changes in time. The study performed in 2002 indicated significant relations between specific parental attitudes and aggressive behaviour in adolescents, however manifested only in girls. According to the results from 2013, a certain pattern of parental attitudes has a significant effect on the intensity of aggressive reactions both in adolescent girls and boys and on the physical aggression manifested by them. As far as girls are concerned, significant correlations were noted between the perception of the lack of acceptance and overprotective attitudes of mothers and fathers and the hostility and adequacy of aggressive reactions, for boys significant correlations were found between the perception of the lack of acceptance and all manifestations of aggression.

The change following from a comparison of the results from 2002 and 2013 may be interpreted as a stronger emotional relation of sons in the period of late adolescence with parents now than 11 years ago. It may be equivalent to extension of the period of developing emotional independence by boys. This supposition is supported by the results published by Oleszkowicz²⁵ who studied the level of loneliness and intergeneration gap in families and changes in them over the last 20 years. The results of this authoress indicate a similar level of conflict between parents and adolescents as 20 years ago, but today – because of the transformations in the parental roles – the conflict has become more concealed and is manifested by stronger sense of the lack of acceptance and greater sense of loneliness in adolescents.

The above correlations can be explained by the importance of the adolescents need of acceptance, if it is not satisfied by parents then aggressive behaviour follows, irrespective of the sex. However, other developmental needs of adolescents (the need of closeness and need of separation) emphasise the importance of a parent of different sex in the development of the child, the importance of father for girls and mothers for boys (see: Erikson²⁶, Logan²⁷). The excessive autonomy given to daughters by fathers or the lack of autonomy can drive the girls to taking up activities aimed at drawing fathers' attention. Perhaps high autonomy given to

²⁵ A. Oleszkowicz, *Konflikt w relacji rodzice – dzieci 20 lat później*, Referat wygłoszony na XXII Ogólnopolskiej Konferencji Psychologii Rozwojowej, Gdańsk, czerwiec, 2013.

²⁶ E.H. Erikson, *Dzieciństwo i społeczeństwo*, Poznań 1996, p. 54.

²⁷ R.D. Logan, *A Reconceptualization of Erikson's Theory*, "Human Development" 1986, No. 29, pp. 125–136.

daughters was premature and produced their anxiety about the loosening of the relation with father who in our culture is still treated as the person guaranteeing stability and safety of the family. This supposition is supported by a negative correlation between the hostility manifested by girls and their perception of fathers as too demanding. The negative correlation between the inconsequent attitude and intensity of hostility is difficult to interpret. It cannot be excluded that as a result of father inconsequent attitude some improper behaviour of daughters is not punished, some is forgiven and some is rewarded. This can lead to emotional ambivalence of daughter towards father and this ambivalence can be projected on relations with other people. Hence a lower result in the dimension of hostility manifested by daughters in social situations. The lack of consequence in the attitude of fathers towards daughters can bring insufficient expression of the norm regulating behaviour in social situations. Such a threat of incorrect socialisation increases in patriarchal families (see: K. Pospiszyl²⁸).

This result points out the ambiguous effects of intense attitude of acceptance in fathers. The excessive acceptance can be understood as the lack of demands or the lack of interest or acceptance of all kinds of behaviour of adolescent which can lead to development of negative emotions. Such a state is often frustrating for adolescents, and according to the Dollard–Miller conception, frustration increases aggression. This can explain an increased level of hostility and aggressive reactions noted in boys and girls (E. Aronson²⁹, H. Liberska³⁰, Nowak³¹). Full or unconditional parental acceptance of all types of behaviour of adolescent can make it difficult for a young person to get correct orientation in society as it fails to provide clear information about the correct modes of behaviour³².

²⁸ K. Pospiszyl, *Ojciec a wychowanie dziecka*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 67–71.

²⁹ E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R.M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna: serce i umysł*, Poznań 2002, pp. 153–161.

³⁰ H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska, D. Freudenreich, *Percepcja postaw rodzicielskich matek i ojców a zachowania agresywne dorastających córek i synów* [in:] *Zachowania agresywne dzieci i młodzieży. Uwarunkowania oraz możliwości ich przewycięzania*, D. Borecka-Biernat (ed.), Warszawa 2013, pp. 78–98.

³¹ J. Nowak, *Rodzinne i szkolne uwarunkowania przestępczości nieletnich dziewcząt – komunikat z badań* [in:] *Wokół wychowania. Rola rodziny i szkoły w procesie socjalizacji dziecka*, T. Rostowska, J. Rostowski (eds.), Łódź 2006, pp. 188–298.

³² G. Poraj, *Wyznaczniki, cele i przejawy agresji w świetle badań młodzieży szkolnej* [in:] *Wokół wychowania. Rola rodziny i szkoły w procesie socjalizacji dziecka*, T. Rostowska, J. Rostowski (eds.), Łódź 2006, pp. 196–208.

7. Final remarks

Results of the above presented and discussed studies have revealed changes in intensity of aggressive behaviour of Polish adolescents, changes in their perception of parental attitudes and a specific pattern of correlations between the parental attitudes and aggressive behaviour of adolescent boys and girls. Interventions towards the adolescents manifesting elevated level of aggression should be made taking into regard their perception of parental attitudes but it would be also recommended to engage parents in the process of prophylactic or therapeutic procedures. In certain situations it might be necessary to take up work with parents aimed at changes in their parental attitudes. Moreover, the way of adolescent functioning in the family context and in a wider social context should be analysed. The relations between the level of hostility and level of control of aggressive behaviour and the adequacy of aggressive behaviour analysed in the family system are directly connected with the functioning of adolescents in other systems (peer, school) and in roles other than the role of a child, that is in the role of a partner, friend or pupil.

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