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Personality correlates of the strategy of avoidance in handling difficult social situations

Difficult situations are not rare in human life. On the contrary, they accompany people from early childhood, so the knowledge about the actions taken by people in order to handle difficult situations and the conditioning factors is of considerable importance.

Difficult situations are not homogeneous, but rather form an internally diversified group. In life-time situations a person may experience various types of difficulties at the same time. An important subgroup of difficult situations are socially difficult situations, i.e. situations which threaten the cherished values, as well as the fulfilment of the individual needs and social aspirations. These are situations in which an individual is ridiculed, severely criticised, involved in an interpersonal conflict or forced by the requirements and demands of others to change the aim of aspirations or resign from important things. It is evident that this category of difficult situations encompasses situations of social exposure, assessment and criticism, as well as circumstances of social conflict and social pressure¹. Such situations are encountered by the young people quite frequently on a daily basis. Research findings obtained by, among others, B. Lohman and P. Jarvis (2000)², M. Krzyśko (1999)³, L. Pufal-Struzik (1997)⁴, R. Sikora and E. Pisula (2002)⁵ proved that adolescents commonly regarded school as a source of the greatest threat. Difficult social situations in the school environment include: oral answers in front of the teacher, teacher's critical remarks and disapproval, graded tests, exams and other methods of performance assessment, public speaking and

¹ Tyszkowa, M. (1997). Odporność psychiczna, In: W. Pomykało (Ed.). Encyklopedia Pedagogiczna, (pp. 475-478). Warsaw: The "Innowacja" foundation.

² Lohman, B., & Jarvis, P. (2000). Adolescent stressors, coping strategies, and psychological health studied in the family context. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29, 15-43.

³ Krzyśko, M. (1999). Styl atrybucyjny a sposoby radzenia sobie młodzieży w trudnych sytuacjach szkolnych i pozaszkolnych. In: W. Kojas, R. Mrózka, & R. Studenski (Ed.). *Młodzież w sytuacjach zmian gospodarczych, edukacyjnych, społecznych i kulturowych* [Young people against the background of economic, educational, social and cultural changes] (pp. 265-276). Cieszyn: Silesian University Publishing Office, agency office in Cieszyn.

⁴ Pufal-Struzik, L (1997). Niektóre cechy osobowości młodzieży agresywnej, *Wychowawcza*, 2, 151-156.

⁵ Sikora, R., & Pisula, E. (2002). Przyczyny stresu i strategie radzenia sobie ze stresem u młodzieży w wieku 14-16 lat]. *Polskie Forum Psychologiczne*, 2, 110-122.

being an object of ridicule in the circle of schoolmates. School is also connected with the teachers' authoritarian pressure and the rigidity of their requirements, which gives rise to conflicts between teachers and pupils. Other sources of difficult situations are relations with the family and peers. The latter, connected with the lack of friends' loyalty or disagreements with schoolmates or a girlfriend/boyfriend, were considered the major source of personal threat by a mere few percent of interviewees. Conflicts with parents are an important source of tension in adolescence. A great proportion of them are everyday problems - differences in opinions, taste, as far as e.g. clothes, music, free time activities are concerned. The growing need for independence in young people clashes with the norms, commands and bans imposed by parents and their tendency to control the life and activities of their growing up children. In the light of those studies it turns out that young people experience the majority of everyday life problems.

Difficult situations cannot be ruled out from human life. From the moment of birth everyone has to learn how to handle difficulties and challenges. Without doubt, children find it more difficult, since they have considerably smaller control over circumstances causing negative emotions, and therefore - smaller possibilities of exerting an influence on them. Moreover, their chances of cognitive assessment of a problematic situation and explaining it in a logical way differ from adults' chances⁶. Therefore it is worth observing how children handle everyday pressures. Those minor, but numerous daily problems are particularly burdensome for some adolescents. The activities they take when faced with a difficult situation are pondered in the very specific circumstances, as a strategy of handling a current difficult situation. Numerous studies and everyday observation indicate that adolescents present quite large repertoire of strategies of handling difficult social situations⁷. Among them, there are defence strategies in form of avoiding confrontation with a problem (e.g. taking up absorbing occupations unrelated with the problem).

A key role in explaining changes in human behaviour in difficult situations is played by the concept of the psychological mechanism of human behaviour in difficult situations developed by M. Tyszkowa (1986)⁸. In the psychological mechanism of behaviour in difficult situations a particularly important role - according to that author (1986) - is played by basic cognitive structures

⁶ Ryan-Wenger, N. (1992). A taxonomy of children's coping strategies: A step toward theory development. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 62(2), 256-263.

