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The Role of Anger, Fear and Curiosity in Various Conflict Resolution Strategies

Abstract

The aim of this research is to evaluate the emotions that generate constructive and destructive strategies for coping in social conflict situations by adolescents. Studies based on C. Spielberger's Three-Factor Personality States and Traits Inventory (TISCO), adapted by K. Wrześniewski, and K. Thomas' and R. Kilmann's Conflict Resolution Style Questionnaire (CRSQ), adapted by T. Wach (Dąbrowski 1991), were used for the empirical study done in 2014 on students from Polish gymnasium schools in Vilnius. Adolescent students (131 girls and 126 boys) ranging from age 13-15 years were chosen. Base on the analysis of the study material collected, one can say that adolescents applying destructive strategies in social conflict situations, demonstrate high level of negative emotions. Adolescents who constructively steer their behaviour in a social conflict situation are characterized with a higher level of positive emotions. The data from current studies suggests that youths using cooperation strategies in social conflict situations, exhibit higher emotional tension of curiosity, as a trait. Studies conducted show that during the age of adolescence, boys deal with emotions-activating social conflict situations better than girls,

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as more often they seek mutual understanding with partners rather than resolving disputable issues.

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Emotions and conflicts are associated in threefold ways. First of all, emotions can be the cause of conflict behavior. Conflict arises when people do not control their emotions (Bell & Song, 2005). Emotions can occur in reaction to an event which interrupts or prevents our potency to reach desired goals (Frijda, 2002). Incompatible goals often lead to conflict since two people are at cross-purposes, but prior to conflict behavior, they tend to lead to emotions because they impede or interrupt one's progress toward getting what one wants (Guerrero, 2013). People realize they are in conflict after they respond emotionally. The expression of negative emotions is signs of distress and a possible means for coping with that distress (Shapiro, 2005).

Secondly, emotions influence conflict behavior. Emotions are part of the conflict process – they influence the coping styles that people employ during interpersonal conflict (Behrendt & Ben-Ari, 2012). Conflict communication is a function of the emotions that conflict participants experience in relation to the arguments they are hearing or the situation they are facing (Guerrero, 2013). Emotions can be quite as strong as the tension is (Shapiro, 2002). Negative emotions may lead to the denial of positive information about the opponent and may cause persons to be more unwilling to negotiate or compromise, or accommodate (Gross, Halperin & Porat, 2013). Positive emotions elicit collaboration, creation of the alternatives, and empathy for the other parties (Shapiro, 2005). Emotional understanding often contributes to both well-aimed methods of assessing an opponent's emotions in conflict as well as their sophisticated social interaction skills (Liao, Li & Su, 2014).

Thirdly, thus considering the association between emotions and conflicts, emotions can be the consequence of conflict situation as well. Emotional stress increases during the problem-solving situation (Grossmann, Maier, Zimmermann, & Winter, 2001). Competitive approaches for managing conflict can lead to threats and pressuring of others. These results may involve emotional anger, frustration, and irritation. Another person's disagreements can be interpreted as personal attacks. This is the way the expressions of emotions occur as a conflict escalates (e.g.

Ayoko, Callan & Hartel, 2008). In contrast to negative conflict emotions, which are generally elicited by an interruption of one's goals, positive conflict emotions may arise when the prospect of cooperation suggests that one's goals will be obtained. Positive emotions may emanate from the closeness and interdependence that partners share.

The process of resolution and outcome of a conflict can have a tremendous impact on affective satisfaction levels. Negotiators typically desire two goals in their interaction: instrumental satisfaction (measures the extent to which material demands are fulfilled) and affective satisfaction (focuses on the general level of satisfaction with the emotions experienced during the conflict) (Shapiro, 2002, 2005). Xie and Zhou (2012) revealed two different mechanisms of subjective outcome formation: one by comparing results and the other by assessing feelings experienced during the process. It should be added that affective satisfaction in a conflict, predicts more accurately with the negotiators' preference and the objective outcome (economic aspect) of the next negotiation.

This is why during conflicts partners need to do more than manage their conflict behavior; they must be able to deal effectively with the different emotions they are experiencing (Guerrero, 2013). Research points out that good emotional management improves the capability to process information better (e.g. to motivate, plan, and achieve). This indicates that individuals who successfully manage their emotions are able to refocus their own and others' attention on more important problems (e.g. Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Despite the advances made, limited investigations have been done on examining the emotions involved in conflict processes. Most studies in the field of conflict resolution generally focus on the negotiation process rather than the interpersonal conflict itself which is the central effect of anger (Behrendt & Ben-Ari, 2012). It is still important to investigate the link between emotions and conflict behavior. This study aims to evaluate the emotions that generate constructive and destructive strategies as applied by adolescents in social conflict situations.

