

# Various Aspects of Young Adults' Functioning

Edited by Katarzyna Adamczyk and Monika Wysota



Various Aspects of Young  
Adults' Functioning

# Various Aspects of Young Adults' Functioning

Edited by Katarzyna Adamczyk and Monika Wysota

© COPYRIGHT BY AUTHORS  
KRAKÓW 2015

ISBN 978-83-65148-05-6

REVIEWER

Dr hab. Elżbieta Rydz, Department of Developmental Psychology at the John Paul II  
Catholic University of Lublin

TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE CORRECTION OF TEXTS IN ENGLISH

Anna Czechowska  
Milena Kalida  
Joanna Matuszczak-Świgoń  
Elżbieta Pieńkowska  
Sylwia Salamon  
James West  
Małgorzata Zawlińska-Janus  
Biuro Tłumaczeń LINGWAY S.c.

DESIGN OF THE COVER

Magdalena Marchocka, student of the third year of Bachelor's Degree studies in the field  
of Graphic Design at University of Arts in Poznań

TYPESETTING

Libron



Wydawnictwo LIBRON – Filip Lohner  
al. Daszyńskiego 21/13  
31-537 Kraków  
tel.: 12 628 05 12  
email: office@libron.pl  
www.libron.pl

# CONTENTS

---

Preface / 7

Contributors / 11

## CHAPTER 1

Ten Facts about Emerging Adulthood / 15

*Małgorzata Rękosiewicz*

## CHAPTER 2

Cognitive and Emotional Functioning of Young Adults  
on the Contemporary Labour Market / 31

*Katarzyna Wojtkowska and Jan Jędrzejczyk*

## CHAPTER 3

To Have to Better One's Being: The Relationship Between  
Materialism and Self-Esteem, Satisfaction with Life  
and the Level of Anxiety Among Young Adults / 49

*Magdalena Szawarska*

## CHAPTER 4

The Construction and Validation Analysis of a Perceived  
Social Support Questionnaire Among Young Adults / 67

*Anna Katarzyna Zaleszczyk*

## CHAPTER 5

Becoming a Mother as a Challenge of Early Adulthood / 83

*Joanna Matuszczak-Świigoń*

## CHAPTER 6

The Feeling of Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy vs. the Parenting  
Styles of Mothers Active in the Labor Market / 101

*Katarzyna Walęcka-Matyja and Marta Kucharska*

CHAPTER 7

The Future Time Perspective in Parenthood of Young Adults  
with Intellectual Disability / 119

*Celina Timoszyk-Tomczak and Elżbieta Pieńkowska*

CHAPTER 8

Mid-Life Transition in Men and Women – Different Ways  
of Psychological Functioning in Middle Age / 131

*Elżbieta Kluska and Piotr Łabuz*

Authors' Notes / 147

## PREFACE

---

One year ago we invited Polish and foreign researchers to write texts concerning different aspects of young adults' functioning in a changing world. As a result the book entitled "*Functionng of Young Adults in a Changing World*" was created. It was published by Libron Publishing House. In the course of its creation it turned out that the above topic does not cover all of the aspects regarding young adults and that there is still the need for the scientific discussion about young adulthood since this is a period in a person's life, which, at present, is constantly influenced by significant changes and young contemporary adults' functioning differs from the life of young adults ten or fifteen years ago. Nowadays it is difficult to establish the beginning of this stage of human development and the criteria on the basis of which someone could be defined as an adult. Today young adults live in a different way that their parents or grandparents did. This is a result of the changes that took place in socio-cultural life within the last decades in many different countries. With the end of young adulthood, which is also difficult to be defined, young people face next challenges such as mid-life transition. Young adults undertake developmental tasks of next periods in the life cycle having different resources than their parents or grandparents had.

The period of young adulthood is an extremely interesting stage of human life cycle and its scientific analysis is necessary for the improvement of our knowledge of contemporary young people's functioning which is still incomplete. Therefore, the idea of analyzing various issues of crucial significance for young adults was born. Thanks to joint involvement and effort of the authors the book concerning different aspects of Polish young adults was created. It brought up such topics as emerging adulthood as a new stage of development, cognitive and emotional functioning of young adults on the labor market, the connection between materialism and self-esteem, satisfaction with life and the level of anxiety among young adults, motherhood and parenthood among young adults, different ways of psychological functioning in middle age, and finally

development and validation of the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire in a sample of Polish young adults.

Chapter 1, *Ten facts about emerging adulthood* by Małgorzata Rękosiewicz, discusses a new phase of the development of individuals in developed countries – emerging adulthood described by Jeffrey. J. Arnett. Ten facts about this phase of the development suggested by the author of this chapter are based on five traits distinguished by Arnett. Apart from that, the author discusses the results of studies conducted both in Poland and abroad. The author also presents the concept of identity development created by Koen Luyckx and colleagues, and the theory of social participation types developed by Heinz Reinders.

Chapter 2, *Cognitive and emotional functioning of young adults on the contemporary labour market* by Katarzyna Wojtkowska and Jan Jędrzejczyk, outlines that the global economic crisis and the subsequent recession in the euro area have contributed to the difficult situation on the Polish labor market. This situation significantly influences on the young people, because of high unemployment. Therefore, it is important to explore their cognitive and emotional functioning in the context of the current situation on the labor market. The aim of the study presented in this chapter was to evaluate the relationship between perceived stress, emotionality, cognitive regulation of emotions and hope for success in young adults. Overall, results suggest that in the group of young adults stress in the situation on the labor market is associated with frequent negative emotions feeling and frequent dumb thoughts to negative events in your life. In turn, the expectation of positive results of their own actions is associated with susceptibility to frequent feeling positive emotions, thinking how you can become a better due to negative developments and planning how to deal with them.

Chapter 3, *To have to better one's being: the relationship between materialism and self-esteem, satisfaction with life and the level of anxiety among young adults* by Magdalena Szawarska, is dedicated to the issue of raising importance of meaning that material goods have in everyday life. The study conducted aimed at verifying if increased concentration on material objects and a tendency to regard them as a condition of happiness and a measure of life achievements, are connected with psychological functioning of young adults. Results showed that here is a relationship between materialism and subjectively assessed psychological deficits. It turned out, that materialism can be predicted on the basis of lower life satisfaction and higher level of anxiety, and, for men only, on the basis of lower self-esteem.

In chapter 4, *Becoming a mother as a challenge of early adulthood*, Joanna Matuszczak-Świgoń characterizes the period of early adulthood in the context



of becoming a mother. She describes the phases of building maternal identity and processes involved in this transition. Moreover, the author presents the results of her own research which shows that mothers-to-be build their expectations and beliefs about a child into coherent stories. This way they acquaint the unknown and prepare themselves for performing a new role.

Chapter 5, *The feeling of satisfaction and self-efficacy vs. the parenting styles of active mothers on the labor market* by Katarzyna Wałęcka-Matyja and Marta Kucharska, presents the study focused on a relation between life satisfaction and accomplishment of mother role by working women. The research results affirm that mothers who are satisfied with their lives, with high self-efficacy prefer democratic and liberal-loving parenting style. Furthermore, there are differences in choosing parenting styles which are determined by place of residence, perception of material situation and age of respondents.

In Chapter 6, *The future time perspective in parenthood of young adults with intellectual disability*, Celina Timoszyk-Tomczak and Elżbieta Pieńkowska introduce two quite broad psychological domains: one describing the temporal dimension and its constructing during the individual life span and another referring to challenges of parenthood of an intellectually disabled offspring in young adulthood. The authors focus especially on the role the future time perspective plays in a particular biography. The chapter considers a well-balanced time perspective as a potential resource that may facilitate processes of coping with difficult parental situations in the development of a disabled young person. The preliminary theoretical analysis is treated here as a preparatory base for the future empirical verification of the ways parents of intellectually disabled young adults construct their and their offspring's future time perspectives.

In Chapter 7, *Mid-life transition in men and women – different ways of psychological functioning in middle age*, Elżbieta Kluska and Piotr Łabuz present the results of research on different ways of experiencing mid-life transition. Mid-life transition is categorized as developmental crisis and happens usually at the age of 35 to 45. The purpose of the research was to discover and compare different ways of psychological functioning of men and women in midlife and to try to establish what role sex plays in experiencing mid-life transition. The results showed that going through and experiencing mid-life transition in middle age may happen along three main paths similar for men and women: Balanced, Crisis and Mature.

Chapter 9, *Development and validation of the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire in a sample of Polish young adults* by Anna Katarzyna Zaleszczyk, presents the results of study aimed to develop and validate a standardized, reli-

able and valid tool for measuring perceived social support. The author of this chapter describes the procedure stages of construction, as well as validation study of Perceived Social Support Questionnaire.

We hope that this book similarly as our prior book will be interesting and important for the readers. We believe that variety of issues concerning Polish young adults presented in this book will enrich our knowledge of this fascinating period of life.

At this point we would like to express our special thanks to the Reviewer – Elżbieta Rydz, Associate Professor for reviewing the book. Her constructive feedback and suggestions let the authors and us increase the quality of the texts. We are also very grateful for her amazing kindness and support during the time of the book creation.

Poznań, 8 September 2014  
Katarzyna Adamczyk and Monika Wysota

## CONTRIBUTORS

---

KATARZYNA ADAMCZYK

Institute of Psychology  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89/AB  
60-568 Poznań, Poland  
Katarzyna.Adamczyk@amu.edu.pl

JAN JĘDRZEJCZYK

Faculty of Psychology  
University of Warsaw  
ul. Stawki 5/7  
00-183 Warszawa, Poland  
jan.jedrzejczyk@psych.uw.edu.pl

ELŻBIETA KLUSKA

Department of Psychological Diagnosis, Faculty of Psychology  
University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw  
ul. 19/31 Chodakowska  
03-815 Warszawa, Poland  
ekluska@swps.edu.pl

MARTA KUCHARSKA

Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences  
University of Lodz  
Department of Social Psychology and Research on Family  
ul. Smugowa 10/12  
91-433 Łódź, Poland  
mkucharska@uni.lodz.pl

PIOTR ŁABUZ

Department of Psychological Diagnosis, Faculty of Psychology  
University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw  
ul. Chodakowska 19/31  
03-815 Warszawa, Poland  
plabuz@st.swps.edu.pl

JOANNA MATUSZCZAK-ŚWIGOŃ

Institute of Psychology  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89/AB  
60-568 Poznań, Poland  
joannamatuszczak@gmail.com

ELŻBIETA PIENKOWSKA

Institute of Psychology  
Szczecin University  
ul. Krakowska 69  
71-017 Szczecin, Poland  
epienkowska@wp.pl

MAGDALENA SZAWARSKA

Faculty of Psychology  
University of Warsaw  
ul. Stawki 5/7  
00-183 Warszawa, Poland  
mszawarska@psych.uw.edu.pl

CELINA TIMOSZYK-TOMCZAK

Institute of Psychology  
Szczecin University  
ul. Krakowska 69  
71-017 Szczecin, Poland  
c.timoszyk@wp.pl

MAŁGORZATA RĘKOSIEWICZ

Institute of Psychology  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89/AB  
60-568 Poznań, Poland  
malgrek@amu.edu.pl

KATARZYNA WAŁĘCKA-MATYJA

Institute of Psychology at the University of Lodz  
Department of Family and Development Psychology  
ul. Smugowa 10/12  
91-433 Łódź, Poland  
kwalecka@uni.lodz.pl

KATARZYNA WOJTKOWSKA

Faculty of Psychology  
University of Warsaw  
ul. Stawki 5/7  
00-183 Warszawa, Poland  
katarzyna.wojtkowska@psych.uw.edu.pl

MONIKA WYSOTA

Institute of Psychology  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89/AB  
60-568 Poznań, Poland  
Monika.Wysota@amu.edu.pl

ANNA KATARZYNA ZALESZCZYK

Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Science  
ul. Jaracza 1  
00-378 Warszawa, Poland  
anna.katarzyna.zal@gmail.com



## CHAPTER 1

---

# Ten Facts about Emerging Adulthood

*Małgorzata Rękosiewicz*

### INTRODUCTION

Emerging adulthood – a new phase of development, described for the first time in 2000 by Arnett – pertains to the period of life between the age of 18 and 25, i.e. the period between late adolescence and early adulthood. It can be observed in the case of young people from the so-called developed countries. Arnett has been the first author who started to treat the commonly observed nowadays postponement of undertaking typical tasks and roles of adulthood, and the prolongation of undertaking roles characteristic of adolescence (the so-called prolonged moratorium), as a normative phenomenon. Entering adulthood has nowadays become an increasingly individualized process that is less and less determined by social expectations. Instead, personal preferences and individual lifestyles have started to function as determinants of the time when new roles can be undertaken.

So far, no developmental tasks of the emerging adulthood period (similar to the developmental tasks suggested by Havighurst; 1981) have been distinguished, nevertheless, Arnett pointed to five characteristic features of this phase – it is a time of searching for one's own identity, of instability, of self-focusing, of an access to a wide range of possibilities, and of possessing a sense of being “in between” (childhood and adulthood). These phenomena can be observed in a growing number of countries and nationalities, also in Poland. In the present chapter, the author discusses the new developmental phase in the light of psychological and sociological studies conducted so far, and proposes to distinguish ten facts about emerging adulthood.

## FEATURE I: THE AGE OF IDENTITY EXPLORATIONS

Pioneers of research on the nature of personal identity development (which is, broadly speaking, an individual answer of a person to the question “who am I and where do I want to get?”) –Erikson (1950) and Marcia (1966), claimed that it forms in the period of adolescence. With an already formed idea of oneself, a young person crosses the Rubicon – enters into the period of adulthood, faithful to one’s own values and beliefs. As pointed out by Marcia, the process of identity development consists of two phases – exploration (that, according to him, takes place in early adolescence) and commitment making (in late adolescence). Exploration comprises the so-called orientation-searching actions, i.e. active trying and assessing various alternatives before final decisions have been made – a young individual experiments then with different roles, learns about different lifestyles and approaches to life. Commitment making, which takes place after exploration, is a phase that consists in making decisions and engaging in a selected activity. If in the development of the person both exploration and commitment making took place, then achieved identity would emerge, i.e. such identity that gives the greatest satisfaction from entering adulthood (apart from identity achievement, Marcia also distinguished identity diffusion, when neither exploration nor commitment making takes place, identity moratorium – in the case when only exploration takes place, and identity foreclosure – when commitment making occurs, but not exploration). With time, studies started to indicate that the period of identity formation prolongs (Grotevant, 1987; Stephen, Fraser & Marcia, 1992; Marcia, 2002).

