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## **Self-Esteem and Strategies for Coping with a Social Conflict Situation Preferred by Adolescents**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to find out relationships between the level of self-esteem and the occurrence of destructive (aggression, avoidance, submission) and constructive (task-oriented) strategies for coping with a social conflict situation by adolescents. The study used M. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES) adapted by M. Łaguna, K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek and I. Dwonkowska as well as the Questionnaire to study strategies for coping with a social conflict situation by adolescents (KSMK) by D. Borecka-Biernat. The empirical research was carried out in junior high schools in Wrocław (and neighbouring towns). They included 893 adolescents (468 girls and 425 boys) aged 13–15. The analysis of research results indicates that a lower assessment of a young person's own abilities coexists with a tendency to react destructively to a conflict. The study also showed that adolescents with a higher self-esteem who find themselves in a conflict situation will take advantage of a constructive strategy to deal with this situation. The research results regarding the personality premise of the strategy for coping with a social conflict situation by youth have practical significance. It is particularly worth paying attention to it in the course of upbringing and education of adolescents in order to shape their ability of effective and ethical coping with conflict situations.

**Key words:** adolescents, self-esteem, coping strategies, social conflict situation.

## Youth coping strategies in the context of a social conflict situation

A situation of conflict with another person is one of the basic difficult social situations in everyone's life. In the context of interpersonal relations, it presents a certain kind of interaction between partners, in which they clearly become aware of differences in their interests, needs or pursuits of goals (Balawajder, 2010).

Adolescence is a period in which young people experience different, often contradictory aspirations and must deal with incoherent social expectations of the society. The research results indicate that during this period adolescents consider interpersonal conflicts such as a conflict with a teacher, quarrels with schoolmates as well as with a boy or girl friend and quarrels with one or both parents and other family members as a source of personal danger, unpleasant experiences and a strong sense of stress (Lohman & Jarvis, 2000; Smetana & Dadais, 2002; Polak, 2010; Gurba, 2013). The most conflicting areas in a student-teacher relation include school grades, tactless teacher's behaviour as well as imperious pressure and rigidity of requirements. In turn, the main reasons for peer disputes include provocative attacks, betrayal, indiscretion as well as competition for grades at school, for gaining favours with the opposite sex, for power over the class and for sports prestige. Most of the problems in the mutual understanding of parents and children result from a change in the adolescents' attitude towards their parents. Adolescents are less open to parents, whereas parents often fail to cope with a stronger autonomy of their growing children by trying to limit them. Many conflicts with parents relate to everyday situations, i.e., differences in tastes and opinions such as those connected with academic results, clothing, music, watching TV, use of the computer, spending free time and coming back home late.

A conflict situation is related to the issue of various behaviours referred to as coping strategies in a specific social conflict situation aimed at restoring the balance between requirements and adaptation possibilities and/or improving emotional state (Heszen-Niejodek, 2002). The ability to cope with a social conflict situation can take two forms of action strategies, i.e., destructive and constructive (Pisula & Sikora, 2008; Kłusek-Wojciszke, 2009; Balawajder, 2010; Borecka-Biernat, 2012). A *destructive strategy* is not focused on solving and overcoming a conflict situation, it only allows man to reduce unpleasant emotional tension. However, the goal that s/he initially sets for him/herself is replaced by another one – achieving well-being. This is done through *aggression* which takes the form of an initiated physical and/or verbal attack direct-

ed against specific people and doing harm to the physical, mental and social well-being of others (i.e. causing pain, suffering, destruction, leading to the loss of appreciated values); by *avoiding* confrontation with a conflict situation, consisting in postponing actions and activities, postponing remedial efforts to resolve a conflict, taking additional actions that engage attention and divert it from a conflict situation (watching TV, playing computer games, surfing the Internet, listening to music, doing sports, overeating, walking, sleeping) as well as seeking contact with other people; by *indulging* which consists in giving up one's own good, defending one's own interests or abandoning one's own goals, intentions in a conflict situation for the interests of a partner, her/his needs and adapting to her/his views, ways of acting and maintaining a positive relationship with her/him.