⁷Frączek, A. (2003). Wszystko o twojej agresji, *Charaktery*, 7, 28-30, Skowrońska, D.(1994). Zachowania agresywne w sytuacjach frustracyjnych młodzieży upośledzonej umysłowo w stopniu lekkim, *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin*, Sectio J, vol VII, 6, 57-63, Kossewska, J.(1995). Młodzież studiująca i stres: problemy stresotwórcze i sposoby radzenia sobie ze stresem. *Roczniki Komisji Nauk Pedagogicznych*, XLVIII, 115-129, Pisula, E., & Baum, (1992). Jak dzieci radzą sobie ze stresem, *Edukacja i Dialog*, 8, 11-14.]

⁸ Tyszkowa, M. (1986). *Zachowanie siedziecei w sytuacjach trudnych* [Children behaviour in difficult situations]. Warsaw: PWN.

of personality, i.e. the picture of the world (structure of the world) and the picture of oneself (structure of 'myself'). How people perceive the world, what are their attitudes and expectations towards themselves, others, tasks and the outcomes of their activities determine the way of cognitive and emotional perception and interpretation of difficult situations, which, in turn, has an influence on their behaviour in that situation. Negative, poorly organised and inaccurate structure of 'myself is particularly vulnerable in a difficult situation, which - according to M. Tyszkowa (1977)⁹ - results in shifting the purpose of activities towards self-defence. Behaviour in difficult situations is negatively influenced by low self-esteem. In a difficult situation, low self-esteem leads to increasing a personal feeling of threat or a growing tendency to resign from reaching the aim of activities and to withdraw from social interaction¹⁰.

How an individual functions in difficult situations is also determined by other elements of personality. M. Tyszkowa (1978)¹¹ draws attention to some mechanisms of control, describing the way they function to the control over a situation. Those mechanisms of control determine how human behaviour changes in difficult situations. The subjective confidence that it is possible to control the world around is an important variable which regulates behaviours in difficult situations. Not being confident of the ability to influence life occurrences leads to resignation, withdrawal and giving up efforts to solve the problem¹².

The reflection of the disturbed state of relations with the environment, which takes place in a difficult situation, increases the level of activation. Emotional activation caused by a difficult situation has a negative variance. Fear is one of the possible emotional reactions of a negative value, caused by a situation which is perceived and regarded as difficult and threatening¹³. Fear is usually unpleasant for an individual, hence attempts to free oneself from it. Methods of dealing with fear can be found among the strategies of dealing with a difficult situation. The strategies of dealing with a

⁹ Tyszkowa, M. (1977). Zachowanie sędzioci i młodzieży w sytuacjach trudnych. Teoretyczno-metodologiczne podstawy badań.,In: M. Tyszkowa (Ed.). Zachowanie się młodzieży w sytuacjach trudnych i rozwój osobowości, (pp. 7-17). Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University Publishing Office.

¹⁰ Ogińska-Bulik, N. (2001). Zasoby osobiste jako wyznaczniki radzenia sobie ze stresem, *Universitatis Lodziensis folia Psychologica*, 5, 83-93

¹¹Tyszkowa, M. (1978). Sytuacyjno-poznawcza koncepcja odporności psychicznej, *Przegląd Psychologiczny*, 1,3-15.

¹² Bishop, G. (2000). *Psychologia zdrowia*, Wrocław: Astrum Publishing House. Ogińska-Bulik, N. (2001). Zasoby osobiste jako wyznaczniki radzenia sobie ze stresem , *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis folia Psychologica*, 5, 83-93, Timko, Ch., Moos, R., & Micheison, D. (1993). The context of adolescents' chronic life stressors. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 21, 397-420, Rola, J., & Pisula E. (1993). Style radzenia sobie ze stresem rodziców dzieci z mózgowym porażeniem dziecięcym i z zespołem Downa ,*Zdrowie Psychiczne*,3-4, 94-101.

¹³ Lazarus, R., & Averill, J. (1972), Emotion and cognition with special reference to anxiety. In: Ch. Spielberger (Ed.). *Anxiety. Current trends in theory and research* (pp.241-283). New York: Academic Press.

difficult situation are activated upon the arousal of negative emotions and used until the stressful event ceases to exist¹⁴. Fear, as it reaches the peak of its intensiveness, makes it impossible to overcome difficulties efficiently, hampers spontaneous human activity, reduces motivation to transgressive actions, causes lack of control over one's own behaviour and prompts the escape from the situation¹⁵.