Adolescence age groups were selected due to the importance that this period has towards the development of emotion and conflict regulation skills (Calvete & Orue, 2012). During adolescent years, many biological, mental and motivational changes take place, as well as changes in social attitudes, which make the youths experience more problems in adapting their behaviours to new situations, tasks and social roles. Moreover, adolescents are exposed to a number of interpersonal stressors, which require the development of adequate emotional conflict regulation skills (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 2003).

1. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

Several theories exist to explain how and why emotions impact the conflict behavior. *Conflict dynamic perspective* posits the dimensions of conflict model which contain three interrelated elements - perceptual, emotional and behavioral dimensions (e.g. Mayer, 2000; Furlong, 2005; Bell & Song, 2005). The first one relates to the participants' perception towards conflict. In addition to their perceptions, how parties respond emotionally to conflict (emotional dimension). Based on their perceptions, different emotions may emerge. Behavioral dimension is the most overt and observable dimension, as it covers responses to the conflict. The conflict model posits that cognitions lead to emotions which in turn predispose the individual towards particular behaviors. These key dimensions should be assessed and understood in order to resolve the situation. From a dynamic perspective, it becomes essentially important to assess conflict from an emotional point of view: what the parties are feeling in relation to the conflict; how their emotions could impact the conflict process management.

Dimensions of conflict are addressed in the *Relational Identity Theory (RIT)* (Shapiro, 2005, 2010) which focuses on an individual's or group's relational identity – its perception and its association with another individual or group. According to Shapiro, autonomy (degree and valence of each party's freedom from the other – their independence to think, feel, or do as they would like without being constrained by the other) and affiliation (the degree and valence of each party's emotional connection with the other) are the direct property of the relationship between parties. Relational identity concerns – autonomy and affiliations – can affect conflict behavior in three substantial ways: 1) they curb normative expectations about taboos regarding what to say, do, think, or feel in relationships; 2) unaddressed relational identity concerns can generate negative emotions and subsequent antagonistic behavior; 3) well addressed relational identity concerns can result along with cooperative behavior and mutual gains.

Reasoning that links cognitive and emotional states to conflict-related behavior are supported by empirical research (e.g. Betancourt, 2004; Bell & Song, 2005; Halperin, 2011). Empirical work suggests that emotions mediate the link between perceptions of conflict and conflict resolution strategies. Betancourt (2004) found that empathic emotions appear to be activated by perspectives taken in and mediating its effect on conflict behavior. According the author, the attribution processes, empathetic emotions, and anger are key elements that explain violent responses to frustrating conflict situations. Specifically, when an instigating (or frustrating) action is perceived as less intentional and attributed to fewer controllable causes,

individuals experience less anger and more empathic emotions. Halperin (2011) concluded that understanding the role and the unique impact of each emotion can result in practical benefits within the realm of conflict resolution and peace-making.

Conflict resolution strategies (styles) are patterned responses to confrontation, or clusters of behavior during the conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). In literature conflict strategies are classified from the two-strategy approach to the ten-strategy approach (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2009). Most frequently is a five-strategy approach, developed by Kilmann and Thomas, which includes collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromising. There are several ways to characterize the five strategies approach when combining them into two dimensions: concern for self and concern for the other; activity and passivity; cooperativeness and assertiveness (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001); appropriateness and effectiveness (Gross & Guerrero, 2000); distributivity and integrity (Van de Vliert, Ohbuchi, Van Rossum, Hayashi & Van der Vegt, 2004); constructivity and destructivity (Heszen-Niejodek, 2000; Terelak, 2001; Borecka-Biernat, 2012).

Cooperation (collaboration / problem solving / integrating) represents a high level of both opponents' concerns. It is a well active strategy – in order to collaborate it, it becomes necessary to summon creative energy, get involve with the other person on the topic, and work toward a resolution. Usually, there are expressions of high levels of assertiveness through cooperation. It is also both effective and appropriate (disputants interrogate each other about their goals; seek a solution that integrates their goals). *Submission* represents a low level of concern for self but a high level of concern for the other. It is a passive and indirect response. It represents a high level of cooperativeness – in this strategy, protecting the relationship is most important. Individuals who use this strategy are perceived as appropriate but not effective. *Aggression* (competition / dominating / forcing) represents a high level of concern for self and a low level of concern for the other (one party reaches his/ her goal and rejects the other party's goal). Competition cannot be used without activity – it needs active work and high-energy involvement - in this strategy the individual resolves conflicts by using his/ her power, or by involving verbal abuse, anger, defence or attacking, and losing self-control. It is defined as a high level of assertiveness, and uncooperative one. *Avoidance* represents a low level of concern for self and a low level of a concern for the other; it is marked by passivity, uncooperativeness, ineffectiveness and inappropriateness. It uses more indirect tactics (refusing to talk to the opponent, walking away, changing the topic (involves avoiding the problem, avoiding discussion, and becoming distant)). *Compromise* is a middle ground, where there are moderate degree of concern for self and concern for other. Compromise can be either active or passive, depending