Today, particular attention is paid to the fact that during adolescence and emerging adulthood identity only gets consolidated, and that it can undergo further changes in the course of the development, being more of a dynamic and continuous process rather than a state (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Luyckx, Goossens and Soenens (2006) assumed that both exploration and commitment making are complex processes. Moreover, the results of their studies indicate that there exists yet another type of exploration – the so-called ruminative exploration (Luyckx et al., 2008). The authors distinguished five dimensions of identity: (1) exploration in breadth, which consists in searching for alternatives with reference to one’s own values, goals and beliefs before a decision has been made; (2) commitment making, i.e. making choices and decisions important for the identity development; (3) exploration in depth – a deepened evaluation of the choices already made in order to verify whether they are right for the person; (4) identification with commitment, i.e. identification with the choices already made,



connected with a sense of being certain that the choices are right for the person; (5) ruminative exploration – fears, anxiety and doubts pertaining to the process of engaging in spheres important for the identity development.

Exploration in breadth, as well as exploration in depth, are considered to be adaptive forms of exploration, inducing reflection and favorable to commitment making. Ruminative exploration, in turn, is connected with anxiety and even symptoms of depression (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino, & Portes, 1995; Luyckx et al., 2008), difficulties in commitment making and uncertainty about one's own decisions and choices. The authors observed a negative correlation between ruminative exploration, and commitment making and identification with commitment, which means that fears and uncertainty hamper the process of making important decisions (Luyckx, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, & Berzonsky, 2007).

What emerges from the studies, is a picture that suggests fact 1: *emerging adulthood is a time when the level of exploration is still high*. Both exploration and commitment are nowadays present not only in the period of early and late adolescence, but also in adulthood. The levels of exploration and commitment change with age – from early adolescence to early adulthood the level of exploration (in breadth and in depth) decreases and the level of commitment making and identification with commitment increases (Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2009). Nevertheless, in the period of emerging adulthood exploration still remains on a relatively high level.

Moreover, *identity achievement* (fact 2) *appears no sooner than in the period of emerging adulthood, very rarely before the end of adolescence* (Fadjukoff, Kokko, & Pulkkinen, 2007). The process of identity achievement formation extends to emerging adulthood, even up to the age of 30. It is also worth stressing that changes in the levels of exploration and commitment undergo alternation under the influence of new tasks and roles undertaken by the individual (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Waterman, 1999). Oleś (2012) emphasizes that personal identity is formed under a significant influence of culture, and current socio-cultural changes result in forming identities provisionally, alternatively and equivocally, relatively and processually (and not categorically). A young individual actively seeks for new inspirations, ponders not over who s/he is, but over who s/he can become, what possibilities lie in front of her/him (Amiot, de la Sablonniere, Terry & Smith, 2007; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

Perhaps, one of the reasons behind the prolonged exploration is an extended period of education. For, it has been observed that the level of exploration among students is significantly higher than the level of exploration among working

individuals (Danielsen, Lorem, & Kröger, 2000; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, & Pollock, 2008). Possessing a regular job decreases exploratory activities of the person (see Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, 2011; Yoder, 2000), yet, as it will be shown below, individuals in emerging adulthood still relatively seldom undertake professional activity. Some authors (e.g. Kunnen & Wassink, 2003) explain that in stable and predictable situations, the level of exploration remains low, whereas the level of commitment is high. In turn, in times marked with a high intensity of conflicts, the opposite phenomenon takes place – the level of commitment decreases and the level of exploration increases. Continuing education at a higher level of the education system, or more widely – availing oneself of a numerous possibilities offered to young people – increases the probability of experiencing various conflicts, i.e. searching for new experiences, the necessity to be prepared for constant changes, unpredictability, and so on. The time when young people study offers a possibility of decreasing the level of exploration and increasing the level of commitment, when compared with the period of adolescence, by solely choosing the field of study, which is considered to be a step towards adulthood (Brzezińska, Kaczan, Piotrowski, & Rękosiewicz, 2011). At the same time, the high level of exploration usually causes identity achievement to form not earlier than at the end of emerging adulthood.

Identity formation is not conditioned exclusively by environmental factors. It has also been proven that subjective factors, such as, temperament (Brzezińska, Piotrowski, Garbarek-Sawicka, Karowska, & Muszyńska, 2010), sense of shame (Czub, Brzezińska, Czub, Piotrowski, & Rękosiewicz, 2012), or other negative emotions (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005), but also personality traits (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Luyckx, Soenens, & Goossens, 2006), and – broadly speaking – the quality of psychosocial functioning (Crocetti, Luyckx, Scrignaro & Sica 2011; Helson & Srivastava, 2001; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, & Pollock, 2008; Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, & Duriez, 2009), are also of great importance here. Nevertheless, the main cause of the prolongation of the process of identity formation seem to be the very socio-cultural conditions mentioned above.

## FEATURE II: THE AGE OF INSTABILITY

Being guided by the developmental tasks distinguished by Havighurst (1981) that are inherent to the period of early adolescence, one can point to several objective indicators of adulthood. Broadly speaking, they can be divided into achieving independence and undertaking commitments in the following four spheres: completing education, starting professional activity, establishing

a stable relationship with a partner, and creating a family. Today, these tasks are very rarely realized by adolescents, whereas by individuals in the period of early adulthood – often. In turn, in the period of emerging adulthood one can observe a great individual diversity (Arnett, 1997). Moreover, even if such tasks are undertaken, they are usually fleeting and temporary. Undertaking the tasks mentioned above is, thus, more of an expression of exploration rather than commitment.

Educational environment of the development in the period of emerging adulthood is, at the beginning, secondary school (in Poland – high school, vocational school or technical school), and later university or other higher education institution. *Emerging adulthood is a time of educational instability* (fact 3), because, as it turns out, young people manifest difficulties in choosing the field they want to study, and they very often decide to change the field of interest, or even suspend education for a period of time. A similar situation applies to undertaking professional activity in this period. Usually, it is undertaken temporarily, casually. It rather serves as means of earning extra money, and young people do not attach themselves to the place where they work, treating it as temporary. As it has been observed by Arnett (2007), a young American citizen changes, on average, her/his place of work almost four times a year. What emerges from this observation, is fact 4: *emerging adulthood is a time of professional instability*.

An important event in the period of emerging adulthood is leaving the parental home, and establishing and running an independent household. It turns out, however, that before young people become entirely independent, they manifest a tendency to frequently change the place where they live, which is why it can be stated that *emerging adulthood is a time of instability of place of residence* (fact 5) – the studies conducted by Arnett (2004) showed that 35% of people between the age of 20 and 30 changed their place of residence once a year. Young people leave their family homes, to return to them after a period of time, and then leave them again. They live in dormitories, with their parents, or with a partner or friends. They move when they change their studies, go abroad, or are offered a job in a different city.

Studies conducted on a sample of young Germans (Seiffge-Krenke, 2010) show that people who in their own opinion left their family home “on time” or late (or returned to their family home after leaving it) had more experiences and would engage in a greater number of romantic relationships. Changing the place of residence, or at least leaving the parental home, seems to be, therefore, conducive to exploration. On the other hand, no differences in the course of

education or professional career have been observed between the individuals who moved out from their family homes on time or very early and the group of individuals who left their family homes late.

In the period of emerging adulthood, one can observe a significant heterogeneity in the sphere of intimate relationships. Young people live in informal relationships or, although less frequently, in marriages, and a tendency to change partners can be observed. A great minority has children, whereas the majority of young people still does not even plan to have them. Arnett (2000) reports that the average age at which women get married in developed and developing countries is the following: (1) in developed countries (e.g. the USA, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan) – 25–27, and in (2) developing countries (e.g. Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, India, Maroko, Brasil) – 17–21. In emerging adulthood (which, according to Arnett, can be observed in developed countries), romantic relationships are common between the age of 18 and 25, nevertheless this period is usually *a time of instability in relationships* (fact 6).

In the case of teenagers, relationships usually take the form of spending time together, going out for parties, spending time in larger groups, and are of trial and fleeting character. Relationships of individuals in the period of emerging adulthood focus to a greater extent on building physical and emotional intimacy, they last longer, are more often associated with sexual intercourses and living together, yet they still are unstable and they are seldom connected with undertaking long-term commitments and making conscious decisions about having children (Lanz & Tagliabue, 2007). Studies show that readiness to create intimate relationships is closely connected with attaining the status of identity achievement (Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2010), which is why in the period of emerging adulthood its level is not as high as in the period of early adulthood.

Central Statistical Office of Poland informs how often Polish people get married (GUS, 2010). It turns out that a significant increase in the average age at which people get married in Poland could have been observed – in the case of men, in 2008 it was 27.7 (i.e. more than three years later when compared to the beginning of the 1990s); in the case of women – 25.6 in 2008 (i.e. 2.6 years later than at the beginning of the 1990s). Moreover, by 2008 an increase in the number of women with higher education took place – from 4% to 36%, and a decrease in the number of women with vocational education – from 35% to 12%, and in the case of men, an increase in the percentage of individuals with secondary education – from 28% to 40%, and higher education – from 5% to 26%, and a decrease in the percentage of individuals with vocational educa-

tion – from 51% to 25%. Also, a shift in the time of highest fertility of women could have been observed – from the age of 20-24 (in the 1990s) to 25-29 today. In 2008, in comparison to the beginning of the 1990s, the number of mothers with higher education was six times higher (an increase from 6% to 34%) and, at the same time, the percentage of mothers with primary education or without education decreased from 18% to 7%. Therefore, the period of emerging adulthood has become a time when young people are more apt to devote more time to education, rather than engaging in long-term relationships and creating a family.

### FEATURE III: THE SELF-FOCUSED AGE

The period of emerging adulthood is a time when a young person, unlike in any other developmental period, *focuses on oneself, on one's own development* (fact 7). Usually, the individual does not yet have duties typical of a person in early adulthood – to the spouse, employer, own children. The person can, thus, avail oneself of a vast variety of possibilities offered by his or her environment – study, work abroad, travel, live in different places. Yet, focusing on one's own development expresses itself particularly strong in a prolonged time devoted to education.

In Poland, for example, the number of people with higher education has been constantly increasing. The percentage of Poles between the age of 25 and 64 with higher education increased from less than 10% in 1995 to 21.2% in 2009 (Szafranec, 2011). The number of people who studied increased from 404 000 in 1990 to 1 580 000 in 2000 (i.e. an increase of 291%; in turn, the increase measured between 1990 and 2010 was even higher – 370%). Also, a growing interest in high school education (from 30% in the middle of the 1990s to 44% in 2009) indicates that there is a tendency to prolong the period of education. Behind the decision to go to a high school, which in fact does not offer acquiring any professional qualifications, there usually is a hidden anticipation of continuing education – at the university level. An interest in vocational schools, i.e. technical schools, occupational schools, and profiled secondary schools, has been systematically decreasing (from 70% in the 1990s to 40% in 2009). As much as 82% of graduates of post-gymnasium schools decides to continue education at the university level. Studies in the country are supplemented by studies abroad. The number of students who participate in the Erasmus program has been constantly increasing. More and more Poles also enroll in various courses and programs extending their knowledge in a specific field.

#### FEATURE IV: THE AGE OF POSSIBILITIES

*Emerging adulthood is a time of great possibilities*, during which a person engages in such a large number of exploration activities as never before and never later in his or her life (fact 8). Due to the fact that adult roles are still to be undertaken, young people have a lot of time to avail themselves of various possibilities in the sphere of education, intimate relationships, or ideology. It is a time when a young individual still can, without more serious consequences, engage in different lifestyles and test different roles.

Such an orientation of young people, i.e. focus on taking advantage of what is going on “here and now”, has been describe in the theory of types of social participation (Reinders, 2006; Reinders, Bergs-Winkels, Butz, & Claßen, 2001; Reinders & Butz, 2001; see also Mianowska, 2008). The authors of this theory distinguished four types of social participation, i.e. the manner of availing oneself of goods and offers available in the given society – *integration*, *assimilation*, *marginalization* and *separation*. They distinguished them on the basis of levels of two independent dimensions of life orientation – moratorium orientation and transitive orientation. Transitive orientation refers to undertaking future-oriented actions, realizing the socially-determined developmental tasks, understood strictly in accord with the concept of developmental tasks described by Havighurst (1981), preparing for undertaking roles of adulthood. Moratorium orientation, in turn, refers to availing oneself of offers available “here and now”. Activities undertaken within this orientation are pleasure-oriented, and gaining new experiences does not result from the need to learn something that may become useful in adulthood. These two orientations are not treated, though, as opposite. An individual can manifest high levels of both transitive and moratorium orientation (integration type), or low levels of the two orientations (marginalization type), or a high level of one orientation and a low level of the other (high transitive orientation and low moratorium orientation – assimilation type; low transitive orientation and high moratorium orientation – segregation type).

Domination of transitive orientation, which can be treated as an indicator of transition to adulthood, over moratorium orientation can be observed relatively late – no sooner than in the period of emerging adulthood. In studies conducted on a sample of post-gymnasium students (Rękosiewicz, 2013), comparably high levels of the two orientations could have been observed (excluding technical school students in the case of whom the level of transitive orientation exceeded the level of moratorium orientation – yet, the effect strength measured with the

use of Cohen's  $d$  was in this group weak – 0.25). In turn, among individuals in the period of emerging adulthood a significant domination of transitive orientation over moratorium orientation could have been observed (Cohen's  $d$  amounted to 0.61 among university students, and to 0.81 among post-secondary school students). At the same time, the level of moratorium orientation in this group proved to be still relatively high, which resulted in naming the integration type the most frequently appearing in this group.