A *constructive strategy* in the form of a task-oriented struggle with a social conflict situation aims at resolving and overcoming a conflict. Here there are attempts to make changes within one's own actions by making an effort to communicate with a partner to find a common solution to arguable issues. It assumes assertive consideration of the goals and needs of participants in a dispute, where nothing happens at the expense of the other party, nor at the expense of their own goals and interests. The basic feature of a constructive strategy for coping with a social conflict situation is the fact that the goal structure is maintained, while the organization of activities enabling its achievement is changed.

Man's coping strategies are always analysed in a specific situation. Therefore, it is worth paying attention to how adolescents deal with conflict situations which are connected with school, contacts with peers and relationships in a family. Numerous studies and even colloquial observation indicate that adolescents have quite a large repertoire of strategies to deal with conflict situations that take place at school, in relationships with colleagues or at home. They include destructive and constructive strategies (Frączek, 2003; Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Polak, 2010; Gurba, 2013).

The research results show that the school environment and especially conflict situations with teachers and schoolmates are particularly stressful for adolescents. The empirical material contained in literature showed that adolescents used many different strategies for coping with school problems (Różańska-Kowal, 2004; Woźniak-Krakowian & Wieczorek, 2009; Miłkowska, 2012; Hibner, 2013). Among coping strategies in the context of difficult school situations which were mentioned by adolescents, we can distinguish aggressive behaviours towards others (poking, pushing, kicking, calling names, ridiculing, mocking), attempts to divert attention from a difficult situation and engage in

something else (reading, listening to music), escape from a difficult situation by physically moving away or isolating from it. Adolescents are also characterized by passive waiting and deluding themselves that time itself will solve a problem. As it can be seen, these are behaviours which control emotions, temporarily serving to improve well-being at a given moment.

In a school situation in a group of adolescents within the types of responses to difficult relationships with others, there are also reactions such as the need to solve a problem independently. Intellectual capabilities of adolescents allow them to correctly assess a situation and to see possibilities of solving it. Therefore, adolescents are willing to compromise or agree in a conflict situation. D. Donaldson along with his colleagues (2000), when comparing strategies used by children and adolescents aged 9–11, 12–14 and 15–17 in difficult situations noticed that the oldest adolescents tried to solve school problems on their own, for example, by planning a solution to a given problem, analysing and transforming it more often than the younger ones.

An interesting study on strategies for dealing with conflict situations in a peer group was carried out by A. Frączek (2003). Nine-, eleven- and fifteen-year-old children living in Israel, Finland, Poland and Italy took part in the research. In the light of the results of this research it was proved that girls cope with conflicts better than boys and tend to reach agreement more often. In the case of boys, however, an aggressive strategy is more common than in the case of girls. Similarly, in the studies by K. Osterman et al. (1997), E. Tezer and A. Demir (2001), H. Eschenbeck et al. (2007) it was shown that girls more often than boys used constructive solutions to a conflict or turned to a third party for help. Care for the relationship, avoidance of aggressive behaviours, being a part of competitions, are characteristic for girls. In contrast, boys in social conflict situations were more often competitive (rivalling) than girls. Apart from the observed manifestation of aggressive behaviours in the process of efficient coping with a conflict, the studies conducted by J. E. Fredenberg and R. Lewis (1999) and A. Hibner (2013) showed that in a conflict situation with peers growing children use coping strategies which are based on giving up, taking no action, avoiding a problem and distancing themselves from difficult relationships with others or based on a tendency to make concessions.

Conflict situations with parents constitute an increasingly important source of tension as children grow up. Conflicts in child-parent relationships are common phenomena in the period of adolescence (Gurba, 2013). Research by B. Lachowska (2010) shows that 14- and 15-year-old adolescents in a conflict situation with their parents perceive themselves as more aggressive and less com-

promised towards their parents, especially in the relationship with their mother. Apart from reactions of an aggressive character, coping with family problems by adolescents involves avoiding a problem and a tendency to make concessions or looking for interpersonal contacts. A. Hibner's study (2013) showed significant gender differences among the surveyed teenagers aged 13–18, where boys react definitely more often in a conformist way with 'subordination' and 'consent' to parents' requirements. However, in the face of parental pressure, resistance reactions are definitely much more often manifested by girls who react with 'counterpressure', 'pretense' and 'protest'.