Generally, in the psychological mechanism of human behaviour in difficult situations as presented by M. Tyszkowa (1986)¹⁶, a special role in changing behaviour in difficult situations is played by the general system of regulation, namely personality. Therefore, this dissertation presents studies of the personality-based premises of the strategy of avoidance used by the young to handle difficult social situations. The most important of them seem to be: self-assessment, the sense of control localisation and fear.

Variables, problem and research hypothesis

In the conducted research, self-assessment, the sense of control localisation and fear were considered independent variables, while the strategy of avoidance in dealing with difficult social situations - a dependent variable.

Self-assessment is defined as a group of judgements and opinions, which individuals treat as describing themselves¹⁷. These judgements and opinions refer to the present qualities of an individual, among which it is possible to distinguish features of physical, moral and ethical, personal and social nature. The impact of self-assessment on human behaviour in a psychological situation depends on its type. The subject of the research was the level of detailed self-assessment regarding the particular qualities of a given individual and the level of global self-assessment, which is the sum of detailed self-assessment volumes¹⁸.

The sense of control localisation is a constant generalised expectation referring to the localisation of reinforcements. If individuals notice that reinforcements depend on their own actions

¹⁴ Lazarus, R (2000). How Emotions Influence Performance in Competitive Sports. *The Sport Psychologist* 14,229-252.

¹⁵ Harwas-Napierała, B. (1987). Czynniki społeczno-rodzinne w kształtowaniu się lęku u młodzieży, Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University Publishing Office. Leary, M., & Kowalski, R. (2001). *Lęk społeczny*, Gdansk: GWP Publishing House., Eysenck, M. (2001). Sprawdź swoje lęki, *Charaktery [Characters]*, 1, 29-30., Nitendel-Bujakowa, E. (2001). Lęki szkolne jako wyznacznik funkcjonowania dziecka, *Problemy poradnictwa psychologiczno-pedagogicznego*, 1, 15-37.

¹⁶ Tyszkowa, M. (1986). *Zachowanie się dzieci w sytuacjach trudnych*, Warsaw: PWN

¹⁷ Kulas, H. (1986). *Samocena młodzieży*, Warsaw: WSiP. Kulas, H. (1988). *Stabilności zmiana poczucia kontroli we wczesnej fazie okresu dorastania*, *Psychologia Wychowawcza*, 3, 257-269.

¹⁸ Fitts, W. (1975). *Podręcznik do Skali Badania Obrazu Własnej Osoby (Skala Samooceny)*, Warsaw.

or their relatively constant qualities, they have a sense of internal control localisation. On the other hand, if a reinforcement is perceived as subsequent to one's own actions, but not entirely dependent on them, the sense of control localisation is external¹⁹.

The term 'fear' applies to two classes of referents. It is a specific state, lasting for a certain period of time, or way of individual's reaction to a situation of threat. Among situations updating the state of fear, it is possible to distinguish socially difficult situations. The term 'fear' is also used to describe a relatively constant feature of personality, taking into account e.g. the frequency with which states of fear occur and their average intensity in case of a given individual²⁰.

In the conducted research, the strategy of avoidance in dealing with difficult social situations was considered a dependent variable. Strategies of avoidance in difficult situations are typically defensive behaviours, allowing only to reduce the unpleasant emotional tension, but the initial purpose is replaced with achieving a good disposition. It is possible by avoiding confrontation with a difficult situation, by taking up additional activities focusing attention and distracting one's attention from the problem (watching TV, gorging oneself, sleeping) and by looking for contacts with other people²¹.

Studying the impact of self-assessment, the sense of control localisation and fear on shaping the strategy of avoidance in dealing difficult social situations, the following research question was formulated: Which personality variables form the basis for the strategy of avoidance in dealing with difficult social situations in case of young people.

The question allows putting forward the following hypothesis, which will be verified by the analysis of findings of the conducted empirical research studies: Adolescents who present low level of self-assessment, external sense of control and high level of fear use the strategy of avoidance in difficult social situation more frequently.

Method

Measurement. The variables in the research study were measured with the help of the author's questionnaire assessing how the young people handle difficult situations of social contacts (RTSS)²²,

¹⁹ Drwal, R. (1978). Poczucie kontroli jako wymiar osobowości- podstawy teoretyczne, techniki badawcze i wyniki badań, *Materiały do Nauczania Psychologii*, vol III, 3, 307-345.