In the reported studies, the assimilation type (a high level of transitive orientation and a low level of moratorium orientation) was connected with a low level of ruminative exploration (one of the five dimensions of identity proposed by Luyckx et al., 2008) and high levels of the remaining four dimensions. Moreover, both the assimilation and integration type (characterized by a high level of transitive orientation) are associated with increased levels of commitment making and identification with commitment. The assimilation type also coincides with a good ability to regulate emotions – an ability slowly formed in the period of early adolescence, but treated as a developmental norm in the period of emerging adulthood (poorest results in this sphere achieve individuals with the segregation type) (Jankowski & Rękosiewicz, 2013). While “excessive” taking advantage of opportunities of adolescence and emerging adulthood can create a risk of a prolonging postponement of adulthood, maintaining a high level of moratorium orientation along with a high level of transitive orientation seems to be connected with a satisfactory transition to adulthood.

## FEATURE V: THE AGE OF FEELING IN BETWEEN

Fact 9. about emerging adulthood pertains to the fact that people in this phase have a *sense of being in between childhood and adulthood*. They neither feel children nor adults. When asked about whether they are already adults, individuals in this developmental phase most frequently, when compared with other age groups, respond that “a little yes, a little no” (Arnett, 1994; see also Piotrowski, 2010).

At the same time, it is not only about the sense that people possess – for, *it is not possible, from the scientific point of view, to clearly assess when the person becomes an adult* (fact 10). One can observe, for example, that changes in the brain anatomy that are to transform the brain into “the brain of an adult”, take a very long time – from the period of early adolescence to the period of early adulthood (Steinberg, 2009). No concrete moment in time of when the brain of a teenager becomes the brain of an adult can be distinguished. Already in late



school age and early adolescence, a reduction of grey matter in prefrontal regions can be observed. Elimination of redundant neural connections during that time results in a significant enhancement of information processing and logic reasoning. From early adolescence to early adulthood, in turn, an expansion of white matter in prefrontal regions takes place. Myelination of nerve fibres improves the effectiveness of neural signalization within prefrontal cortex, which has a significant meaning for the development of executive functions. The expansion of neural connections within different regions of the brain cortex and between the brain cortex and subcortical structures has an effect on the enhancement of emotion regulation. This process takes place in the period between early and late adolescence. At the same time, in early adolescence, the highest activity of the dopamine system in the whole life can be observed. Thus, on the one hand, a need to seek for sensations emerges very quickly (which conditions the increase of the level of exploration at this age) and, on the other hand, the development of emotion regulation lasts a few years longer. Cerebral systems that are engaged in executive functions, self-regulation, and coordination between emotional and cognitive processes, mature for a long period of time – from late adolescence to early adulthood. Therefore, from the biological point of view, we are also unable to unequivocally determine when we become adults. Probably in early adolescence, nevertheless naming a concrete age is impossible, because considerable individual differences between young people can be observed (Rostowski, 2012).

Apart from the biological approach to the matter of becoming an adult, one can look into this topic from the socio-cultural perspective. If we distinguish between subjective and objective indicators of adulthood, then the subjective indicators will include a formed identity and sense of being an adult, whereas the objective indicators will comprise undertaking social roles of adulthood. Whether the person in his or her own opinion is directed more by the subjective or objective indicators may depend on the culture in which s/he lives. In one of the studies (Arnett & Galambos, 2003), researchers asked young people about the criteria of entering adulthood. Two thirds of young Irish said that an important criterion of entering adulthood was completing the military service, young Argentinians claimed that it was creating a family, and for young Mormons indicators of entering adulthood were transitions connected with their religion. Additionally, the most frequently named criteria of adulthood in all of the investigated groups were financial independence, making independent decisions about oneself and taking responsibility for one's own actions.

Not undertaking social roles of the adulthood period may be directly associated with the situation and requirements on the job market, which to a great



extent prolongs education. In Poland, postponing adulthood in the spheres connected with professional career and family is strongly conditioned by the socio-economic situation associated with a difficult entrance on the job market, the necessity to study longer, difficulties in achieving the financial independence (Brzezińska, Czub, Nowotnik, & Rękosiewicz, 2012; Szafraniec, 2011). Arnett himself (2000) considered social and demographic changes to be the cause of the appearance of emerging adulthood.

## CONCLUSION

In psychology, when it comes to the issue of determining boundaries of adulthood, nothing can be considered unequivocally normative or not normative (Arnett, 2001). The manner of entering adulthood in developed countries has undergone substantial changes in recent years (Bynner, 2005). The postponement of undertaking social roles of adulthood can be observed in various nationalities (Arnett, 1998; Kokko, Pulkkinen, & Mesiäinen, 2009; Macek, Bejček, & Vaníčková, 2007; Sirsch, Dreher, Mayr, & Willinger, 2009). The period of entering adulthood, during which the main developmental task becomes the formation of identity and the sense of being an adult, and starting to undertake social roles of adulthood, lasts even up to the age of 30 (Arnett, 2004; Konstam, 2007). What can be noticed nowadays, is a social consent to postpone the realization of some of developmental tasks associated with the transition to adulthood (e.g. postponing creating a family, prolonging the period of education, etc.) or, at least, it does not meet with a social disapproval (Settersten & Hagestad, 1996).

According to Arnett (2001), the prolonged period of transition to adulthood stems from changes that take place in Western societies. Zygmunt Bauman defines these changes in terms of entering societies into a new phase of development – *postmodernity*, or *second, late or liquid modernity* (Bauman, 2000; 2006). Characteristic traits of this phase of societies development are rapid changes and abundance of offers, which does not remain without influence on the process of identity development. The fact that practically at any stage of life identity becomes ultimately established, it undergoes constant changes, is re-build and modified under the influence of new experiences, may be a form of a response to the conditions present in the social environment: “A coherent, strongly consolidated and properly constructed identity could turn out to be a burden, a necessity, or a limitation of freedom of choice. It could predict inability to open the door, when another opportunity knocked.” (Bauman, 2007; p. 51).

It is worth emphasizing that a high level of exploration, instability in education, in the sphere of work, place of residence and relationships, focusing on one's own development and availing oneself of opportunities of the period of emerging adulthood has both strong and weak sides. Postponing entering adulthood for a long time, i.e. not undertaking commitments and roles of adulthood, constitutes a kind of a developmental „brake”, it can strengthen fears and uncertainty about undertaking roles of adulthood. In turn, the greatest advantage of this phenomenon is increasing the probability of forming such an identity that will guarantee a high level of satisfaction, and minimize the risk of the emergence of identity foreclosure (a low level of exploration and a high level of commitment – when a person adopts commitments passed on from his or her parents or other significant individuals; these commitments may not always be suitable for the person who adopts them) or identity diffusion (a low level of both exploration and commitment; the most serious risk of various psychological problems).

## REFERENCES

- Amiot, C. E., de la Sablonniere, R., Terry, D. J., & Smith, J. R. (2007). Integration of social identities in the self: toward a cognitive-developmental model. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *11*, 364-388. doi: 10.1177/1088868307304091
- Arnett, J. J. (1994). Are college students adults? Their conceptions of the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Adult Development*, *1*, 154-168. doi: 10.1177/0044118X97029001001
- Arnett, J. J. (1997). Young people's conceptions of the transition to adulthood. *Youth and Society*, *29*, 1-23. doi: 10.1177/0044118X97029001001
- Arnett, J. J. (1998). Learning to stand alone: the contemporary American transition to adulthood in cultural and historical context. *Human Development*, *41*, 295-315. doi: 10.1159/000022591
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood. A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 469-480. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469
- Arnett, J. J. (2001). Conceptions of the transition to adulthood: Perspectives from adolescence through midlife. *Journal of Adult Development*, *8*, 133-143. doi: 10.1023/A:1026450103225.
- Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: the winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Arnett, J. J. (2007). Afterward: aging out of care- toward realizing the possibilities of emerging adulthood. *New directions for youth development*, *113*, 151-161. doi: 10.1002/yd.207

- Arnett, J. J. & Galambos, N. L. (2003). Culture and conceptions of adulthood. In J. J. Arnett & N. L. Galambos (Eds.), *New directions for child and adolescent development: Exploring cultural conceptions of the transition to adulthood* (100, pp. 91–98). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Ponowoczesność jako źródło cierpień* [Postmodernity and its discontents]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sic!
- Bauman, Z. (2006). *Płynna nowoczesność* [Liquid modernity]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Bauman, Z. (2007). *Tożsamość. Rozmowy z Benedetto Vecchim* [Identity. Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi]. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Bosma, H. A., & Kunnen, S. E. (2001). Determinants and mechanisms in ego identity development: A review and synthesis. *Developmental Review*, 21, 39–66. doi: 10.1006/drev.2000.0514
- Brzezińska, A. I., Czub, T., Czub, M., Kaczan, R., Piotrowski, K., & Rękosiewicz, M. (2012). Postponed or delayed adulthood? In E. Nowak, D. Schrader, & B. Zizek (Eds.), *Educating competencies for democracy* (pp. 135–157). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.
- Brzezińska, A. I., Czub, T., Nowotnik, A., & Rękosiewicz, M. (2012). Supporting Polish youth in entering into adulthood. Discussion on the margins of the Youth of 2011 Report. *Culture and Education*, 5(91), 244–257.
- Brzezińska, A. I., & Piotrowski, K. (2009). Diagnoza statusów tożsamości w okresie adolescencji, wyłaniającej się dorosłości i wczesnej dorosłości za pomocą *Skali Wymiarów Rozwoju Tożsamości (DIDS)* [A Diagnosis of identity status in adolescence, Emerging adulthood and early adulthood using the *Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS)*]. *Studia Psychologiczne* 3(47), 93–109.
- Brzezińska, A. I., & Piotrowski, K. (2010). Formowanie się tożsamości a poczucie dorosłości i gotowość do tworzenia bliskich związków [The link between identity formation, sense of being adult and readiness for intimate relationships]. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne* 16(2), 265–274.
- Bynner, J. (2005). Rethinking the youth phase of the life course: The case for emerging adulthood. *Journal of Youth Studies* 8(4), 367–384. doi: 10.1080/13676260500431628
- Clancy, S. M., & Dollinger, S. J. (1993). Identity, self, and personality: identity status and the Five – Factor Model of Personality. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 3, 227–245. doi: 10.1207/s15327795jra0303\_2
- Crocetti, E., Luyckx, K., Scrignaro, M., & Sica, L. S. (2011). Identity formation in Italian emerging adults: A cluster-analytic approach and associations with psychosocial functioning. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 8, 558–572. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2011.576858
- Czub, T., Brzezińska, A. I., Czub, M., Piotrowski, K., & Rękosiewicz, M. (2012). 羞愧感在同一性发展中的调节作用 [Regulative role of shame in the process of identity formation]. *Culture and Education – Chinese Edition*, 7 (93), 38–51.

- Danielsen, L.M., Lorem, A.E., & Kröger J. (2000). The impact of social context on the identity-formation process of Norwegian late adolescents. *Youth & Society* 31(3), 332–362. doi: 10.1177/0044118X00031003004
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton.
- Fadjukoff, P., Kokko, K., & Pulkkinen, L. (2007). Implications of timing of entering adulthood for identity achievement. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 22, 504–530. doi: 10.1177/0743558407305420
- Grotevant, H. D. (1987). Toward a process model of identity formation. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 2, 203–222. doi: 10.1177/074355488723003
- GUS (2010). *Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski w latach 2000-2009* [Basic information about the demographic development in Poland in 2000–2009].
- Havighurst, R. J. (1981), *Developmental tasks and education*. New York: Longman.
- Helson, R., & Srivastava, S. (2001). Three paths of adult development: conservers, seekers and achievers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 995–1010. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.80.6.995
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Dimaggio, G. (2007). Self, identity, and globalization in times of uncertainty: a dialogical analysis. *Review of General Psychology*, 11, 31–61. doi: 10.1037/1089-2680.11.1.31
- Jankowski, P., & Rękosiewicz, M. (2013). Type of social participation and regulation of emotion among upper secondary school students. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 3, 196–204. doi: 10.2478/ppb-2013-0035
- Kidwell, J. S., Dunham, R. M., Bacho, R. A., Pastorino, E., & Portes, P. R. (1995). Adolescent identity exploration: a test of Erikson's theory of transitional crisis. *Adolescence*, 30, 785–793.
- Kokko, K., Pulkkinen, L., & Mesiäinen, P. (2009). Timing of parenthood in relation to other life, transitions and adult social functioning. *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 33(4), 356–365. doi: 10.1177/0165025409103873
- Konstam, V. (2007). *Emerging and young adulthood. Multiple perspectives, diverse narratives*. New York: Springer.
- Kunnen, E. S., & Wassink, M. E. K. (2003). An analysis of identity change in adulthood. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 3, 347–366. doi: 10.1207/S1532706XID0304\_03
- Lanz, M., & Tagliabue, S. (2007). Do I really need someone in order to become an adult? Romantic relationships during emerging adulthood in Italy. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22(5), 531–549. doi: 10.1177/0743558407306713
- Luyckx, K., Goossens, L., & Soenens, B. (2006). A developmental contextual perspective on identity construction in emerging adulthood: change dynamics in commitment formation and commitment evaluation. *Developmental Psychology*, 42, 366–380. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.42.2.366
- Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S. J., Berzonsky, M. D., Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Smits, I., & Goossens, L. (2008). Capturing ruminative exploration: extending the four-di-

- mensional model of identity formation in late adolescence. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 42, 58–82. doi: 10.1016/j.jrp.2007.04.004
- Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S. J., Goossens, L., Beyers, W., & Missotten, L. (2011). Processes of personal identity formation and evaluation. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 77–98). New York: Springer.
- Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S. J., Goossens, L., & Pollock, S. (2008). Employment, sense of coherence and identity formation: Contextual and psychological processes on the pathway to sense of adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 23(5), 566–591. doi: 10.1177/0743558408322146
- Luyckx, K., Soenens, B., & Goossens, L. (2006). The personality-identity interplay in emerging adult women: convergent findings from complementary analysis. *European Journal of Personality*, 20, 195–215. doi: 10.1002/per.579
- Luyckx, K., Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Goossens, L., & Berzonsky, M. D. (2007). Parental psychological control and dimensions of identity formation in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21, 546–550. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.21.3.546
- Luyckx, K., Vansteenkiste, M., Goossens, L., & Duriez, B. (2009). Basic need satisfaction and identity formation: Bridging self-determination theory and process-oriented identity research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 56, 276–288. doi: 10.1037/a0015349
- Macek, P., Bejček, J., & Vaníčková, J. (2007). Contemporary Czech emerging adults: Generation growing up in the period of social changes. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22(5), 444–475. doi: 10.1177/0743558407305417
- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego – identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3(5), 551–558. doi: 10.1037/h0023281
- Marcia, J. E. (2002). Identity and psychosocial development in adulthood. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 2, 7–28. doi: 10.1207/S1532706X-ID0201\_02
- Mianowska, E. (2008). *Strategie społecznego uczestnictwa młodzieży* [Strategies of youth social participation]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Impuls.
- Oleś, P. K. (2011). *Psychologia człowieka dorosłego* [Psychology of adulthood]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Reinders, H. (2006). *Jugendtypen zwischen Bildung und Freizeit Theoretische Präzisierung und empirische Prüfung einer differenziellen Theorie der Adoleszenz*. Münster, New York, München, Berlin: Waxmann.
- Reinders, H., Bergs-Winkels, D., Butz, P., & Claßen, G. (2001). Typologische Entwicklungswege Jugendlicher. Die horizontale Dimension sozialräumlicher Entfaltung. In J. Mansel, W. Schweins, & M. Ulbrich-Herrmann (Eds.), *Zukunftsperspektiven Jugendlicher. Wirtschaftliche und soziale Entwicklungen als Herausforderung und Bedrohung für die Lebensplanung* (pp. 200–216). München: Juventa Verlag.