To summarise this part of the discussion we cannot fail to notice that some adolescents in the face of dispute at school, in relationships with peers or at home adopt a destructive strategy in the form of an aggressive response to conflict, avoiding active action in the face of conflict by engaging in other stress-free forms of activities or giving in to conflict. However, there are also young people who cope with a social conflict situation well, treat any conflict as a challenge for themselves, which prompts them to mobilize their resources to overcome obstacles that prevent the fulfilment of needs.

### **Self-assessment as a personality correlate of strategies for coping with a social conflict situation by youth**

Human behaviour is neither a passive reflection of external environmental influences, nor an automatic consequence of internal impulses. An important role in determining the direction of activities carried out by people is played by perception and cognitive schemes (Tyszkowa, 1986). Self-image plays a key role among these schemes. A set of concepts and ideas about oneself as well as expectations about oneself, which is structure 'I', performs a significant role in the human behaviour in difficult situations (Kulas, 1986). Information about oneself and traits forming knowledge about oneself constitute a premise for assessing one's own capabilities in difficult situations (Tyszkowa, 1986). Self-esteem is inextricably linked with the concept of oneself, it is an evaluating and valuating component of the human knowledge system about one's own 'I'. It is usually referred to as a positive or negative attitude towards oneself (Gregg, 2003).

Man's behaviour in difficult situations depends not only on what s/he is in reality, that is, what features and possibilities are characteristic of her/him, but also on how s/he perceives and evaluates them. Research results obtained by e.g. N. Ogińska-Bulik (2001), M. Donnellan et al. (2005), D. Borecka-Biernat

(2006), D. Kubacka-Jasiecka (2006), A. Brytek (2007), Poprawa (2008), Hisli Sahin, Basim and Cetin (2009) and Kobosko (2013) showed that low (adequate or inadequate) and high (inadequate) self-esteem performed an unfavourable role in the behaviour of young people in difficult situations. When an individual faces difficulties of a situation, inadequate self-esteem leads to an increase in a sense of personal threat, negative emotions and disorganization of behaviour. In the case of low self-esteem, there is a tendency to give up achieving the goal of an activity, refrain from actions and withdraw from a social interaction. It is worth emphasising that a low assessment of oneself, one's own capabilities and effectiveness of action in the face of various difficult events is also conducive to the appearance of aggressive behaviours. The research conducted by H. Kulas (1986) showed that for 2/3 of adolescent girls and boys with low self-esteem, contacts with classmates in the school class were unfavourable and conflicting, whereas only 6.7% of students with high self-esteem determined their interpersonal relationships with peers in the class in this way. None of the respondents with low self-esteem claimed that their contacts with colleagues were definitely favourable and conflict-free, whereas 1/3 of students with high self-esteem considered these contacts to be completely satisfactory. The research by T. Ros-towska (2001) succeeded in confirming this dependency. A low level of adolescents' self-esteem coincided with a high level of conflict.

In the case of high (inadequate) self-esteem, we can observe a tendency to manifest strong negative emotions and discharge aggressive reactions. R. Baumeister et al. (1996; 2003) claim that people with high self-esteem, even narcissistic, are characterized by a tendency to fall into anger and react with aggression, especially in situations where their self-esteem is threatened. High, incorrect self-esteem means that man is guided in her/his behaviour by desires rather than by real possibilities. This conditions uncritical readiness to undertake tasks when her/his possibilities do not justify their implementation. An individual, not achieving what s/he expected, exposes herself/himself to frustration and at the same time disappoints others due to a poor performance of the task or its failure. An individual is often accused of lack of responsibility or exposed to disapproval and reprimand. A person, who defends herself/himself against these unpleasant consequences, tries to reduce her/his own guilt, tries to transfer responsibility to others, to circumstances or to people with whom s/he cooperated. In this situation, it is easy to get into a conflict with the environment (Perez et al., 2005).

People exhibiting a high (adequate) level of self-esteem turned out to be the least susceptible to disorganization of behaviours in difficult situations. This self-esteem is conducive to higher psychological resilience in a difficult situa-

tion and enables constructive behaviour in the face of various stressful events (Carver et al., 1989; Baumeister et al., 2003; Perez et al., 2005; Brytek, 2007; Fecenec, 2008; Lachowicz-Tabaczek & Śniecińska, 2008). Interesting research on determining the importance of a sense of one's own value in predicting the methods of coping with difficult situations by children aged 11–12 was carried out by N. Ogińska-Bulik (2001). She found that a high sense of one's own value, in particular connected with functioning at school and in a family, contributes to a more frequent use of active strategies which are treated as the most effective in the process of coping with difficult situations.