on its type. Compromising is based on bargaining. This strategy is also seen as moderately direct and cooperative, effective and appropriate.

A similar description of the five behavioral types, resulting from a combination of high or low self- and other-concern, are used by Bell and Song (2005), who have organized conflict relevant emotions into four categories. The fact that an emotion can stress the self or the other as the subject of the emotion, (self-concern versus other-concern), indicates the propensity it has for encouraging either approach or withdrawal behaviors. Conflict emotions grouped into four constructs can be described as 1) *hostility* (self-focused approach, comprised of sub-components of anger, anxiety, and frustration), 2) *self-conscious* (self-focused withdrawal, consists of shame, guilt, embarrassment and humiliation.), 3) *relational positivity* (other-focused approach consisting of liking the other party, respect, and sympathy), and 4) *fear* (other-focused withdrawal). However this typology has no empirical support as seen in later investigations. It is interesting to note that researchers indicate different sets of emotions that mostly influence conflict. For example, Gross, Halperin and Porat (2013) points out fear, hatred, despair, and anger; Guerrero and La Valley (2006) highlighted anger, jealousy, hurt, and guilt; Jehn and Mannix (2001 cited in Ayoko et al., 2008) supposed that emotions such as hostility, annoyance, and frustration are most often associated with relationship conflicts. According to Halperin (2011) fear, anger and hatred are the most influential emotions of conflict process. Grossmann, Maier, Zimmermann and Winter (2001) in assessing emotion regulation during a joint problem-solving task with friend, asked the subjects to rate their current mood for both negative and positive emotions such as: well-being, calmness, sadness, anger, tension, confusion, insecurity, helplessness, disappointment, resignation, interest, ‘getting on my nerves’ and surprise.

Each emotion can promote specific conflict resolution strategies. Anger and other *negative emotions* portray confused choices and can reduce empathy. High levels of negative emotions fuel intractable conflicts (Gross et al., 2013). Negative emotions may lead people to act different ways: one may reject an ultimatum that is superior to his/ her alternatives; one may replace his/ her original instrumental goals with new goals focused on attacking the person who triggered the anger (Daly, 1997 cited in Shapiro, 2005). *Anger*, the key determinant of aggression in the frustration-aggression theory (e.g., Skorny, 1968; Berkowitz, 1993), is said to increase violent responses in conflict environments.

Betancourt (2004) found that higher levels of anger may result in a greater probability of a violent response. On the other hand, Fischer and Roserman (2007) suggest that angry individuals tend to correct or improve the situations or the

relationships. These general emotional goals are expressed either in contention or in efforts to conciliate and change the source of anger or the nature of the interaction (Halperin, 2008). Research on hatred and anger conducted by Halperin (2008, 2011) suggests that anger toward the opponent is positively related to the outgroup blame-attribution. On the other hand, when controlling hatred, anger is related to a greater willingness to take risks in negotiation and an increased openness to positive information about the opponent. In addition, hatred is found to be negatively related for supporting negotiation, compromise, and reconciliation; willingness to learn new, positive knowledge about opponent. Hatred is also found to be positively related to supporting indiscriminant military actions. Tam, Hewstone, Cairns, Maio and Kenworthy (2007) have found that there is the link between anger and an objection to forgive, compromise, negotiate, and reconcile.

The *self-conscious* emotion construct is associated with conciliatory and compliant behaviors (Bell & Song, 2005). Behrendt and Ben-Ari (2012) indicate that guilt is positively related to integrative strategy, and is negatively correlated with the competitive and avoidance strategies. Their study also shows that shame leads to accommodation and avoidance.