- Reinders, H., & Butz, P. (2001). Entwicklungswege Jugendlicher zwischen Transition und Moratorium. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 47, 913–928.
- Rękosiewicz, M. (2013). Type of social participation and identity formation in adolescence and emerging adulthood. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 3, 277–287. doi: 10.2478/ppb-2013-0031
- Rostowski, J. (2012). *Rozwój mózgu człowieka w cyklu życia. Aspekty bioneuropsychologiczne. [Human brain development in life cycle. Bioneuropsychological aspects]*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Difin.
- Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2010). Predicting the timing of leaving home and related developmental tasks: Parents' and children's perspectives. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 27, 495–518. doi: 10.1177/0265407510363426
- Settersten, R. A., & Hagestad, R. (1996). What's the latest? Cultural age deadlines for family transitions. *The Gerontologist*, 36, 178–188. doi: 10.1093/geront/36.2.178
- Sirsch, U., Dreher, E., Mayr, E., & Willinger, U. (2009). What does it take to be an adult in Austria? Views of adulthood in Austrian adolescent, emerging adults, and adults. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 24(3), 275–292. doi: 10.1177/0743558408331184
- Steinberg, L. (2009). Should the science of adolescent brain development inform public policy? *American Psychologist*, 64(8), 739–750. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.64.8.739
- Stephen, J., Fraser, E. & Marcia, J. E. (1992). Lifespan identity development: variables related to Moratorium-Achievement (MAMA) cycles, *Journal of Adolescence*, 15, 283–300. doi: 10.1016/0140-1971(92)90031-Y
- Szafraniec, K. (2011). *Młodzi 2011'* [Report Youth 2011]. Warsaw: Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów.
- Waterman, A. (1999). Identity, identity statuses, and identity status development: A contemporary statement. *Developmental Review*, 19, 591–621. doi: 10.1006/drev.1999.0493
- Yoder, A. E. (2000). Barriers to ego identity status formation: a contextual qualification of Marcia's identity status paradigm. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23, 95–106. doi: 10.1006/jado.1999.0298
- Vleioras, G., & Bosma, H. A. (2005). Predicting change in relational identity commitments: exploration and emotions. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 5, 35–56. doi: 10.1207/s1532706xid0501\_3

## CHAPTER 2

---

# Cognitive and Emotional Functioning of Young Adults on the Contemporary Labour Market

*Katarzyna Wojtkowska and Jan Jędrzejczyk*

### INTRODUCTION

The global economic crisis of 2008–2009, caused by a real estate bubble, is considered the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s (Yergin, Roubini, Rogoff, & Behraves, 2009). Due to strong associations between global markets, this crisis was one of the factors contributing to the recession in the Eurozone (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2013). This situation has also influenced Poland, where economic slowdown still continues (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2013).

One of the aspects of the difficult economic situation is a high unemployment rate. In Poland this rate has been the highest in six years – 16%. It means that two million people are jobless. According to predictions, in 2014 the unemployment rate will be maintained at 13–14% (Gacki, 2013). Unemployment among young people in the European Union has reached the highest levels in history – one in four people under 25 is out of work (23.2%). In Poland this rate is even higher – unemployment among young adults is 27.4% (Eurostat, 2014).

Economic situation and mental health are interconnected. On the one hand, economic crisis, which manifests itself through reduction of wages and jobs, and through destabilisation of health care, leads to deterioration of psychological well-being. On the other hand, mental health affects human productivity (Herman, Saxena, & Moodie, 2005). It is estimated that in the European Union



mental disorders result in a 3–4% drop in gross national product (Gabriel & Liimatainen, 2000).

Mental health is affected by many different factors, one of them being economic status. Stable employment and secure income are associated with psychological well-being, while poverty and financial problems (i.e. mortgage) are risk factors for mental disorders (Almedom, 2005; Fryers, Melzer, Jenkins, & Brugha, 2005; Jenkins et al., 2008; Skapinakis, Weich, Louis, Singleton, & Araya, 2006). Unemployment, in turn, is associated with such serious mental health problems as depression, substance abuse or even suicide (Berk, Dodd, & Henry, 2006; Paul & Moser, 2009; Rehkopf & Buka, 2006).

The following variables are associated with mental health: level of perceived stress, tendency to feel positive and negative affect, cognitive emotion regulation strategies, and hope of success. For this reason, it is worth examining the relationships between these variables in the group of final-year students, who will soon face the harsh reality of the labour market as described earlier.

## EMOTIONS

Emotions are an integral part of the human experience. Their role is to shape perception and orientation activities, and to influence interaction between people (Frijda, 1986). Emotional arousal motivates the individual to act – this is its motivational function (Łukaszewski & Doliński, 2004). People have many goals to achieve, but it is mainly emotion that determines the priorities for action and their implementation (Clare, 1999). Emotions direct one's behaviour in a particular way so that the individual can cope with the current reality (Frijda, 1986). If there is no sufficient information in the environment, emotions can fill this gap (Doliński, 2004). Emotional reaction gives meaning to ambiguous situations and the individual feels how they should behave. The information function is activated if the individual is close to achieving a goal, has already reached it, or if despite the efforts the goal is still distant. Another function is related to the information that people communicate to their social environment. Both facial and vocal expression of emotion provides information about the self (Clare, 1999). This function is of twofold importance; firstly, others can learn about the individual's emotional state and, secondly, they can react accordingly. Crying makes people help, smiling creates bonds between people and releases tension – each emotion has a different effect on the environment (Levenson, 1999). Emotions influence cognitive processing – mindfulness, a way of perceiving oneself and others, interpretations of events, and remembering them



(Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008). The pioneer of research in this area was Bower (1981, 1991 in Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008). He described the phenomenon of mood-congruent processing according to which people process and extract information in accordance with their current mood. A similar phenomenon – memory dependent on the mood – was discovered by Eich (1995 in Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008).

According to the theory developed by David Watson and Auke Tellegen (1985) in their study, human emotions can be divided into two independent dimensions of affect: positive and negative feelings. However, there are other models which assume different divisions of emotions (Russell, 1980; Thayer, 1989; Matthews, Jones, & Chamberlain, 1990; Larsen & Diener, 1992). People experiencing minimum intensity of positive affect feel sadness and apathy; in contrast, in extremely positive states they feel pleasant engagement, are full of energy, power and excitement. In the case of extremely negative affect we are dealing with anger, a sense of unhappiness, nervousness and hysteria, while an almost complete absence of negative emotions results in calmness and serenity (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Watson (Watson et al., 1999) sees a relation between feelings and the two systems proposed by Fowles (1987): the inhibitory (BIS) and activation (BFS) systems. The goal of the BIS is to protect the organism against any troubles, injuries or other damage. Negative emotions motivate the individual to remain vigilant and cautious. The BFS is used to ensure that the desired resources are available in the environment. Feeling positive emotions is a source of motivation and reward for supporting activities aimed at achieving a goal. The feeling of energy and vitality creates a subjective feeling that the individual is able to achieve the goal by means of their behaviour. On the other hand, weak experiencing of positive feelings co-occurs with a sense of depression because of the lack of emotional reward. For this reason, people with depression do not take purposeful action because they do not receive sufficient emotional reward for their efforts.

The tendency to experience negative emotions is associated with the feeling of stress (Rydstedt, Johnsen, Lundh, & Devereux, 2013). The concept of stress refers to the three functional areas: social (relationship between the individual and the environment), psychological (subjective assessment of the situation) and physiological (activation of the nervous system, which mobilizes the organism to act). Stress occurs when a person sees a situation as straining or exceeding their resources, which might pose a threat to their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). An economic crisis can be regarded as this type of a situation (Wetzel, Mertens, & Rübken, 2012).

## COGNITIVE EMOTION REGULATION

The concept of emotion regulation refers to processes by which people influence which emotions they experience, when these emotions appear and how they are expressed. Elements of emotions that can be influenced include the moment of their occurrence, intensity and duration, as well as experiential, behavioural and physiological responses. Emotion regulation may be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious. Both negative and positive emotions can undergo those processes (Gross, 1998).

Gross (1998) distinguishes five stages of the emotion generation process. At each of the stages different emotion regulation strategies may occur. These stages are: (1) situation selection, (2) situation modification, (3) attention deployment, (4) cognitive change, and (5) response modulation.

Stages (3) and (4) are defined as cognitive emotion regulation because cognitive processes are their main component. Thanks to those processes (i.e. directing attention towards/from a stimulus, changing the meaning of a stimulus) individuals can cope with information which elicits emotional response. It applies particularly to negative emotions control – so they do not become overwhelming (Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2002). Cognitive emotion regulation can be unconscious (i.e. selective attention or memory distortion processes) or conscious. Garnefski, Kraaij, and Spinhoven (2001) described nine cognitive emotion regulation strategies – the conscious strategies of coping with emotions that arise after a negative or stressful event. These strategies can be adaptive, i.e. associated with psychological well-being, or non-adaptive, i.e. associated with psychopathological symptoms. Adaptive strategies include (1) acceptance, i.e. accepting the reality as it is, (2) positive reappraisal, i.e. reinterpreting a negative event as an experience that can strengthen the individual and contribute to personal growth, (3) positive refocusing, i.e. thinking about pleasant experiences instead of the negative event, (4) refocus on planning, i.e. thinking how to deal with the negative event, and (5) putting into perspective, i.e. comparing the negative event with other experiences in life and acknowledging that it is not so bad. The non-adaptive strategies are (1) catastrophizing, i.e. thinking how horrible the event was, (2) rumination, i.e. thinking all the time about emotions and thoughts associated with the negative experience, (3) self-blame, i.e. blaming oneself for the negative event, and (4) other-blame, i.e. blaming others for the negative event (Garnefski et al., 2002).

## HOPE OF SUCCESS

Hope is a commonly used term, yet not so obvious for researchers. It can be regarded as a positive emotional state (Franken, 2005); however, more and more often it is considered a cognitive construct (Kozielecki, 2006; Trzebińska, 2008).

Snyder (1993, 2002) emphasizes the aspect of hope that focuses on achieving goals, e.g. finding a job by a graduate. From the researchers' perspective, hope is defined as an interrelated belief in the strong will and the ability to find solutions to achieve an objective. Clear formulation of the goal leads to the belief that one is able to take and sustain action to achieve it. Another element is seeing oneself as a person able to cope with the difficulties encountered on the way to reaching the goal. Hope as approached by Snyder is a relatively permanent disposition which provides one with energy to cope with difficult situations (Snyder, Ilardi, Michael, & Cheavens, 2000).

According to Snyder, hope is a set of conscious beliefs and thoughts about the self (Shorey, Snyder, Rand, Hockemeyer, & Feldman, 2002). Hope defined this way is called "the hope of success" due to the belief that the positive results of one's actions are possible (Łaguna et al., 2005). The emotional aspect of hope is caused by the observation of one's success in achieving the goal. Emotions therefore follow one's cognitive processes (Shorey et al., 2002). Research confirms this relation; individuals with a high level of hope differ from those with a low level of hope in terms of the emotional attitude to their lives (Snyder, 2002). Individuals with a high level of hope experience positive emotions and enthusiasm when achieving goals, while those with a low level of hope feel negative emotions and a sense of lack of vigour in achieving their objectives. What happens when one runs into difficulties on one's way to achieving the objective? Individuals with a high level of hope behave in a flexible way and try to find alternative plans. On the other hand, those with a low level of hope think that they are stuck and resort to magical thinking (Snyder & Pulvers, 2001). This is an avoidance strategy of coping with the situation which does not yield the desired effects, and people who use avoidance thinking remain passive and do not learn from their experience. In addition, hope is related to emotional functioning. Research conducted by Matczak (2002; unpublished thesis) shows a negative correlation between hope of success, anxiety as a trait and depression, but a positive one with optimism (Matczak, 2002; Łaguna, 2005). Hope of success is associated with generally better adaptation (Snyder, 2002). Individuals with a higher level of hope of success declare higher self-esteem and life satisfaction, fewer negative thoughts but more positive thoughts, and

additionally, in situations of coping with stress, they are willing to look for the benefits of such an event (Affleck & Tennen, 1996; Kwon, 2000).