²⁰ Spielberger, Ch. (1966). Theory and Research on Anxiety. In: Ch. Spieberger (Ed.). *Anxiety and Behavior* (pp. 3-20). New York: Academic Press.

²¹ Ryan-Wenger, N. (1992). A taxonomy of children's coping strategies: A step toward theory development. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 62(2), 256-263.

²² Borecka-Biemat, D. (2003). Kwestionariusz radzenia sobie w trudnych sytuacjach społecznych, *Przegląd Psychologiczny*, 1, 9-36.

Self-assessment scale (TSCS) by W. Fitts, the questionnaire assessing the sense of control (KBPK) by G. Krasowicz and A. Kurzyp-Wojnarska, as well as the Inventory of the State and Properties of Fear (ISCL) by C. Spielberger, J. Strelau, M. Tysarczyk and K. Wrześniewski.

The author's questionnaire RTSS is designated to examine the strategy of handling difficult social situations used by young people at an average school age. It consists of a description of 30 difficult social situations. Three types of behaviour were provided for each situation - the first refers to handling a difficult situation in an aggressive way, the second to avoiding it, and the third to dealing with it reasonably.

Self-assessment Scale (TSCS) by Fitts consists of 100 descriptive statements about oneself, with which the interviewer may perform a self-assessment, using the phenomenological system of classifying statements. Ten of them create the so-called selfassessment rate (SC). The remaining ninety statements comprise the Scale proper. They compose 8 rates of detailed self-assessment forming a grid of three verses (“This is how I am”, “This is how I feel about myself”, “This is how I behave”) and five columns (“I – physically”, "I - morally and ethically", "I - personally", "I - family" and "I - socially"). Apart from the rates of detailed self-assessment, the Scale enables to calculate a global positive rate (P.Glob.).

The questionnaire KBPK is used to measure a personality variable called “the sense of control localization”. It consists of 46 questions of forced choice; 36 of them are diagnostic items, while the remaining 10 are buffer questions. Diagnostic questions regarding simple situations taken from every-day life of the school young people, compose two scales: the scale of successes (S) and the scale of failures (P). The questions regarding favourable events compose the scale of successes (S), while questions regarding unfavourable events - the scale of failures (P). The sum of results achieved in the scales of successes and failures composes a rate of generalised sense of control localisation (S+P).

The Inventory of the State and Properties of Fear (ISCL) by C. Spielberger, J Strelau, M Tysarczyk and K. Wrześniewski basically consists of two separate scales, one of which (XI) is designated to measure the state of fear, while the other, marked with the symbol (X-2), to measure the Properties of Fear. Both scales are presented on the same sheet, entitled on both sides "The Self-assessment Questionnaire". The test items are below the instructions in the number of 20 for each scale. They have a form of short statements referring to the subjective feelings of an individual.

Sample of interviewees. The study covered 376 girls and 404 boys aged 13-15. Overall, 780 people participated in the conducted research. One interviewed pupils of the first and second year of middle school from Wrocław and its surroundings. All interviewees were adolescents.

Analysis of the research findings

In order to find out which set of personality features is connected with the fact that in the course of difficult social situations some people use the strategy of avoidance more intensively, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted, with the strategy of avoidance as a dependent variable and the following independent variables: the global rate of self-assessment level (P.Glob.), self-assessment rates connected with the assessments regarding various fields of self-functioning in social roles ('I - physically' (PA), 'I - morally and ethnically' (PB), 'I personally' (PC), 'I - family' (PD) and 'I - socially' (PE)), self-assessment rates connected with experiencing and perceiving oneself ('This is how I am' (PWI), 'This is how I feel about myself' (PW2) and 'This is how I behave' (PW3)), the sense of control localisation for the situation of success (S), the sense of control localisation for the situation of failure (P), the generalised sense of control localisation (S+P), fear as a momentary state experienced in connection with a difficult situation (X-1) and fear as a relatively constant feature of personality. (X-2). The findings were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Stepwise multiple regression of the avoidance scale findings (U) of RTSS against the scales of the questionnaire: the findings of Self-assessment scale, KBPK and the Inventory ISCL for the whole group (N=780) and for girls (N=376) and boys (N=404)