Empirical research shows that *positive relational emotions* are significantly and positively related to the cooperative strategies (collaboration and compromise), and to an obliging strategy (Bell & Song, 2005). Positive emotions foster thinking, creativity, and increase flexibility of reactions, and hence cooperate in respect of experimenting, discovering new phenomena, seeking for new solutions (Fredrickson, 2001). The study of Schei (2013) which focused on the general state of positive arousal when entering the negotiations, revealed that positive arousal moderates the effect of creativity on joint outcomes (the higher the level of positive arousal, the more creative the resolution process). Betancourt (2004) demonstrates that empathic emotions (sympathy, pity) both increase the level of non-violent responses and lowered the likelihood of violence. Curiosity is one of the possible positive emotional reactions arising from behaviours that contribute to resolving problems. It reflects an intensive need to search, discover, and the desire to understand environmental features (Doliński, 2000; Voss & Keller, 1983; Łaguna & Bąk, 2007; Spielberger & Reheiser, 2009). Hence, some contradictions, novelties, or the desire to know situational features, can raise the emotional reactions of inquiring mind.

Bell and Song (2005) conceptualized *fear* as a social emotion that focus on the other party and characterize by the suppression of troubling or hurting the other party. Findings from Halperin, Bar-Tal, Nets-Zehngut and Almog (2008) indicate that fear is associated with the avoidance of taking risks and the willing-

ness to create a safer environment. In addition, fear is negatively related to taking risks in negotiations, initiating military actions, compromise, and security risks (Halperin, 2011).

Previous investigations on the influence of an opponent's emotional state on his or her own conflict behavior, supports the role that emotions play in conflict resolution. Therefore each emotion should be treated as a distinct predictor of behavior in conflict situation. Previous studies indicate emotions accompanying social conflict situations were assumed to be an independent variable and conflict resolution strategies as a dependent variable. Taking the context of emotional conditions of constructive and destructive strategies as applied by youth in social conflict situations as the study object, the following study questions are generated: 1) Is there a relationship between the content level of emotions and strategy used by young people coping in a social conflict situation? 2) Does the content level of emotions, as a factor, differentiate coping strategies for youths in a social conflict situation?

2. METHOD

2.1. PARTICIPANTS

The main criteria for selecting the group of students used in the study were their age. The impact of age on the selection of a social conflict situation coping strategy was analyzed in the 13-15 year-old group (sub-period of early adolescence). The age of adolescence is an important stage in the life of every human being, as it is considered to be the transitional stage from childhood into adulthood. It is also described as a period of rebellion and resistance. Many biological, mental, motivational changes take place during this period. Changes in social attitudes which occur during adolescence can cause problems for youth trying to adapt their behaviors to new situations, tasks and social roles (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz 2003). Due to the critical assessment of the surrounding reality and increased changes that occur in shaping of one's self-esteem, supremacy of the emotional zone over the mental life, as well as new forms of social contacts and directness in behavior of 13-15 year-old youth are constructed in order to understand the strategy of coping in social conflict situations. The empirical research was performed in 2014 among Polish students from Vilnius gymnasium schools. A total of 257 students participated in the study. The group included 131 girls and 126 boys.

2.2. Data Instruments

The background of the study was based from C. Spielberger's Three-Factor Personality States and Traits Inventory (TISCO), adapted by K. Wrześniewski, and K. Thomas' and R. Kilmann's Conflict Resolution Style Questionnaire (CRSQ), adapted by T. Wach (Dąbrowski 1991). The first section (*SPI*) of *TISCO* measured fear, anger and curiosity treated as emotional states felt in a given moment (state). In the second section (*TPI*) of *TISCO* was applied to examine the same emotions treated as permanent personality traits (trait). The study subjects were asked to circle a response that represented their feeling(s). The study subjects responses were based on a four-point frequency scale, where „1” means never/almost never, „2” means rather not/sometimes, „3” often/mediocre, and „4” almost always/very. Results were calculated separately for each subscale. For the sake of the study, a third sub-scale was introduced in the TPI scale to observe individual emotions treated as a trait. Results pertaining to the reliability and accuracy of *TISCO* Inventory proved satisfying and closely related to the original *STPI* method version.

Conflict Resolution Style Questionnaire (CRSQ) is the Polish version of the American test *The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)* developed by K. Thomas and R. Kilmann (Dąbrowski 1991). This research tool includes thirty pairs of statements that characterize different behaviours in conflict situations. The task for the respondents was to select a statement from each pair in which his/her opinions give the best description of themselves. The questionnaire consisted of five scales that correspond to the five response styles to conflict situations (cooperation, compromise, aggression, submission and avoidance). In each scale the study subject can achieve a maximum of 12 points and a minimum of 0 points. Scales in which a given person attains the highest results best describes his/her style(s) of conflict resolution (Dąbrowski, 1991). For the personal needs of the research, sten standards were calculated for individual scales from results obtained from the study subjects. Results are considered according to the following range: from the 1-4 sten low, 5-6 stens mediocre, and 7-10 stens high (e.g., Brzeziński, 2007). Description of the psychometric and standardisation procedure for the original *TKI* method has been presented in the paper by Herk, Thompson, Kenneth and Kilmann (2011).