## THE CURRENT STUDY

On the basis of research suggesting a positive relationship between stress and the tendency to experience negative emotions (Karlsson & Archer, 2007) and a negative relationship between stress and the tendency to experience positive emotions (Rydstedt, Johnsen, Lundh, & Devereux, 2013), the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: There is a relationship between the level of stress and the tendency to experience emotions, such that the higher the level of stress, the greater the tendency to experience negative emotions and the lesser the tendency to experience positive emotions.

On the basis of research suggesting a negative relationship between hope and negative emotions (Matczak, 2002) and a positive relationship between hope and positive emotions (Affleck & Tennen, 1996; Kwon, 2000), the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: There is a relationship between the level of hope of success and the tendency to experience emotions, such that the higher the level of hope of success, the greater the tendency to experience positive emotions and the lesser the tendency to experience negative emotions.

On the basis of research suggesting a relationship between stress and psychopathological symptoms (Bremner, Krystal, Southwick, & Charney, 1996; Kendler, Karkowski, & Prescott, 1999) and the theory by Garnefski, Kraaij, and Spinhoven (2002), which posits that adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies are related to a reduced level of psychopathological symptoms and that non-adaptive strategies are related to an elevated level of these symptoms, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: There is a relationship between the level of stress and cognitive emotion regulation strategies, such that the higher the level of stress, the more the non-adaptive strategies are preferred and the less the adaptive ones.

On the basis of the theory that posits a relationship between hope of success and better adaptation (Snyder, 2002) and the theory that posits a positive relationship between adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies and psychological adjustment, as well as between non-adaptive strategies and psychopathological symptoms, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: There is a relationship between the level of hope of success and the frequency of using cognitive emotion regulation strategies, such that the higher the level of hope of success, the more adaptive strategies are preferred and the less non-adaptive ones.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The study group included 80 final-year students of the humanities aged 21 to 28 (mean age: 23.13 years,  $SD = 1.32$ ). 40 of them were females. The study was conducted among students of the four departments of the University of Warsaw: philosophy, Polish studies, history, and pedagogics. In our research we decided to focus on students of the humanities because of the different level of the objective difficulty in finding a job, which depends on the chosen major (Górniak, 2013).

## MATERIALS

In order to measure the variables we used the question about the perceived level of stress related to the current situation on the labour market and three questionnaires.

**Level of stress.** It was measured by a survey question: To what extent the current situation on the labour market is stressful for you? Participants answered on a 5-point scale (1 – not at all, 5 – very strongly).

**Level of positive and negative affectivity.** It was measured by the *Skala Uczuć Pozytywnych i Negatywnych* (Brzozowski, 1992), which is a Polish version of The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson & Clark, 1988). We used the C30 version, which measures the relatively stable affective traits. In the C30 version the participant is asked how they usually feel. It consists of a list of 30 adjectives describing different feelings. Each adjective is rated by a participant on a 5-point scale (1 – slightly or not at all, 5 – very strongly). Internal reliability of the questionnaire measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranges from 0.73 to 0.95 (depending on the version and type of sample).

**Cognitive emotion regulation strategies.** To measure the frequency of using these strategies we used the Polish translation of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ-short). The original version was developed by Garnefski and Kraaij (2006), while the Polish adaptation of the standard version of CERQ was prepared by Marszał-Wiśniewska and Fajkowska (2010). The Polish ver-

sion of CERQ-short is in the process of being adapted; reverse translation has been made. Internal reliability of the questionnaire measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficients on our study sample ranges from 0,63 to 0,84 (depending on the subscale). The questionnaire consists of 18 statements describing ways of thinking applied when the individual experiences a negative event in their life. Participants assess how often they think in each of the ways using a 5-point scale (1 – almost never, 5 – almost always). CERQ-short measures the frequency of the use of each of the nine cognitive emotion regulation strategies (each strategy is described by two statements): (1) self-blame, (2) acceptance, (3) rumination, (4) positive refocusing, (5) refocus on planning, (6) positive reappraisal, (7) putting into perspective, (8) catastrophizing, and (9) other-blame.

*Hope of success.* It was measured by the Polish adaptation – *Kwestionariusz Nadziei na Sukces* (Łaguna, Trzebiński, & Zięba, 2005) based on the original version by Snyder et. al. from 1991. The questionnaire consists of 12 statements which the participant has to rate on an 8-point scale (1 – definitely untrue, 8 – definitely true). It has two scales: belief in one's ability to find solutions and belief in having a strong will (each consists of 4 items), and buffer positions (additional 4 items). Internal reliability of the questionnaire measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficients is 0,86.

### *Data Analysis*

To analyse the data, SPSS-21 software was used. To identify relationships between variables, the Pearson's correlation coefficient (table 1) and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (table 2) were used. Pearson's correlation coefficient's data assumptions were met only for the level of hope of success and positive and negative affect. The remaining correlations' measurements were made using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

## RESULTS

Positive correlations were obtained between the level of stress, the frequency of using the rumination strategy ( $r_s = .214$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and the tendency to experience negative emotions ( $r_s = .301$ ;  $p < .01$ ), as well as between hope of success and the frequency of using such strategies as positive reappraisal ( $r_s = .448$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and refocus on planning ( $r_s = .430$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Also, positive correlations were observed between the tendency to experience positive feelings and hope of success ( $r = .519$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

Table 1

*Correlations: hope of success; positive affectivity; negative affectivity.*

Hope of success	Scales	
	Positive Affectivity	Negative Affectivity
Correlation	.519	-.138
Significance	.000	.111

Table 2  
Correlations for the variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1.Stress	-												
2.Positive Affectivity	.014	-											
3.Negative Affectivity	.301**	-.420*	-										
4.Self-Blame	.118	-.107	.338**	-									
5.Acceptance	-.181	-.070	-.028	0.171	-								
6.Rumination	.214*	-.250*	.396**	.335**	0.058	-							
7. Positive Refocusing	.019	.099	-.194*	-.238*	-.058	-.263**	-						
8. Refocus on Planning	.065	.340**	-.176	.122	.038	.185	-.113	-					
9. Positive Reappraisal	.046	.515**	-.281**	.007	.245*	-.090	.073	.453**	-				
10. Putting into Perspective	.058	.138	-.115	.361	.035	-.123	.253*	.199*	.271**	-			
11. Catastrophizing	.143	-.477**	.500**	.378**	.095	.604**	-.265**	-.135	-.339**	-.054	-		
12. Other-Blame	-.018	-.177	.101	-.202*	.037	.135	.040	-.247*	-.165	.084	.084	-	
13.Hope of success	.102	.506**	-.140	0.062	.115	.131	-.064	.430**	.448**	.089	-.104	-.030	-

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .00$



## DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1. In the study, positive correlation between feeling the stress related to the situation on the labour market and the tendency to experience negative emotions was observed, but an inverse relation was not established in the case of feeling positive emotions. A study conducted by Karlsson and Archer (2007) found a similar relation. In turn, this is only partly consistent with the results previously obtained by Rydstedt, Johnsen, Lundh, and Devereux (2013), which demonstrated a significantly positive correlation between stress and negative emotionality and an inverse relation with positive affectivity. The differences can be explained by different characteristics of the sample: in the cited article a much larger sample consisting solely of men was studied ( $N = 731$ ). This suggests ambiguous results of the previous studies, which requires further verification.

Hypothesis 2. A positive relation between the tendency to experience positive emotions and hope of success was demonstrated, while an inverse relation with experiencing negative emotions was not confirmed. This result is partly consistent with the results of experimental and correlation studies by Snyder (2002), which also showed a negative relation between hope of success and negative emotionality. However, the diagnostic scales, i.e. the ability to find solutions ( $r_s = -0.498$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and a strong will ( $r_s = -0.429$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), significantly negatively correlated with the tendency to feel negative emotions in a way that was assumed in hypothesis 2. Perhaps the buffer items, which have lower discriminatory power than the position on the scales, hamper the disclosure of significant relations with the overall results for hope of success.

Hypothesis 3. There is a positive relation between the level of stress and cognitive emotion regulation strategies – rumination. This result is partly consistent with the results obtained by Martin and Dahlen (2005). In the cited study, the relation between rumination and stress is the strongest of all the strategies, which confirms the results of the present study. However, in the work of Martin and Dahlen, the study sample was of a significantly greater number ( $N = 362$ ). In addition, the authors differently measured the severity of stress; they used the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) questionnaire. The differences in the method may explain the significant relation between stress and other strategies, which could not be verified in the present study.

Hypothesis 4. A positive relation between hope of success and the two adaptive strategies: refocus on planning and positive reappraisal was discovered. The results are partly in line with the expectations. People who show hope of

success are focused on planning activities and also positively evaluate the future effects of their actions (Snyder, 1993; 2002). No significant correlation was obtained between hope of success and other strategies. The explanation for this non-compliance with the hypothesis may be the fact that the use of specific strategies varies depending on the context – a person can think of negative events differently in different situations (Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2002). It is therefore possible that, in the context of this study (the current situation on the labour market), other strategies are not associated with the expectation of positive results of one's own actions. In addition, it is worth noticing that the hypothesis was formulated on the basis of the premises that follow from the theory. So far, the relation between hope of success and cognitive emotion regulation strategies has not been empirically verified. The evaluation of these relations requires further research.

## APPLICATION

The results of this study demonstrate that young adults who are more likely to experience stress due to the difficult situation on the labour market are also characterized by negative affectivity. Positive affectivity turned out to be associated with the expectation of positive outcomes of one's actions. People who tend to feel stress often return to thinking about emotions related to negative events in their lives. Moreover, when facing a negative event, individuals who expect positive results of their own actions start thinking how to deal with the event and how it can strengthen them or contribute to their development.

## LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The limitations of the present study include the insufficient size of the sample. The relatively small sample size increases the likelihood of a second type error, which means that the fact that no significant relation between the variables was observed might be a false result. Moreover, the study was not conducted in standardized conditions – some respondents filled out the questionnaire during classes in groups of different sizes, others during breaks between classes. This diversity could affect the reliability of the study. The assessment of the level of stress was performed with the use of a single question – probably using a questionnaire with proven psychometric properties would yield more reliable results. A significant constraint that affects the application of the discussed results in practice is the fact that the presented survey is of correlational rather

that experimental nature. Therefore, cause-effect relations between variables could not be established.

Future studies in the field should take more care of the sample size and homogenous test conditions. To obtain a fuller picture of the situation of fresh graduates, it would be worthwhile to examine cognitive and emotional functioning not only among students of the humanities but also of science. Employing an experimental research model would allow the use of the results of the study in practice, e.g. in order to prevent psychological problems of people in a difficult economic situation.

## REFERENCES

- Affleck, G. & Tennen, H. (1996). Construing benefits from adversity: Adaptational significance and dispositional underpinnings. *Journal of Personality*, *64*, 899–922. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.1996.tb00948.x
- Almedom, A.M. (2005). Social capital and mental health: An interdisciplinary review of primary evidence. *Social Science & Medicine*, *61*, 943–964. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.12.025
- Berk, M., Dodd, S. & Henry, M. (2006). The effect of macroeconomic variables on suicide. *Psychological Medicine*, *36*, 181–189. doi:10.1017/S0033291705006
- Bremner, J.D. Krystal, J.H., Southwick, S.M., & Charney, D.S. (1996). Noradrenergic mechanisms in stress and anxiety: I. preclinical studies. *Synapse*, *23*, 28–38.
- Clore, G. C. (1999). Dlaczego przeżywamy emocje [Why do we experience emotions]? In P. Ekman, & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *Natura emocji [The nature of emotion]* (pp. 94–102). Gdańsk: GWP.
- Doliński, D. (2004). Emocje, poznanie i zachowanie [Emotions, cognition and behaviour]. In J. Strelau (Ed.), *Psychologia. Podręcznik Akademicki [Psychology. An academic textbook]* (Vol. 2, pp. 369–394). Gdańsk: GWP.
- Eurostat. (2014). *Unemployment news release December 2013*. [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/3-31012014-AP/EN/3-31012014-AP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-31012014-AP/EN/3-31012014-AP-EN.PDF)
- Franken, R.E. (2005). *Psychologia motywacji [Psychology of motivation]*. Gdańsk: GWP.
- Frijda, N. H. (1986). *The emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frijda, N. H. (1999). Emocje są funkcjonalne – na ogół [Emotions are functional – generally]. In P. Ekman & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *Natura emocji [The nature of emotion]* (pp. 102–112). Gdańsk: GWP.
- Fryers, T., Melzer, D., Jenkins, R., & Brugha, T. (2005). The distribution of the common mental disorders: social inequalities in Europe. *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health*, *1*(14). doi: 10.1186/1745-0179-1-14
- Gabriel, P., & Liimatainen, M-R. (2000). *Mental health in the workplace*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

- Gacki, G. (2013, 08 listopada). Bezrobocie w Polsce 2014 [Unemployment in Poland 2014]. *eGospodarka.pl*. Retrieved from [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/3-31012014-AP/EN/3-31012014-AP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-31012014-AP/EN/3-31012014-AP-EN.PDF)
- Garnefski, N., & Kraaij, V. (2006). Cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire – development of a short 18-item version (CERQ-short). *Personality and Individual Differences*, *41*, 1045–1053. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2006.04.010
- Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V., & Spinhoven, P. (2001). Negative life events, cognitive emotion regulation and emotional problems. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *30*, 1311–1327. doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(00)00113-6
- Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V. & Spinhoven, P. (2002). *Manual for the use of the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire*. Leiderdorp: Datec.
- Gerrig, R., & Zimbardo, P.G. (2008). *Psychologia i życie [Psychology and life]*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Główny Urząd Statystyczny. (2013). Informacja o sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej Polski w I. półroczu 2013 r. [The information on socio-economic situation in Poland in the first half of 2013]. Retrieved from [http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbr/gus/POZ\\_gus\\_Konferencja\\_prasowa\\_23\\_lipca\\_2013.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbr/gus/POZ_gus_Konferencja_prasowa_23_lipca_2013.pdf)
- Gross, J.J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: an integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, *2*(3), 271–299.
- Gross, J.J., & Thompson, R.A. (2006). Emotion regulation: Conceptual foundations. In Gross, J.J. (Ed.), *Handbook of emotion regulation*. New York: Guilford press.
- Herrman, H., Saxena, S. & Moodie, R. (2005). *Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice*. Geneva: World Health Organization. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/evidence/en/promoting\\_mhh.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf)
- Jenkins, R., Bhugra, D., Bebbington, P., Brugha, T., Farrell, M., Coid, J., et al. (2008). Debt, income and mental disorder in the general population. *Psychological Medicine*, *38*, 1485–1493. doi: 10.1017/S0033291707002516
- Karlsonn, E., & Archer, T. (2007). Relationship between personality characteristics and affect: Gender and affective personality. *Individual Differences Research*, *5*, 44–58.
- Kendler, K.S., Karkowski, L.M, & Prescott, C.A. (1999). Causal relationship between stressful life events and the onset of major depression. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *156*(6), 837–841.
- Kwon, P. (2000). Hope and dysphoria: the moderating role of defense mechanisms. *Journal of Personality*, *68*(2), 199–214. doi: 10.1111/1467-6494.00095
- Łaguna, M. (2005). *Nadzieja i optymizm a aktywne radzenie sobie z sytuacją bezrobocia [Hope and optimism and active coping with unemployment situation]*. Referat na XXXII Zjeździe Naukowym PTP. Kraków.