Interviewees	Variable	Beta	B	Standard error B	t	Level p<
Total	PA	-0.16	-0.06	0.02	-4.39	0.001
	S	-0.13	-0.16	0.04	-3.69	0.002
	residual		13.26	1.07	12.44	0.000000
Coefficient of multiple correlation: R=0,23 Coefficient of multiple determination : R ² =0,05 Equation importance: F(2,777)=20,69; p<0,00000 Standard error of estimation: 3,56						
Girls	PE	-0.17	-0.07	0.02	-3.39	0.0008
	P	-0.13	-0.17	0.07	-2.59	0.01
	residual		13.86	1.58	8.76	0.000000
Coefficient of multiple correlation: R=0,23 Coefficient of multiple determination : R ² =0,05 Equation importance: F(2,373)=10,53; p<0,00004 Standard error of estimation: 3,67						
Boys	PA	-0.18	-0.07	0.02	-3.54	0.0005
	S	-0.16	0.18	0.06	-3.27	0.001
	residual		13.67	1.38	9.92	0.000000
Coefficient of multiple correlation: R=0,26 Coefficient of multiple determination : R ² =0,07 Equation importance: F(2,401)=14,87; p<0,000000 Standard error of estimation: 3,44						

Key: PA – 'I – physically', PE – 'I – socially', S - scale of successes, P- scale of failures

The findings show that the strategy of avoiding difficult social situations by the young people (the interviewed, overall) is strongly influenced by the assessment of one's own appearance (PA) and the sense of control localisation in the situation of successes (S). The percentage of the explained variance for the strategy of avoidance amounts to 5% ($R^2 = 0,05$). The remaining variables considered in the research turned out to be insignificant determinants of the strategy of avoidance in the group of young people. The Beta value indicates that the lower self-assessment of one's own physical features, external appearance and health and the stronger conviction that successes are externally controlled, the more frequently adolescents use the strategy of avoidance in dealing with difficult social situations. Shifting responsibility for one's own success onto the sphere of chance or luck, particularly when lacking an attractive physical appearance, may cause unwillingness to take charge of one's own fate and passive behaviour in difficult situations.

Will the same properties turn out equally important both for girls and boys who apply the strategy of avoidance more frequently in dealing with difficult social situations. The answer to this question is given in the findings of the next regression analysis, which is presented in Table 1.

Out of 14 independent variables, two proved important in the regression equation; in case of girls, it is the self-assessment in relations with the general social environment (PE) and the sense of control localisation in a situation of failures (P). The coefficient of multiple determination for the strategy of avoidance in the group of girls amounts to 5% and proves that those variables explain a very small proportion of dependent variable variance. Other independent variables provided for in the research turned out to be insignificant determinants of the strategy of avoidance in the group of girls. The Beta value indicates that the lower self-assessment of an individual as a participant in the process of interaction with other people or a partner in the company of people and the stronger conviction that failures can be externally controlled, the more frequently girls apply the strategy of avoidance in difficult social situations. It turned out that girls' lack of self-acceptance in the field of social functioning and responsibility for failures results in their lack of motivation to make attempts to change their situation. They try to come to terms with the existing situation and usually turn to other activities, so as to distract the attention from the existing problem.

On the other hand, the parameters of regression equation, incl. its significance, prove that the level of findings in the field of 'I - physically' (PA) and the sense of control localisation in the situation of successes (S) has a serious impact on the level of the strategy of avoidance as a way of dealing with difficult situations in a group of boys (cf. Table 1). It can be interpreted as follows: the lower assessment of one's own body, external appearance and physical fitness and the stronger

conviction that positive events are independent from one's own actions and that getting involved in activities is purposeless, because the final result does not depend on those actions, the more frequently boys will withdraw from difficult phenomena in their environment. The coefficient of multiple determination is very low ($R^2=0,07$), which means that only 7% of variability in the strategy of avoidance can be explained on the basis of the above-mentioned variables.

To sum up, the findings of the conducted analyses indicate that self-assessment and the sense of control localisation are connected with the strategy of avoidance in handling difficult social situations. It is interesting that the cited data provide information about the indirect impact of fear and its type on the strategy of avoidance in handling difficult social situations. Generally, it can be said that, in the light of statistical verification, the obtained findings enabled a partial verification of the hypothesis presented in the theoretical part.