2.3. Procedure

The research was conducted during class periods. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Parents were informed by educators that their children will be participating in the research.

The students signed with nicknames or initials. Before the using the TPI scale of TISCO Inventory and the CRSQ questionnaire, the study subjects were carefully advised about the instructions. Young people had the opportunity to ask questions for unclear situations. It must be emphasized that teenagers were positive about the study, through the interest shown and the willingness to answer to the questions asked in the questionnaire.

2.4. RESULTS

In order to investigate the relationship between the emotional content levels and coping strategies applied by youths in a social conflict situation, results were correlated to the *TPI* scales of TISCO Inventory and the *CRSQ* questionnaire scale. Pearson's correlation coefficient *r* for the entire group of youth divided according to gender is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson's correlation coefficients between TPI scales and TISCO Inventory scales and the CRSQ questionnaire scales for the whole group (N=257), for girls (N=131) and boys (N=126)

Scales of the CRSQ questionnaire	Sub-jects	TPI scale of TICO Inventory		
		Anger-trait	Fear-trait	Curiosity-trait
Avoidance	Girls	0,12 ns.	0,25 p<0,003	-0,20 p<0,02
	Boys	0,08 ns.	0,26 p<0,003	-0,27 p<0,003
	Total	0,09 ns.	0,23 p<0,0001	-0,23 p<0,0001
Submission	Girls	-0,35 p<0,0001	-0,08 ns.	0,02 ns.
	Boys	-0,23 p<0,01	0,05 ns.	-0,05 ns.
	Total	-0,29 p<0,0001	-0,002 ns.	0,01 ns.

Scales of the CRSQ questionnaire	Subjects	TPI scale of TICO Inventory		
		Anger-trait	Fear-trait	Curiosity-trait
Aggression	Girls	0,31 p<0,0001	-0,06 ns.	0,08 ns.
	Boys	0,10 ns.	-0,15 ns.	0,06 ns.
	Total	0,22 p<0,0001	-0,12 p<0,056	0,07 ns.
Compromise	Girls	-0,10 ns.	-0,02 ns.	-0,04 ns.
	Boys	-0,06 ns.	-0,21 p<0,02	0,06 ns.
	Total	-0,08 ns.	-0,09 ns.	0,02 ns.
Cooperation	Girls	-0,08 ns.	-0,10 ns.	0,12 ns.
	Boys	0,08 ns.	0,05 ns.	0,18 p<0,05
	Total	-0,004 ns.	-0,004 ns.	0,15 p<0,02

Legend: ns. – nonsignificant.

Based on Table 1, the correlation between anger, as a trait, and avoidance, compromise, and cooperation strategy scales are statistically insignificant for the entire study subjects and for both genders ($p < 0.05$). This supports the theory that a trained disposition to react with anger is not directly related to the trained disposition to avoidance and constructive styles (compromise, cooperation) to cope in social conflict situations.

A statistically high significant ($0.01 < p < 0.0001$) to a low negative correlation was linked to anger, as a trait, and submission strategy scale for the whole group of youth ($r = -0.29$) and for gender ($r = -0.35$ girls, $r = -0.23$ boys). Negative correlations in this case indicate a reverse relationship. Hence, an unambiguous trend exists simultaneously to values of the traits studied: that is the higher the level of anger interpreted as a relatively constant personality trait, the lower the level of submission strategy of coping, and inversely – the lower the anger level as a trait, the higher the intensity of submission strategy of coping in a social conflict situation.

Moreover while a low positive correlation coefficient was obtained, a statistically high significant ($p < 0.0001$) was showed between the anger level interpreted as a trait and aggression strategy scale for the whole group of youth subject to the

study ($r=0.22$) and for girls ($r=0.31$). A simple relationship emerges, in that the higher the disposition to anger reaction, the higher the level of aggression strategy of coping in a social conflict situation. At the same time, results from the statistical analysis enabled the assumption that the said relation is somehow determined by the factor, respondents' gender, because it is relevant among girls.

From Table 1, one can observe a low positive relationship between fear as a trait and coping avoidance strategy for the whole group of people subject to the study ($r=0.23$) and for girls ($r=0.25$), and boys ($r=0.26$), yet still statistically significant ($0.003 < p < 0.0001$). Hence, it seems that for youths the level of fear as a trait determine the coping avoidance strategy. Interpretation of the relationship is as follows: the higher the fear level as a trait, the more likely an adolescent applies avoidance strategy in case of social conflict. One may say that a trained disposition grants the ability to notice, objectively harmless social situations as threatening and to react disproportionately, a strong feeling of fear to the threat level, is connected with the trained disposition of avoidance coping in a social conflict situation.