- Łaguna, M., Trzebińska, J., & Zięba, M. (2005). *Kwestionariusz Nadziei na Sukces* [Hope for Success Questionnaire]. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów psychologicznych PTP.
- Larsen, G. J., Diener, E. (1992). Promises and problems with circumplex model of emotion. In: M. S. Clark (ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology: Emotion* (t. 13, pp. 25–59). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lazarus, R.S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Levenson, R. W. (1999). Funkcjonalne podejście do ludzkich emocji [Human emotions – functional approach]. In P. Ekman, & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *Natura emocji* [*The nature of emotion*] (pp. 112–115). Gdańsk: GWP.
- Łukaszewski, W., & Doliński, D. (2004). Mechanizmy leżące u podstaw motywacji [The mechanisms underlying motivation]. In J. Strelau (Ed.), *Psychologia. Podręcznik Akademicki* [*Psychology. An academic textbook*] (Vol. 2, pp. 441–468). Gdańsk: GWP.
- Marszał-Wiśniewska, M. & Fajkowska, M. (2010). Właściwości psychometryczne Kwestionariusza Poznawczej Regulacji Emocji (Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire; CERQ) – wyniki badań na polskiej próbie [Psychometric properties of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire – results on polish sample]. *Studia Psychologiczne*, 48(1), 19–39.
- Martin, R. C., & Dahlen E. R. (2005). Cognitive emotion regulation in the prediction of depression, anxiety, stress, and anger. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 39, 1249–1260. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2005.06.004
- Matthews, G., Jones, D. M., Chamberlain, A. G. (1990). Refining the measurement of mood: The UWIST Mood Adjective Checklist. *British Journal of Psychology*, 81, 17–42.
- Górniak, J. (Ed.) (2013). Młodość czy doświadczenie? Kapitał ludzki w Polsce. Raport podsumowujący III edycję badań BKL z 2012 roku [Youth or experience? Human capital in Poland. Report summarizing the 3rd edition of BKL research from 2012]. Retrieved from [http://bkl.parp.gov.pl/system/files/Downloads/20121128143313/BKL\\_Raport\\_2013\\_int\\_m.pdf](http://bkl.parp.gov.pl/system/files/Downloads/20121128143313/BKL_Raport_2013_int_m.pdf)
- Narodowy Bank Polski. (2013). *Kryzys w strefie euro. Przyczyny, przebieg i perspektywy jego rozwiązania*. [Eurozone crisis. Causes, course and prospects of its solution]. Retrieved from <http://www.nbp.pl/cie/download/kryzys-w-strefie-euro.pdf>
- Paul, K.I., & Moser, K. (2009). Unemployment impairs mental health: Meta-analyses. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74(3), 264–282. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2009.01.001
- Russell, J. A. (1980). A circumplex model of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 1161–1178.
- Rehkopf, D.H., & Buka, S.L. (2006). The association between suicide and the socio-economic characteristics of geographical areas: a systematic review. *Psychological Medicine*, 36, 145–157. doi:10.1017/S003329170500588X

- Rydstedt, L.W., Johnsen, S.-Å. K., Lundh, M., & Devereux, J.J. (2013). The conceptual roles of negative and positive affectivity in the stressor-strain relationship. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 9(1), 93–103.
- Shorey, H. S., Snyder, C. R., Rand, K. L., Hockemeyer, J. R., & Feldman, D. B. (2002). Somewhere over the rainbow: Hope theory weathers its first decade. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13, 322–331. doi: 10.1207/S15327965PLI1304\_03
- Skapinakis, P., Wiech, S., Lewis, G., Singleton, N., & Araya, R. (2006). Socio-economic position and common mental disorders: Longitudinal study in the general population in the UK. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 189, 109–117. doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.105.014449
- Snyder, C. R. (1993). Hope for the journey. In A. P. Turnbull, J. M. Patterson, S. K. Behr, D. L. Murphy, J. G. Marquis & M. J. Blue-Banning (Eds.), *Cognitive coping, families, and disability* (pp. 271–286). Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks.
- Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13, 249–275. doi:10.1207/S15327965PLI1304\_01
- Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J.R., Holleran, S.A., Irving, L.M., Sigmon, S.T., et al. (1991). The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(4), 570–585. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.60.4.570
- Snyder, C. R., Ilardi, S. Michael, S. T., & Cheavens, J. (2000). Hope theory: Updating a common process for psychological change. In C. R. Snyder & R. E. Ingram (Eds.), *Handbook of psychological change* (pp. 128–150). New York: Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Snyder, C. R., & Pulvers, K. M. (2001). Dr. Seuss, the coping machine, and “Oh the places you’ll go”. In C. R. Snyder (Ed.), *Coping with stress: Effective people and processes* (pp. 3–29). London: Oxford Press.
- Snyder, C. R., Rand, K. L., King, E. A., Feldman, D. B., & Woodward, J. T. (2002). “False” hope. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58, 1003–1022. doi: 10.1002/jclp.10096
- Thayer, R. E. (1989). *The biopsychology of mood and arousal*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Watson, D., & Tellegen, A. (1985). Toward a consensual structure of mood. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98, 219–235. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.98.2.219
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of Positive and Negative Affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 1063–1070. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063
- Watson, D., Wiese, D., Vaidya, J., & Tellegen, A. (1999). The two general activation systems of affect: Structural findings, evolutionary considerations, and psychobiological evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 820–838. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.76.5.820
- Wetzel, K., Mertens, A., & Rübken, H. (2012). How does the economic crisis affect the psychological well-being? Comparing college students and employees. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 18, 1–9.

Yergin, D. (interviewer), Roubini, N., Rogoff, K., & Behraves, N. (interviewees). (2009). Three top economists agree 2009 worst financial crisis since Great Depression; risks increase if right steps are not taken [Interview transcription]. *Business Wire*. Retrieved from [http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news\\_view&newsId=20090213005161&newsLang=en](http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20090213005161&newsLang=en)





## CHAPTER 3

---

# To Have to Better One's Being: The Relationship Between Materialism and Self-Esteem, Satisfaction with Life and the Level of Anxiety Among Young Adults

*Magdalena Szawarska*

### INTRODUCTION

Even though material goods have surrounded man since the beginning of time, never before has their number been so great. As a consequence of technological development and the material enrichment of people in many parts of the world, there have never been so many products available on the market or so many potential buyers of those goods. In particular, the kilometres of shop shelves bending under the weight of products and crowds of customers who throng shopping centres in highly developed countries provoke the question concerning the role that acquisition and possession of material goods play in everyday life.

The pursuit of possessing material goods has attracted the attention of psychologists intrigued to know the reasons behind and consequences of the phenomenon. This has led to a significant increase in the number of publications which indicate that, apart from instrumental functions (being a means of achieving precisely formulated goals or performing a specific task such as travelling from point A to point B), objects have also many functions of psychological nature.

This assumption is consistent among others with the concept of the extended self, according to which possessions can be so strongly connected with their owner that it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between them and the self of the individual (Belk, 1988). The most valued possessions become an integral part of the individual, concentrically surrounding the self, supporting it and providing it with definitional categories.

Other researchers also indicate that material goods play a role in constructing and maintaining personal identity, at the same time helping to create and maintain a positive self-image (Dittmar, 2008; Górnik-Durose, 2002; Richins & Dawson, 1992). It is also assumed that people rely on particular objects to provide them with support especially in situations when in doubt whether they possess qualities or skills that are, in their view, important. Examples include novice sportsmen who purchase expensive professional equipment to compensate for their sense of incompetence, or students of law who have not yet embarked on their professional careers but dress like professionally active lawyers, often wearing a suit and an elegant brand-name watch for university classes (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981). The mechanism of relying on objects to compensate for perceived non-material deficits is also evident in experimental studies, whose results indicate among others that people are able to use their possessions with the aim of regaining their sense of control and agency (Beggan, 1991).

Material goods, due to their rich symbolic value, also act as a means of communicating messages to the society. Their aim is not only to emphasise the material status of the individual but also to convey information about their psychological functioning. Research clearly shows that people presented surrounded by expensive material goods are considered to be more competent, diligent and independent (Christopher & Schlenker, 2000; Dittmar, 1992). Moreover, the choice of particular objects and brands can highlight qualities desired by the individual such as creativity, progressiveness or sophistication (Sirgy, 1985).

Researchers, however, point out that people are not only inclined to notice the various functions dormant in objects, including their ability to influence the psychological and social functioning of man. Some people go a step further, acknowledging that material wealth is a basic condition for psychological well-being and that possessing the right material goods is a key to being satisfied with themselves and the life they live (Kasser, 2002). With the positive attitude towards material goods (acknowledging and appreciating the various functions that objects perform in people's lives) they enter the world where life revolves around acquiring and possessing objects.

For years, psychological literature has been using the concept of materialism to capture this phenomenon. The present paper adopts the definition of materialism as proposed by Richins and Dawson (1992), according to which materialism is a value that guides people's choices in various situations (not only those connected with consumption) and manifests itself in:

- attaching great importance to material goods in everyday life (materialism-centrality dimension);
- believing that material goods are key to happiness (materialism–happiness dimension);
- displaying the tendency to perceive material goods as signs of success and life achievements of the individual (materialism–success dimension).

During the last 30 years, materialism has been the subject of many publications, mostly by American and British psychologists. Today, studies devoted to materialism constitute a particularly important research area. In the age of the growing popularity of consumer culture and the tendency following from it to promote constant acquisition and possession of more and more material goods, the expansion of materialistic attitudes in many societies has attracted growing attention (Belk, 1985; Dittmar, 2008; Kasser, 2002; Kasser & Kanner, 2004). Numerous studies also demonstrate that the concentration on possessing goods and the desire to earn more and more are a phenomenon that is characteristic not only of inhabitants of economically deprived countries but also – if not predominantly – of highly developed ones (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). Researchers point out that shopping centres are becoming the modern-day temples (Ritzer, 2001) and the ability to participate in the consumption process has ceased to be a privilege, instead turning into an obligation for everyone who does not want to be viewed as a “loser” in today's world (Bauman, 2009). The above-mentioned observations corroborate the views of Kasser (2002, 2010), one of the currently best known researchers of materialism, who argues that nowadays people are increasingly convinced that to be well, one first must be well-off. As a consequence, instead of concentrating on the spiritual aspect of their existence, people focus on acquiring material goods and money.

Studies conducted among first-year students of US higher education institutions can provide a good illustration of the tendency. Their results clearly show that over the years the importance of material wealth as a life goal has gradually increased (percentage of students who considered being materially well-off as a very important or essential life goal rose from 45% in 1966 to 74.10% in 1996), while spiritual aspirations have simultaneously declined

(in 1966 developing a meaningful philosophy of life was endorsed as the top value by more than 80% of students, in contrast in 1996 only 42.10% of students considered it as an essential or very important goal; Astin, Parrot, Korn, & Sax, 1997).

The expansion of the phenomenon of concentrating on material wealth has also reached Poland. Even though the most important values for Poles are invariably personal and family life, today 31% of Polish citizens admit that money as well as status-related and material aspirations are among the three most important spheres of their lives (CBOS, 2008). Other important life goals include aspirations not mentioned 10 years ago such as the desire to have a well-paid job (CBOS, 2008).

In the case of Polish adults it has been pointed out that attaching importance to material wealth might follow from the desire to satisfy the fundamental needs that had to be suppressed for years (Sikorska, 1998; Wąsowicz-Kiryło, 2006). The premises for the argumentation that the pursuit of material wealth does not necessarily have to follow from the desire to take care of one's material concerns have been provided by analyses of the structure of life goals of Polish adolescents. Today, approximately 60% of nineteen-year-olds believe that possessing large amounts of money is important or very important in life (in comparison, in 1976 only 15% of adolescents from this age group were of the same opinion; Szafraniec, 2011). Research commissioned by the National Bureau for Drug Prevention shows that among secondary school students (who are not burdened with the obligation to maintain themselves and their families) as many as 30% list acquisition of wealth among their top three life goals (KBPN, 2010; see *Figure 1*). It is also worth mentioning that the percentage of adolescents who are intent on becoming wealthy has been steadily growing (24% in 2006, 26% in 2008, and 30% in 2010; KBPN, 2010).

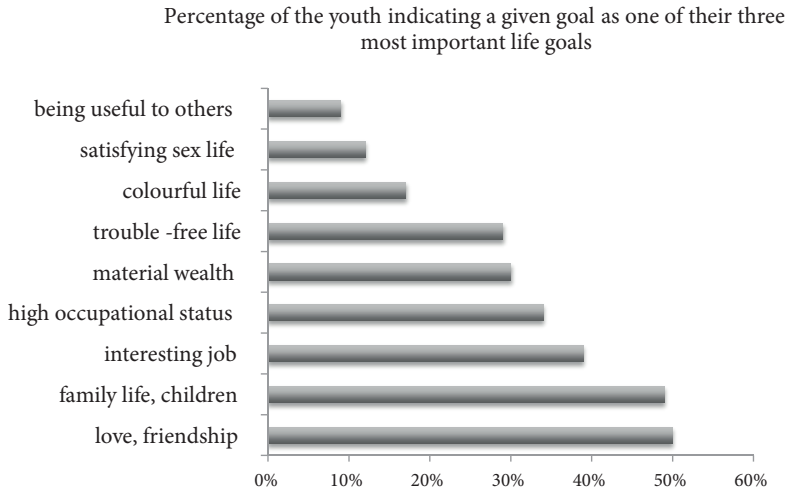


Figure 1  
Goals and aspirations of the Polish youth (own elaboration based on KBPN, 2010)

What is interesting, this growth is accompanied by gradual increase – not decrease – in satisfaction with one’s own material situation (see Table 1).