Summary of the research findings

The findings of the conducted research studies allow the following conclusions:

1. Adolescents (both all the interviewed and the interviewees as broken down into gender) using the strategy of avoidance in difficult social situations have lower assessment of themselves and the particular aspects of 'themselves' which are connected with the sphere of interpersonal relations. Individuals willing to use strategies of avoidance in difficult situations regard themselves as occupying a lower social position, have lower assessment of social attitudes and feel that they are perceived negatively by others. Generally, the young people of decreased self-esteem more frequently apply defensive strategies based on immature forms of behaviour (avoidance) which reduce emotional tension, regardless of the type of existing difficulties. Similar findings were obtained in the research conducted by D. Kubacka-Jasiecka (1988)²³, N. Ogińska-Bulik (2001)²⁴ and D. Borecka-Biernat (2001)²⁵.

2. It must be also noted that a stronger conviction that others influence positive and/or negative results of one's own actions (external control) is conducive to increasing the strategy of avoidance in dealing with difficult social situations among the young peoples (overall and in terms of gender). It also seems probable that lack of faith in the possibility of obtaining the desired results of

²³ Kubacka-Jasiecka, D. (1988). Struktura ja osób agresywnych jako źródło lęku, *Rocznik Komisji Nauk Pedagogicznych*, XL, 187-200.

²⁴ Ogińska-Bulik, N. (2001). Zasoby osobiste jako wyznaczniki radzenia sobie ze stresem, *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis folia Psychologica*, 5, 83-93.

²⁵ Borecka-Biernat, D. (2001). *Zachowanie nieśmiała młodzieży w trudnej sytuacji społecznej*, Cracow: "Impuls" Printing House.

one's own actions or lacking sense of responsibility for failures is conducive to revealing the strategy of avoidance in difficult social situations among the young people. These findings indicate that the young people who are convinced of a difficult situation being impossible to change apply defensive strategies in the form of an escape from the problem, without attempting to solve it. Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by J. Rola and E. Pisula (1993)²⁶ and T. Rostowska (2001)²⁷.

3. The study analysis also revealed that the lower the level of assessment referring to the 'external reference system', which is connected with social roles performed, the related way of functioning in the environment and the "shift or the sense of control localisation separately for successes and failures, the more frequently adolescents (both generally, and as broken down into genders) apply the strategy of avoidance in handling difficult social situations. These findings indicate that the lack of self-acceptance in the field of social functioning and lack of young people's confidence that it is possible to control positive and negative outcome of events suppress the motivation to make attempts to change the situation. young people try then to come to terms with the existing situation and usually turn to other activities, so as to distract their attention from the existing problem²⁸.

4. Fear (state, quality) did not come out as a direct predictor of the strategy of avoidance in dealing with difficult social situation. This result seems to correspond with the conclusion formulated by M. Tyszkowa (1986)²⁹ that the structure and qualities of the personality of an individual, and above all - the set of habits (learned methods) of reacting against difficult situations that are shaped in specific educational conditions - determine how emotional tension will be perceived by an individual in a difficult situation (as information and compensation in relation to the purpose of the activity, or as a signal of personal threat).

To sum up the above-mentioned findings, it can be stated that young people who present low self-assessment in different roles and social systems, and particularly those aspects of themselves which are directly connected with social interactions, apply the strategy of avoidance in difficult situations. It cannot be overlooked that a characteristic feature of the structure of "myself" is information about oneself

²⁶ Rola, J., & Pisula E. (1993). Style radzenia sobie ze stresem rodziców dzieci z mózgowym porażeniem dziecięcym i z zespołem Downa, *Zdrowie Psychiczne*, 3-4, 94-101.

²⁷ Rostowska, T. (2001). *Konflikt międzypokoleniowy w rodzinie. Analiza psychologiczna*, Lodz: University in Lodz Publishing Office.

²⁸ Rola, J., & Pisula E. (1993). Style radzenia sobie ze stresem rodziców dzieci z mózgowym porażeniem dziecięcym i z zespołem Downa, *Zdrowie Psychiczne*, 3-4, 94-101

Borecka-Biernat, D. (2001). *Zachowanie nieśmiałości młodzieży w trudnej sytuacji społecznej*, Cracow: "Impuls" Printing House.

²⁹ Tyszkowa, M. (1986). *Zachowanie się dzieci w sytuacjach trudnych*, Warsaw: PWN

and one's own possibilities to influence the events. The obtained findings suggest that strong conviction that others influence positive and/or negative results of events plays a role in choosing the strategy of avoidance in handling difficult social situations. It proves that young people under study, using the strategy of avoidance in handling difficult social situations, are not convinced of their ability to freely influence the events in their environment and are incapable of assuming responsibility for their successes and failures.

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