The above considerations show that the evaluation of one's own abilities plays an important role in coping with difficult situations of social interactions because this evaluation influences the result of estimating the relation of requirements to possibilities, which, consequently, will be positive or negative. Faith in one's own abilities helps an individual cope with difficult situations more effectively. It is different when faith in one's own abilities is small. Then even a small obstacle, a slight threat provoke a violent reaction. This leads to facilitating strong emotional arousal, unrestrained aggression, tendencies to withdraw from cooperation with others and avoiding contact with people as well as agreeing with the conflict partner's proposals and submitting to her/him.

## **Research problem and hypothesis**

Empirical studies aimed to answer the following research question:

1. What is the correlation between the level of self-esteem and the destructive and constructive strategy of coping with a social conflict situation by girls and boys?

The research question formulated in this way makes it possible to put forward the following hypothesis, which will be verified by the analysis of the empirical research results:

- H.1 Girls and boys with a low level of self-esteem take a destructive strategy to cope with a social conflict situation more often, whereas girls and boys with a high level of self-esteem activate a constructive strategy for coping with a social conflict situation more often.

## **Own research methods**

The following methods were applied in the research:

*Self-Esteem Scale* (SES) by M. Rosenberg as adapted of M. Laguna, K. Lacho-

wicz-Tabaczek and I. Dzwonkowska (2007) gives the possibility to determine the level of general (global) self-esteem in both adolescents and adults. SES consists of ten diagnostic descriptive statements about oneself, with the help of which a subject describes her/his 'I'. A respondent provides answers on a four-point scale. For each answer s/he can get from 1 to 4 points. Final results range from 10 to 40 points. A high score means a high level of general (global) self-esteem. The Polish version of SES method is a reliable tool (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in various studies ranges from 0.81 to 0.83) and with the confirmed theoretical validity.

*KSMK Questionnaire*, which was developed by D. Borecka-Biernat (2012), is intended to investigate a strategy for coping with a social conflict situation by adolescents. It consists of descriptions of 33 social conflict situations. For each situation, four behaviours expressing coping with a social conflict situation were given – the first refers to aggressive coping ('A'), the second refers to avoiding coping ('U'), the third refers to submissive coping ('UI') and the fourth to task-oriented (constructive) coping with a social conflict situation ('Z'). The results are obtained for each scale separately by summing the selected behaviours in 33 situations belonging to a given scale. The questionnaire is characterized by good reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of internal compatibility is around or above 0.70) and diagnostic accuracy.

## **The participants**

468 girls and 425 boys aged 13–15 were examined in Poland. In total, 893 people took part in the research. The respondents were first-, second- and third-grade junior high school students from Wrocław and neighbouring towns. The research was carried out in groups and participation in it was voluntary. Students signed with their nicknames or initials. Before the research was conducted by means of the Self-Assessment Scale and KSMK questionnaire, the participants were thoroughly instructed on what to do. Adolescents had the opportunity to ask questions in unclear situations. The research was conducted in accordance with the principles of psychological scientific research. It is necessary to emphasize that students responded to the study positively and showed interest in it as well as they willingly gave answers to the questionnaire questions.

## **Analysis of the research results**

Before making the correlation calculations between the independent variable – self-esteem and the dependent variable – strategies for coping with a social



conflict situations, the normality of distribution of the results obtained for these variables was examined. This was done by using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which showed that the distribution of variable values, i.e., self-esteem ( $p = 0.11$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), aggressive coping with a conflict situation ( $p = 0.20$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), avoiding coping with a conflict situation ( $p = 0.40$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), submissive coping with a social conflict situation ( $p = 0.65$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), and task-related coping with a social conflict situation ( $p = 0.74$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) assumes the features of normal distribution. On this basis, the parametric r-Pearson correlation test was used for further calculations. In order to check possible correlations between the level of self-esteem and particular coping strategies used by adolescents in a social conflict situation, the results in Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and the scales of KSMK questionnaire were correlated. Pearson's r-correlation coefficients for the entire group of adolescents examined and for groups separated by gender are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of r-Pearson correlation coefficient values between Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and KSMK questionnaire scales for the whole group (N=893), for girls (N=468) and boys (N=425)