The correlation of the fear coefficient in the TPI and Compromise scale of the CRSQ questionnaire has shown that boys attaining lower level of fear as a trait, applied the compromise strategy in case of social conflict situation. This proves that a low negative correlation coefficient was computed for the group of boys with a trained disposition for compromise coping in social conflict situations ($r=-0.21$, $p < 0.02$). One can assume that with boys a lower level of fear, interpreted as a trait, chose a highly intensified compromise coping strategy for conflicts.

Analysis of study results revealed lack of significant relations between fear as a trait and strategy scale of Submission, Aggression, and Cooperation of the CRSQ questionnaire for the entire group and for both groups were divided due to gender. It therefore supports that a trained disposition to fear reactions does not relate to the trained disposition to specific forms of destructive strategies (submission and aggression) and constructive ones (cooperation) in social conflict situations. It is worth adding that accurate results indicate in the pair of fear as a trait and aggressive coping strategy, the subject group of youth in the study showed that the p coefficient is close to the verge of significance, since it amounts to 0.05 and reaches a value of 0.056. One may assume that additional data verification would confirm presence of this relation as there is a tendency for negative relation between fear as a trait and aggressive form of youth's coping in a social conflict situation.

Analysis of the statistical data in Table 1 suggests the presence of a low negative relation between curiosity, interpreted as a relatively fixed personality trait and strategy of avoidance for the whole group of youth subject to the study

($r=-0.23$), and for girls ($r=-0.20$), and boys ($r=-0.27$) at a high relevance level $0.02 < p < 0.0001$. It seems that we are dealing with a two-way trend for the trait values studied: that is the lower the level of curiosity as a trait the higher the level of avoidance coping, and vice-versa: in addition, the higher the curiosity level as a trait, the lower the intensity of avoidance strategy of coping in a social conflict situation.

Furthermore, the data numbers indicate that a statistically weak ($0.02 < p < 0.05$) positive correlation was attained between the fixed personality disposition that reacts with curiosity and scale of cooperation strategy of coping for the whole youth group ($r=0.15$) and for boys ($r=0.18$). A significant dependency was not attained in the group of girls. The coefficients attained show that higher curiosity level as a trait, was accompanied with an increase in results in the Cooperation scale of the CRSQ questionnaire for the whole group and for group of boys. This means that the higher curiosity level as a trait fuels the cooperation strategy of coping in social conflict situation. The adolescence youth, especially boys with a higher curiosity level as a trait, chose social conflict situation a cooperation strategy bearing a higher tension.

Analysis of study results revealed a lack of significant associations between the emotions level of curiosity as a trait and strategy scale of Submission, Aggression, and Cooperation from the CRSQ questionnaire for the entire group and for both groups were divided due to gender. This means that trained disposition used to identify social conflict situations as a challenge and reacting to it with curiosity does not relate to the trained disposition to specific forms of destructive strategies (submission and aggression) and constructive ones (compromise) in social conflict situation.

At the next stage of analysis, a comparison was done on five groups of youth at a high destructive strategy level (avoidance, submission, aggression), and constructive strategy level (compromise, cooperation) in a social conflict situation, taking into account their gender, acknowledging the level and content of emotions measured with the TPI scale of the TICO Inventory. Groups with a high level of destructive strategy and constructive strategy of coping were separated due to high results in the CRSQ questionnaire scale ($N=154$ Total, $N=84$ Girls, $N=70$ boys). Comparison of mean results in the TPI Scale of TICO questionnaire performed on the basis of the one-way analysis of variance ANOVA (F statistics), could provide the answer to the question as whether differences in strategies of youth's coping in a social conflict situation are dependent on emotion levels of anger, fear, and curiosity as a trait? The results of the comparative analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean values (M), standard deviations (SD), and differences significance (F) between the youth applying the avoidance, submission, aggression, compromise, and cooperation strategy in a social conflict situation in respect to results from the TPI Scale of the TISCO Inventory acknowledging gender