Table 1  
Youth’s satisfaction with the material conditions of their family (KBPN, 2010).

How would you rate the present material condition of your family?	2003	2008	2010
	% of replies		
Really bad and rather bad	16%	8%	9%
Average	47%	42%	36%
Very good and rather good	37%	50%	55%

It thus shows that the increased concentration on possessing material goods and money cannot be fully explained by the deprivation of basic existential needs or the deep dissatisfaction with one’s material situation.

Psychologists researching the subject of materialistic approach to life argue that its links with a range of psychological variables are much stronger than its relation to material situation. Previous studies have shown that the concentration on possessing material goods and their treatment as a means of satisfying

one's psychological needs (such as the need for achievement or affiliation) go hand in hand with worse psychological functioning (Belk, 1985; Dittmar, 2008; Kasser 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Lower self-esteem, higher level of anxiety, as well as depressiveness and neuroticism are characteristic of materialists (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002). Also empirical reports concerning emotional states of materialists demonstrate that on a daily basis they experience more negative emotions and fewer positive ones in comparison to individuals with a less materialistic outlook on life (Solberg, Diener & Robinson, 2004). Materialists are also less satisfied both with their lives as a whole and their particular domains (such as family and social lives; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Experimental research suggests that what may constitute the basis of materialism are the feelings of uncertainty or insecurity (Chang & Arkin, 2002; Kasser & Sheldon, 2000; Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 2004) and lower self-esteem (Chaplin & John, 2007). Those observations support the view that materialism is an attempt at compensating for deficiencies experienced with respect to satisfying one's psychological needs. According to Kasser (2002), people who become materialists are individuals whose psychological needs are deprived and who, acting in accordance with the ideas of consumer culture, choose to rely on material goods in the hope that they will act as a means of satisfying those needs. As many researchers argue, the turn to materialistic aspirations such as money, fame and physical attractiveness is, however, not a response to problems of psychological nature, and the concentration on external goals such as the pursuit of material wealth cannot contribute to the improvement of the individual's well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; Sheldon et al., 2004). As a consequence, the situation of materialists is constantly deteriorating since their pursuit of material goods does not offer a solution to the problems that trouble them (Kasser, 2002).

Apart from individual costs manifested in worsening psychological functioning, materialism also entails costs on the social level. Materialistic approach, researchers claim, does not influence only one's thoughts and feelings, but also one's social behaviour (Kasser, 2010). It has been demonstrated that, among others, such attitude goes together with lesser inclination to cooperate and less care for the common good – behaviours that consequently lead to decreasing welfare of entire societies (Brown & Kasser, 2003; Sheldon & McGregor, 2000).

Observations concerning materialism are alarming. However, the majority of the quoted studies were conducted on inhabitants of highly developed countries, with a long history of capitalist system and a strong presence of consumer culture in their inhabitants' everyday lives. This provokes the question whether

similar relationships can also be observed in societies that are relatively poorer and where consumerism ideas are less widespread.

Polish studies in this area often yield conflicting results. Some publications indicate the existence of connections between materialism and worse psychological functioning that have been postulated in the literature (Górnik-Durose, 2002), others don't show such relationships (Zawadzka, 2013) or demonstrate that although they appear there are very weak, such as in the Social Diagnosis studies (Czapiński & Panek, 2013). Even though results of the latter indicate that materialistic people are less satisfied with life, have lower sense of happiness and stronger suicidal tendencies, Pearson's correlation coefficient did not exceed the value of .055 for any of the above-mentioned correlations. In the case of fondness for shopping (in the Social Diagnosis studies the second factor of materialism, alongside materialism proper conceived of as attaching special importance to material goods) the relationship was similarly weak but with opposite direction. People who derive great pleasure from shopping turned out to evaluate their lives more positively, declared greater sense of happiness and desire to live, and lower suicidal and depressive tendencies. Such results additionally point to the lack of consistency in the relationships and suggest that connections between materialism and psychological functioning of man can have a more complex nature in Poland than what has been postulated in the literature.

In order to investigate the nature of the relationship between psychological functioning of an individual and materialism, I decided to focus on a group of people whose inclination towards materialism should be relatively strong. Taking into consideration that materialism is stronger among younger people (Czapiński & Panek, 2013; Dittmar, 2008), the present study concentrate on young adults since people from this age group are more materialistic than adults (Czapiński & Panek, 2013). In contrast with adolescents, however, their materialism should affect various spheres of their lives as young adults have significantly greater freedom to lead their lives according to the values they hold as compared with pupils and students. The period of young adulthood should be the time of becoming independent of one's parents and deciding for oneself when it comes to both private and professional life (Kieral-Turska, 2003). Thus, at this stage, concentrating on material goods and treating their possession as an important value in life should to a greater extent (than at the earlier stages of development) be reflected in the life choices, behaviour and the way of psychological functioning of the individual.

The aim of the present study was to examine whether the relationship between materialism and worse psychological well-being postulated by earlier –

especially British and American – studies can be observed among young adults in Poland. To this end, it was verified whether materialism in this group is connected with the following three aspects of psychological functioning:

- self-esteem – understood as a general positive or negative attitude toward the self, which includes both a cognitive component connected with beliefs about the self as well as an emotional component related to self-acceptance (Rosenberg, 1989);

- life satisfaction – defined as a cognitive evaluation of one's life (Czapiński, 2005); and

- level of anxiety – treated as a relatively permanent character trait that manifests itself in the tendency to view a wide range of objectively non-threatening situations as dangerous and to react to them with anxiety states that are inadequately acute in relation to the objective scale of the threat (Wrześniewski et al., 2006).

Taking into consideration results obtained by other researchers which indicate the existence of connections between materialism and worse psychological functioning, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Lower self-esteem and life satisfaction are related to a stronger inclination towards materialism.

H2: There is a positive correlation between anxiety and the inclination towards materialism.

Moreover, bearing in mind that according to the results of the Social Diagnosis studies materialism in Poland is related to one's sex and income (Czapiński & Panek, 2013), the present study controlled for those variables.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The study was conducted on 237 subjects (112 females and 125 males) aged 18–25 ( $M = 23.42$ ;  $SD = 1.40$ ), with an average monthly net income per household member of 300–8000 PLN ( $M = 2737.62$ ;  $SD = 3221.43$ ). The majority of subjects (79%) were university students of various disciplines.

### *Materials*

The questionnaire package presented to the study participants was comprised of the following instruments:

**Material Values Scale - Short Form** (MSV; Richins, 2004) (Polish adaptation - Wąsowicz-Kiryło, 2013). The scale assesses three aspects of materialism: con-



sidering the possession of material goods as a key, central aspect of life (materialism–centrality dimension), viewing material goods as the key to happiness (materialism–happiness dimension), and treating them as signs of success and life achievements (materialism–success dimension). Subjects were asked to answer all items using a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Since among the examined subjects the dimension of materialism–centrality yielded in the present study low internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .40), it was excluded from the analysis. The remaining two dimensions: materialism–happiness (Cronbach's alpha = .65) and materialism–success (Cronbach's alpha = .63) demonstrated in the present study acceptable internal consistency. The mean for the materialism–happiness dimension was 2.69 ( $SD = .57$ ) and 2.20 ( $SD = .62$ ) for materialism–success. The mean overall score for the materialism scale was 2.48 ( $SD = .52$ ).

**Self-Esteem Scale** (SES; Rosenberg, 1965) (Polish adaptation, Dzwonkowska, Lachowicz-Tabaczek, & Łaguna; 2008). The questionnaire comprises 10 items that subjects have to answer using a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). In the present study Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .84. The mean result obtained by the subjects was 3.22 ( $SD = .47$ ).

**Satisfaction with Life Scale** (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) (Polish adaptation - Juczyński, 2009). The scale comprises five items that examine how subjects evaluate their lives as a whole. The subjects answer the items using a seven-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the scale in the present study was .80. The mean result obtained for this scale was 4.28 ( $SD = 1.02$ ).

**State-Trait Anxiety Inventory** (STAI; version X-2, Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983) (Polish adaptation - Spielberger, Strelau, Tysarczyk, & Wrześniewski, 2011, in: Wrześniewski et al., 2011). The subjects' task while completing X-2 version of STAI (which is a measure of anxiety as a trait) is to evaluate how they usually feel using a four-point scale (1 = almost never, 4 = almost always). In the present study Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .88. The mean result obtained by the subjects was 2.04 ( $SD = .44$ ).

## PROCEDURE

Participants were asked to individually fill out a battery of questionnaires; the questionnaires were arranged in the same order as they have been discussed above. The test finished with questions concerning demographic variables such as sex, age and average monthly net income per household member.

## RESULTS

Using the 'Enter' method a series of hierarchical regression analyses was conducted in which materialism and its dimensions were dependent variables. In the first step, sex and average monthly net income per household member were entered as predictors into the regression equations; in the second step – self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and anxiety.

It transpired that materialism (understood as an overall result) can be predicted on the basis of the average monthly net income per household member, although it explains less than 4% of variability of results (Table 2). Sex turned out not to be a predictor of materialism. The analyses showed that expanding the model with psychological variables improves its parameters. Satisfaction with life and anxiety are statistically significant predictors of materialism. Expanding the model with psychological variables additionally renders income's contribution to predicting materialism insignificant.

Table 2

*Demographic and psychological variables as predictors of materialism (results of hierarchical regression analysis).*

Variables	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model 1	R <sup>2</sup> = .04; <i>F</i> (2,142) = 2.76; <i>p</i> = .049		
Constant		30.97	.001
Sex	.06	.73	.467
Income	.18	2.18	.031
Model 2	R <sup>2</sup> = .21; <i>F</i> (5,139) = 7.42; <i>p</i> = .001		
Constant		5.58	.001
Sex	.12	1.52	.130
Income	.14	1.61	.109
Self-esteem	-.05	-.45	.653
Life satisfaction	-.24	-2.53	.012
Anxiety	.22	2.05	.042

R<sup>2</sup> change = .17; *F* (3,139) = 10.18; *p* = .001

In the case of materialism–happiness and materialism–success dimensions (Tables 3 and 4), neither income nor sex contributed to their predictions. The inclusion of psychological variables rendered the models statistically relevant. Satisfaction with life turned out to be a good predictor of materialism–happiness, while materialism–success is determined by the level of anxiety. As shown by the analyses, self-esteem is not a relevant predictor of any of the dimensions of materialism. It is also important to note that using the model obtained for the materialism–happiness dimension it is possible to account for nearly twice as large a percentage of variability of results (23.1%) than in the case of the model obtained for the materialism–success dimension, which in turn can account for only 12.3% of variance of the results.

Table 3

*Demographic and psychological variables as predictors of the materialism–happiness dimension (results of hierarchical regression analysis).*

Variables	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model 1	R <sup>2</sup> = .03; <i>F</i> (2,142) = 2.54; <i>p</i> = .112		
Constant		15.50	.001
Sex	.01	.13	.895
Income	.16	1.71	.090
Model 2	R <sup>2</sup> = .23; <i>F</i> (5,139) = 8.33; <i>p</i> = .001		
Constant		4.41	.001
Sex	.06	.70	.488
Income	.12	1.56	.121
Self-esteem	-.05	-.45	.651
Life satisfaction	-.32	-3.51	.001
Anxiety	.15	1.44	.153

R<sup>2</sup> change = .23; *F*(3,139) = 11.81; *p* = .001

Table 4

*Demographic and psychological variables as predictors of the materialism–success dimension (results of hierarchical regression analysis).*

Variables	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Model 1	R2 = .03; <i>F</i> (2,142) = 2.02; <i>p</i> = .136		
Constant		10.53	.001
Sex	.09	1.09	.278
Income	.14	1.61	.109
Model 2	R2 = .12; <i>F</i> (5,139) = 3.90; <i>p</i> = .002		
Constant		1.88	.025
Sex	.16	1.82	.081
Income	.09	1.40	.164
Self-esteem	-.04	-.33	.742
Life satisfaction	-.10	-1.04	.298
Anxiety	.23	2.03	.041

R2 change = .10; *F* (3,139) = 5.05; *p* = .002

Furthermore, it has been examined whether the variables included in the models interact. A series of linear regression analyses using the ‘Enter’ method indicated the existence of one statistically relevant indirect effect. It turned out that the relationship between self-esteem and the materialism–happiness dimension is moderated by sex (Table 5).

Table 5

*The effect of interaction between sex and self-esteem in predicting the materialism–happiness dimension (results of linear regression analysis).*

Variables	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant		13.00	.001
Sex	-.02	-.24	.808
Self-esteem	-.21	-3.25	.001
Self-esteem x Sex	-.16	-2.44	.015

R2 = .07; *F*(3,223) = 5.94; *p* = .001

The analyses demonstrated that only for males self-esteem is a relevant predictor of the belief that material goods are the key to happiness in life (Beta =  $-.32$ ,  $t = -3.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Such effect was not observed among females (Beta =  $-.09$ ,  $t = -.82$ ,  $p > .005$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the presented study was to examine whether materialism among young Poles is connected with worse psychological well-being, which manifests itself in lower self-esteem and satisfaction with life, and in a higher level of anxiety.

The obtained results corroborate hypotheses formulated in the study. Satisfaction with life and a higher level of anxiety turned out to determine the overall level of materialism. In addition, it transpired that the intensity of materialism cannot be predicted on the basis of self-esteem when satisfaction with life and the level of anxiety are taken into account.