Questionnaire SES	KSMK questionnaire scales											
	„A”			„U”			„UI”			„Z”		
	G.	B.	T.	G.	B.	T.	G.	B.	T.	G.	B.	T.
<b>Self-Esteem Scale</b>	0.06	-0.17*	-0.04	-0,007	-0.21*	-0.10*	-0.10*	0.03	-0.03	0.03	0.21*	0.10*

'A' – aggressive coping with a social conflict situation, 'U' – avoiding coping with a social conflict situation, 'UI' – submissive coping with a social conflict situation, 'Z' – task-oriented coping with a social conflict situation, G. – girls, B. – boys, T. – total, \*  $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Author's research.

As shown in Table 1, the correlation between the level of self-esteem and the scale of aggression strategy for coping with a social conflict situation ('A') is not statistically significant for the whole group and for girls ( $p < 0.05$ ). A weak negative correlation coefficient, statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), was obtained between the level of self-esteem and the scale of aggression strategy for coping with a social conflict situation for boys ( $r = -0.17$ ). The interpretation of the obtained dependency is as follows: the lower the level of self-esteem, the more often boys use aggression strategies in coping with a social conflict situation.

The analysis of data also indicates a statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), weak negative correlation between the level of self-esteem and the scale of the avoiding strategy for coping with a social conflict situation ('U') for the whole group ( $r = -0.10$ ), which is confirmed in the group of boys ( $r = -0.21$ ), whereas

in the group of girls it does not reach the significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ). It seems likely that the lower the level of self-esteem, the more often adolescents (respondents in total, boys) use avoiding strategies for coping with a social conflict situation.

The research conducted also indicates a weak negative interrelation between the level of self-esteem and the scale of the strategy of submission ('U1') for girls to cope with a social conflict situation ( $r = -0.10$ ). There is no significant correlation between the level of self-esteem and the strategy for submissive coping for the whole group of the examined adolescents and for the group of boys ( $p < 0.05$ ). A simple interrelation can be noticed as follows: the lower the level of self-esteem, the more often girls activate submissive strategies in social conflict situations.

The results indicate low positive correlations, statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), between the level of self-esteem and the scale of task-oriented coping strategies in a social conflict situation ('Z') for the whole group of adolescents ( $r = 0.10$ ), which are confirmed in the group of boys ( $r = 0.21$ ), whereas in the group of girls they do not reach the level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). This is a positive interrelation, which means that the higher the level of self-esteem, the more often the adolescent (respondents in total, boys) undertakes a task-oriented strategy for coping with a social conflict situation.

The analysis of statistical findings contained in Table 1 suggests that the level of self-esteem and strategies for coping with a social conflict situation by adolescents are not strongly correlated phenomena. Sex (gender) has not proved to be a factor determining the strength of the interrelation between variables. Empirical studies confirmed the hypothesis presented in methodological part H.1.

## Discussion and conclusions

The process of assessing the value of oneself influences interpersonal relationships as well as the choice of behaviours in difficult situations. It turns out that the lower the level of self-esteem which characterizes an adolescent, the more often s/he uses **strategies of aggressive coping** with a social conflict situation. It should be mentioned that the level of self-esteem seems to play a greater role in the case of aggression strategies in boys than in girls. This means that boys have social acceptance of direct aggression, which is not acceptable in the case of girls (Ranschburg, 1993). These differences are culturally conditioned and are connected with the specificity of social and emotional development of girls and boys (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004; Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Batool,

2013). People with low self-esteem are characterized by hypersensitivity, suspicion, withdrawal from social relations and their existing relations with the environment are of a conflicting character (Donnellan et al., 2005; Sandstrom & Harlan, 2007; Diamantopoulou et al., 2008; Eftimie & Ionescu, 2010; Martowska, 2012). This undoubtedly occurs due to the fact that people with low self-esteem experience many internal conflicts, which in turn determines the feeling of strong negative emotions and discharge behaviours. For these people, attacking and causing others to suffer can be a way of expressing and at the same time increasing their strength and autonomy (Ostrowsky, 2010). It can be expected that in interpersonal relations people referring to a strategy of aggression in a conflict situation must demonstrate a certain level of faith in their strength and possibilities, as they are motivated to undertake activities aimed at achieving their plans and goals in an assertive and ruthless way without taking into account the interest of the other party. Therefore, adolescents who have a low level of self-esteem have unsatisfactory and confrontational relationships with their peers.