TPI scale of TICO Inventory	Sub-jects	Coping strategies in a social conflict situation:										F	p
		Avoidance		Submission		Aggression		Compromise		Cooperation			
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Anger-trait	Girls	25,33	3,22	19,57	5,06	25,96	6,42	20,50	5,68	21,89	6,19	4,90	0,001
	Boys	24,67	0,58	20,95	5,23	21,61	4,93	21,36	4,97	23,00	3,08	0,50	ns.
	Total	25,00	2,10	20,15	5,12	23,70	6,05	20,88	5,31	22,29	5,18	3,51	0,009
Fear-trait	Girls	27,00	5,57	22,43	3,45	23,15	4,04	22,50	4,42	23,67	5,00	0,99	ns.
	Boys	22,67	1,16	20,90	3,14	20,00	3,98	20,50	4,65	23,60	4,72	1,13	ns.
	Total	24,83	4,31	21,79	3,38	21,52	4,28	21,63	4,56	23,64	4,72	1,54	ns.
Curiosity-trait	Girls	19,67	5,051	28,11	4,05	28,23	4,92	27,11	5,11	28,33	2,87	2,63	0,04
	Boys	27,00	4,36	26,45	3,20	27,82	4,04	27,07	2,67	29,40	2,07	0,93	ns.
	Total	23,33	5,99	27,42	3,78	28,02	4,45	27,09	4,16	28,71	2,59	2,14	ns.

Legend: nsr. – nonsignificant

When analysing the average amount of results in individual TPI Scales of the TISCO Inventory, one can see a small difference of the values when compared to coping strategies in the youth group as a whole, and in the group of girls and boys, separately. The differences between the fear level as a trait with adolescents (individual studies treated as a whole) using destructive and constructive strategies in the conflict situation are significant. F statistics showed a high significance level of 0.009. From this it may seem that the coping manner in a social conflict situation reflects differences in anger levels, as a youth trait. Whereas, results of fear level and curiosity as traits in the whole group of youth subject to the study do not differ highly statistically from the coping strategy in a social conflict situation. Rather it suggests an independence of the fear level – trait, curiosity – trait, and coping strategy in a social conflict situation visible in a youth group.

Between adolescent girls applying destructive and constructive strategies in the social conflict situation, there are highly significant differences in the anger level as a trait ($p < 0.001$) and curiosity as a trait ($p < 0.04$). Hence, for the girls' group there are clear visible dependencies between the anger-fear level and curiosity-fear level and the type of conflict resolution strategy. Therefore, between girls applying destructive and constructive strategies in social conflict situations, there are no significant differences in the fear level to interpret it as

a trait. Rather, what is visible is independence between the fear-trait level and coping strategy among girls.

Moreover, from the analysis done on the amount of mean results in individual TPI Scales of the TISCO Inventory, one can state that no significant differences were found in the values in the group of boys applying destructive and constructive strategies in a social conflict situation. The distributions of the ‘emotion’ variable presented (Tab. 2) show that coping strategies do not differ in respect of emotion’s level and content, and mean results obtained from the boys from individual destructive and constructive coping strategies are similar.

This indicates the need for a more detailed analysis on the detected differences. For this purpose, a specialised method was used, i.e. RIR Tukey test. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. RIR Tukey test’s results regarding comparison of differences between mean arithmetical results in TPI scale of TISCO Inventory depending on the type of coping strategy by the youth in a social conflict situation

TPI scale of TICO Inventory	Subjects	Coping strategies in a social conflict situation	Coping strategies in a social conflict situation:					Differences as to groups
			Avoidance (A)	Submission (S)	Aggression (Ag)	Compromise (C)	Cooperation (Co)	
Anger-trait	Girls	Avoidance						ns.
		Submission	0,47					S<Ag
		Aggression	0,99	0,001				Ag>S,
		Compromise	0,66	0,98	0,02			Ag>C
		Cooperation	0,90	0,83	0,36	0,98		C<Ag
	Total	Avoidance						ns.
		Submission	0,24					S<Ag
		Aggression	0,98	0,009				Ag>S
		Compromise	0,43	0,98	0,14			ns.
		Cooperation	0,85	0,70	0,91	0,93		ns.
Curiosity-trait	Girls	Avoidance						A<S, A<Ag
		Submission	0,02					S>A
		Aggression	0,02	0,99				Ag>A
		Compromise	0,07	0,95	0,93			ns.
		Cooperation	0,04	0,99	0,99	0,96		ns.

Legend: ns. – nonsignificant.

Outcomes from the statistical analysis revealed that youth group (in case of the entire group subject to the study) with an aggression strategy are characterised

with higher mean anger level as a trait when compared with other adolescents that applied a submission strategy in a social conflict situation. Moreover, results obtained in the girls' group indicate presence of differentiation between the mean results of emotions anger-trait depending on the type of coping strategy. Girls applying aggression strategies showed a significantly higher mean anger level as a trait compared to girls who apply a submission strategy and compromise strategy in a social conflict situation. Generally speaking, a higher level of anger trait experienced in a social conflict situation seems to favour the application of aggression strategy of youth's coping, especially for girls in this situation.