The research results presented above indicate that a low level of self-esteem, one's own abilities and effectiveness of actions are conducive to the appearance of **avoiding forms of behaviour** which re-educate emotional tension due to the conflicting character of the difficulties occurred (Campbell & Lavallee, 1993; Mazurkiewicz, 1996; Heimpel et al., 2006; Poprawa, 2008; Hisli Sahin et al., 2009; Martowska, 2012; Kobosko, 2013). As it can be seen, a negative attitude towards oneself and doubt in one's own strength are conducive to a withdrawal from interactions, avoiding relationships with others, a failure to undertake tasks, lack of trust and a hostile social attitude. Aversion to other people and inability to overcome this social barrier results in many conflicts with the environment. Lack of self-confidence and giving up acting due to failures constitute an obstacle in coping with tensions. These elements, which affect low self-esteem, make it impossible to resolve conflicts. Thus, low self-esteem is connected with low activity, lack of involvement in solving problems, anxiety and reluctance to participate in interpersonal contacts.

People who are characterised by low self-esteem (global self-esteem) expect in interpersonal relationships less than it might be expected (Reykowski, 1970). Their action is limited, which results in achieving much smaller benefits in relation to their possibilities. The consequence of such efforts is the lack of undertaking more difficult tasks, facing difficult situations and giving up achieving goals for other people. Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem causes a desire to adapt to a given situation (Bijstra et al., 1994; Węglowska-

Rzepa, 2000; Ozkan & Ozen, 2008). The analysis showed that the lower the level of self-esteem, the more often girls, in particular, used **submissive strategies** for coping with a social conflict situation. It can be presumed that girls are aware of their possibilities and limitations affecting their functioning. They do not feel certain about their abilities and effectiveness in terms of tasks performed, which results in a greater tendency for submission. A teenage girl, when behaving submissively in a conflict situation, gives up, limits herself in fulfilling her own desires, tolerates threatening her own interests or refrains from defending her own rights and feelings. Submission is an attempt at resolving a sudden conflict, the consequences of which can be serious (Wojciszke, 2011). This strategy belongs to 'passivity-facilitation' (Węglowska-Rzepa, 2000), so it can strengthen acceptance and approval of an individual with other parties (e.g. through agreement) (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Thus, being a part of a group, an individual wants to be accepted and liked by it and in order to achieve this s/he must comply with its standards. Thanks to this, s/he gains approval, a sense of belonging and sympathy. It can be assumed that s/he will be more likely to apply submissive strategies of functioning in a conflict situation and will adapt to other people because it is safe for her/his self-esteem.

Adolescents are more likely to resolve and overcome a social conflict situation by changing their own actions or the surroundings which threaten the achievement of their goals. It is hard not to notice that a **task-oriented strategy**, which is sometimes called a creative solution to a conflict, is considered to be the best way to resolve conflicts allows for the good of the two parties to the conflict as well as the full implementation of their needs. The analysis of the research results revealed that adolescents using a task-oriented strategy in a social conflict situation achieved higher results in terms of the level of global self-esteem. Global self-esteem generates readiness to act, to be active and make contacts. Individuals who are characterized by its higher level have a greater awareness of their own abilities, tend to engage in action and entering into new relationships is not difficult for them (Obuchowski, 1983). Adolescents with a higher level of self-esteem make more efforts to directly solve the problems they face, they are focused on efforts to overcome adversities, namely they refer to task-oriented strategies to a greater extent. Generally, they are focused on actions that will lead them to the achievement of their own intentions and achieving their goals, so their action in a conflict is based on an assertive dimension (Hys & Nieznańska, 2001; Janowski, 2005; Heimpel et al., 2006; Fecenec, 2008; Lachowicz-Tabaczek & Śniecińska, 2008; Martowska, 2012).

Broadly speaking about the above results, it can be noticed that a lower assessment of one's own possibilities in a young person coexists with a tendency to destructively react to a conflict, whereas higher self-esteem creates greater opportunities for coping with a social conflict situation in a constructive way. It should not be ruled out that the results of this research constitute a theoretical guide in the development and implementation of educational strategies that support a teenager in the development of rational remedial actions taking care of all participants who take part in the dispute.

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