Results from the statistical analysis suggest that curiosity level as a trait, impacts different types of conflict resolution strategies. Mean arithmetic results in respect to curiosity as a trait obtained by girls using the avoidance strategy is decisively lower than the analogous amount referring to girls using specific destructive (aggression, submission) strategies. Thus, a low tendency to perceive a social conflict situation as a challenge and failure to react to it by arising curiosity emotions incline girls to apply avoidance in conflict situations.

3. DISCUSSION

The study's main limitation is that it is only suitable for certain organizations (i.e., Polish gymnasium schools in Vilnius). Consequently, the sample size significantly limits the generalization and applicability of results. Furthermore, variables were measured by self-reports, which can cause an overzealousness to create a more socially attractive image of the self.

However, results from the conducted study allowed the following assumptions to be made. Youth (results for the entire group and divided by gender) applying avoidance in social conflict situations are prone to experience fear as a trait. Results presented are convergent with the results obtained by Borecka-Biernat (2006), Domińska-Werbel (2014), and Halperin et al. (2008). It is worth mentioning the impact of the avoidance strategy can lower the curiosity level as a fixed personality predisposition. One can assume that along with the increase level of fear level as a trait and the decreased level of curiosity as a trait with adolescents within interpersonal situations, pose a potential threat to performance of their own goals as the level of avoidance strategy increases, which takes the form of engaging alternative actions and/or seeking social contacts.

The study also revealed that youth (results for the whole group and for girls) displayed in social conflict situations, an aggression strategy that demonstrates

a higher level of trained disposition in reaction to anger. One should also note that along with reducing the level of anger as a trait, in a social conflict situation the level of youth's submission strategy will be increasing (acknowledging study subjects as a whole and based on gender). Hence, a lower level of anger as a relative to permanent personality trait is connected with higher susceptibility youth submission, and failure to oppose and become subordinate in conflict reactions (e.g. Łosiak, 2007; Kossewska, 2008; Borecka-Biernat, 2013; Domińska-Werbel, 2014; Betancourt, 2004).

However these findings contrast with the findings of Bell and Song (2005) who found no supportive evidence in predicting hostile emotions as a dominating strategy and fear as an avoidance strategy. Thus contradictory results may be due to age difference of participants (adolescents vs. adult). Modifications in regards to the intensity, duration, and latency of emotional reactions that aid in goal accomplishment is included in emotion regulation and accompanies the processes of monitoring and evaluating (e.g. Grossmann et al., 2001).

The data from the current study therefore suggests that youth (results for the whole group and for boys) using in a social conflict situation as a cooperation strategy exhibit higher levels of emotional tension of curiosity as a trait. Hence, the higher the curiosity level as a disposition to react to any changes and innovations, the stronger, especially with boys, the need to communicate with a partner in order to find a mutually beneficial solution to a problem that occurred as a conflict. One should also note that boys who made an effort to find disputable resolutions using the method of partial resignation from own goals for the sake of objectives of a partner, to lower the level of fear – as a trait – was detected. It permits the assumption that that appearance of adaptation function of fear as a trait, by lowering tension, benefits compromised behaviours of boys, by stopping or mitigating a conflict (e.g. Doliński, 2000; Fredrickson, 2001; deCatanzaro, 2003; Jelonkiewicz & Kosińska-Dec, 2008; Domińska-Werbel, 2014). Generally speaking, the study showed that adolescent-aged boys dealt with social conflict situation activating emotions, better than girls. This finding, in contrast with other studies, showed that girls are relatively higher in positive problem solving and in withdrawal and compliance as well (Ayas, Deniz, Kagan & Kenc, 2010; De Wied, Branje & Meeus, 2007; Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006; Feldman & Gowen, 1998; Owens et al., 2005; Black, 2000; Ciuladiene, 2013). However, some researchers have revealed there were no significant differences between gender and conflict resolution strategies (Missotten, Luyckx, Branje, Vanhalst & Goossens, 2011; De Wied et al., 2007; Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006; Owens et al., 2005; Black, 2000; Borecka-Biernat & Ciuladiene, 2015). As Noakes and Rinaldi (2006) state, this is

partly due, to the rapid changes that have occurred in recent years with respect to gender roles (e.g. females becoming more involved in activities and behaving in a similar manner like their male counterparts). On the other hand, the incongruity of research can be determined by methodological variations.

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