The analyses also demonstrated that materialism can be better predicted on the basis of psychological variables than on the basis of demographic variables. It turned out that sex does not determine materialism. However, it does act as a moderator of the relationship between self-esteem and materialism; the relation between lower self-esteem and a stronger tendency to view material goods as a condition for happiness is characteristic of males only. It suggests that young men who function worse psychologically more often adopt the materialistic attitude than do women, or – assuming the existence of inverse or two-sided relationship – that materialism among men affects their self-esteem more strongly. Further research is necessary in order to corroborate and explain this outcome, since publications by other researchers indicate that self-esteem among women is to a similar extent related to materialism as it is among men, and that its fall entails a similar increase in materialism irrespective of sex (Chaplin & John, 2007). The moderating effect of sex on the relationship between self-esteem and materialism–happiness can act as an explanation of why in the case of analyses conducted on the entire sample self-esteem is not a predictor of materialism.

The second included demographic variable – income – turned out to contribute little to predicting materialism. This bears out the observations of some researchers who suggest that the level of material wealth to a small extent contributes to predicting the materialistic attitude towards life (Dittmar, 2008). What is interesting, even though researchers usually argue that it is the economic

deprivation that is connected with a stronger tendency towards materialism (Cohen & Cohen, 1996; Czapiński & Panek, 2013), it turned out that the relationship between income and materialism was positive. As follows from the present study, young adults with a better financial situation declare that they attach greater importance to possessing material goods. This result is analogous to results obtained in some of the Polish studies concerning attitudes towards money which demonstrate that together with the growth of affluence Poles increasingly view money in a positive light and ascribe it the ability to positively affect their everyday lives (Kozak, 2004). Results showing that individuals who have more material possessions are more inclined towards materialism suggest that it is not objective economic deficits that lie at the basis of the concentration on material goods and money. It seems thus that the argument of the authors of the Social Diagnosis according to which “those who do not have really wanted to have; those who have can concentrate on something else” (Czapiński & Panek, 2013, p. 267) does not capture all possible relationships between material wealth and materialism. It is probable that for some young adults appetite comes with eating, and, even though they live better in terms of their material situation, they constantly focus on material goods.

The results of the present study demonstrate that the relationships between the psychological functioning of an individual and materialism depend to a large extent on the latter’s particular dimension. This could suggest that materialism is a much more complex phenomenon than is assumed in those publications where researchers use only the overall result in their analyses (Richins, 2004). In light of the obtained results, separate examination of particular dimensions of materialism seems justified since different causes can lie at their basis. It turned out that the materialism–success dimension only to a small extent can be predicted on the basis of the examined psychological variables. It is possible that the dimension is more strongly connected with other factors, which have not been included in the present research model and which have been indicated in other publications on materialism, such as the level of stress or negative affect (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002). It is also probable that psychological variables determine the dimension to a lesser extent than do factors of social nature (related to, among others, the prevalence among Poles of the belief that material wealth constitutes a symbol of success and life achievement; Jarecka, 2013).

When it comes to the second aspect of materialism – the tendency to view material goods as the key to a happy life (materialism–happiness dimension), it turned out that it can to a larger extent be predicted on the basis of psychological variables, in particular the level of the subjective satisfaction with life. The

obtained results demonstrated that dissatisfaction with life acts as a predictor of the belief that material goods are a source of happiness in life. It is thus possible that young adults who assess their lives worse believe that possessing material goods could change their lives and bring them the desired happiness. In other words, that it is good to have to better one's being.

## REFERENCES

- Astin, A., Parrot, S., Korn, W., & Sax, L. (1997). *The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends: 1966-1996*. University of California at Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute. Retrived from: <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/PDFs/pubs/TFS/Trends/Monographs/TheAmericanFreshman30YearTrends.pdf>
- Bauman, Z. (2009). *Konsumowanie życia [Consuming Life]*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Beggan, J. K. (1991). Using what you own to get what you need: The role of possessions in satisfying control motivation. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 6(6), 129–146.
- Belk, R. W. (1985). Materialism: Trait aspect of living in the material world. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12, 265 - 280.
- Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and Extended Self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), 139–168.
- Brown, K. W., & Kasser, T. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 822–848.
- Burroughs, J. E., & Rindfleisch, A. (2002). Materialism and well-being: A conflicting value perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(3), 348–370.
- CBOS, (2008). Aspiracje Polaków w latach 1998 i 2008 [Aspiration of Poles in years 1998 and 2008]. Retrived from: [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K\\_155\\_08.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2008/K_155_08.PDF)
- Chang, L., & Arkin, R.M. (2002). Materialism as an attempt to cope with uncertainty. *Psychology and Marketing*, 19, 389–406.
- Chaplin, L. N., & John, D. R. (2007). Growing up in a material world: Age differences in materialism in children and adolescents. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(4), 480–493.
- Christopher, A.N., & Schlenker, B. R. (2000). The impact of perceived material wealth and perceiver personality on first imoressions. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 21, 1–19.
- Cohen, P., Cohen, J. (1996). *Life values and adolescent mental health*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Czapiński, J. (2005). *Psychologia pozytywna. Nauka o szczęściu, zdrowiu, sile i cnotach człowieka* [Positive psychology. Science of happiness, health, power and virtue]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN
- Czapiński, J., & Panek T. (Eds.). (2013). *Diagnoza społeczna 2013* [Social Diagnosis 2013]. Retrieved from: [www.diagnoza.com](http://www.diagnoza.com)
- Dittmar, H. (1992). Perceived material wealth and first impressions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 31, 379–392.
- Dittmar, H. (2008). *Consumer culture, identity and well-being. the search for the “good life” and the “perfect body”*. East Sussex: Psychology Press.
- Dzwonkowska, I., Lachowicz-Tabaczek, K., & Łaguna, M. (2008). *Samoocena i jej pomiar: Polska adaptacja skali SES M. Rosenberga. Podręcznik* [Self-esteem and its measurement: Polish adaptation of Rosenberg SES. Manual]. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych.
- Górnik-Durose, M. (2002). *Psychologiczne aspekty posiadania – między instrumentalnością a społeczną użytecznością dóbr materialnych* [Psychological aspects of material possession – between instrumentality and social utility of material goods]. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Jarecka, U. (2013). Wizerunek biednych i bogatych – analiza wyników badań [Image of poor and rich - analysis of research outcomes.]. In U. Jarecka (Eds.), *Luksus vs niedostatek. Społeczno-ekonomiczne tło konsumpcji* [Luxury and scarcity. Socioeconomic background of consumption] (pp. 45–74). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN.
- Kasser, T. (2002). *The high price of materialism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kasser, T. (2010). Materialism and its Alternatives. In: A. M. Zawadzka & M. Górnik-Durose (Eds.), *Życie w konsumpcji, konsumpcja w życiu. Psychologiczne ścieżki współzależności* [Life in consumption, consumption in life. Psychological paths of interdependence] (pp. 127–141). Sopot: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Kasser, T., & Kanner, A. D. (2004). *Psychology and consumer culture. The struggle for a good life in a materialistic world*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R.M. (1993). A dark side of the American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 410-422.
- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R.M. (1996). Further examining the American Dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65, 410-422.
- Kasser, T., & Sheldon., K. (2000). Of health or death. Materialism, mortality salience, consumption behaviour. *Psychological Science*, 11(4), 348–351.
- KBPN (2010). *Plany, dążenia i aspiracje życiowe młodzieży. Raport z badań* [Plans and life aspirations of teenagers. Research report].



- Kieral-Turska, M. (2003). Rozwój człowieka w pełnym cyklu życia [Human development in lifespan.]. In J. Strelau (Eds.), *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki* [Psychology. Academic manual] (pp. 287-332). Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Kozak, A. (2004). *Znaczenie pieniądza* [Meaning of money.]. Lublin: Norbertinum.
- Juczynski, Z. (2009). *Narzędzia Pomiaru w Promocji i Psychologii Zdrowia* [Tools of measurement in Promotion and Health Psychology]. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych.
- Richins, M. L. (2004). The Material Value Scale: Measurement proprieties and development of a short form. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, 209-219. doi: 10.1086/383436
- Richins, M. L., & Dawson, S. (1992). A Consumer values orientation for materialism and its measurement: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19, 303-316.
- Ritzer, G. (2001). *Magiczny świat konsumpcji* [Enchanting a Disenchanted World. Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Muza.
- Rosenberg, M. (1989). *Society and the adolescent self-image. revised edition*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Sheldon, K. M., & McGregor, H. (2000). Extrinsic value orientation and the tragedy of the commons. *Journal of Personality*, 68, 383-411.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Psychological threat and extrinsic goal striving. *Motivation and Emotion*, 32, 37-45. doi: 10.1007/s11031-008-9081-5
- Sheldon, K.M., Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., & Kasser, T. (2004). Independent effects of goal contents and motives on well-being: it's both what you pursue and why you pursue it. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(4), 475-486. doi: 10.1177/0146167203261883
- Sikorska, J. (1988). *Konsumpcja: warunki, zróżnicowania, strategie* [Consumption: conditions, differentiation, strategies]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN.
- Sirgy, M. J. (1985). Using self-congruity and ideal congruity to predict purchase motivation. *Journal of Business Research*, 13, 195-206.
- Solberg, E. G., Diener E., & Robinson, M. D. (2004). Why are materialists less satisfied? In T. Kasser & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Psychology and consumer culture. the struggle for a good life in a materialistic world* (pp. 29-48). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Solomon, S., Greenberg, J. L., & Pyszczynski, T.A. (2004). Lethal consumption: Death denying materialism. In T. Kasser & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *psychology and consumer culture. the struggle for a good life in a materialistic world* (pp. 29-48). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Wrześniewski, K., Sosnowski, T., Jaworowska, A., & Fecenc, D. (2011). *Inwentarz Stanu i Cechy Lęku. Polska adaptacja STAI. Podręcznik*. [State -Trait Anxiety Inventory. Polish adaptation of STAI. Manual] Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych.

- Szafraniec, K. (2011). *Młodzi 2011 [Young 2011]*. Warszawa: Kancelaria Rady Ministrów.
- Wąsowicz-Kiryło, G. (2006). Zasoby, zachowania i decyzje alokacyjne [Resources, behaviours and allocation decisions]. In E. Aranowska & M. Łukasiak-Goszczyńska (Eds.), *Człowiek wobec wyzwań i dylematów współczesności [Human in the face of challenges and dilemmas of modern times]* (pp. 156–171). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Wicklund, R. A., & Gollwitzer, P. M. (1981). Symbolic self-completion, attempted influence and self-deprecation. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 2(2), 89–114.
- Zawadzka, A. M. (2013). Aspiracje materialistyczne młodzieży w kontekście preferowanych wartości i dobrostanu [Materialistic aspiration of teenagers in context of preferred values and wellbeing]. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne*, 19 (1), 7–16.
- Zaleskiewicz, T. (2011). *Psychologia ekonomiczna [Economic psychology]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

## CHAPTER 4

---

# The Construction and Validation Analysis of a Perceived Social Support Questionnaire Among Young Adults

*Anna Katarzyna Zaleszczyk*

### INTRODUCTION

Social support is assistance available to an individual in difficult situations, resources supplied to an individual by means of human interaction, the consequences of belonging to a society and satisfying the needs in difficult situations by significant people and reference groups (Sęk, 2001). In the most general terms, it is any assistance granted by individuals integrated with the recipient in a network of social contacts (Sęk & Cieślak, 2004). Multiple aspects of support should be stressed: support actually received, support perceived and the sense of social bonds (Kaniasty, 2003).

Sęk (2004, p. 18) defines social support as a “type of social interaction initiated by one or both participants in a problematic, difficult, stressful or critical situation”. A characteristic feature of this type of human interaction is the fact of transmitting or exchanging information, tangible goods, action instruments or emotions. Exchange can be unilateral or bilateral; there is a recipient and a giver. What is essential is the concord between the subject’s needs and the amount and type of support provided. In addition, efficacy of support depends on the extent to which it allows for rebuilding physical and mental resources indispensable in the coping process (Hobfoll, 1998). The purpose of such support is to come nearer to the solution to the problem, to achieve a set goal or overcome a difficult situation. Based on her own research and research done by other authors, (House, 1981; Pommersbach, 1984; Schwarzer, Leppin, 1988),

H. Sęk (2004, pp. 18–19) has listed the most commonly distinguished types of social support:

- Emotional support - comprising verbal and non-verbal communication with an individual which strengthens the sense of safety, belonging, being important and loved. Supportive behaviours are also aimed at creating a sense of belonging, care and improving self-assessment. Emotional support can help the suffering free themselves of tensions and negative emotions; they can express their fears, anxiety or sadness. Not only does it improve the self-assessment of a support recipient, but also their well-being. Adequate behaviour of a support giver also releases the sense of hope. This type of support is most commonly observed in difficult situations.
- Informational support - provision of such information, also being advice, that has the potential to solve a problem or better understand a given situation. This is also about providing feedback on the efficacy of various remedies undertaken by a support recipient and sharing the experience by those having similar problems. Informational support responds to the need of understanding the sense of critical events and their causes.
- Instrumental support - encompasses providing assistance in solving life tasks. It is also providing information on specific modes of conduct and a form of modelling effective preventive behaviours.
- Material support - demonstrated by providing material and financial assistance. This type of support also encompasses direct measures implemented for the benefit of others such as providing clothes, medicines, hygiene products, offering shelter or accommodation. Similarly to informational support, this type of support is the most expected and needed in the case of catastrophes, natural disasters, etc.

Functional properties of support give basis to distinguish between perceived support and received support. Perceived support results from a person's belief in availability of support, knowing when, where and from whom they can get help and who to rely on in a difficult situation. Received support is evaluated objectively or subjectively by a recipient as the actually received type and amount of support. The types of support listed depend on multiple factors: the type of a difficult situation, the needs of supported people, features of social networks that are available and used in a given situation (Sęk, Cieślak, 2004).

In early adulthood, taking up the tasks typical of this stage of development and their consistent implementation have impact on the sense of quality of a young person (Ziółkowska, 2005). The tasks which a young person faces in their adulthood are (White, 1975; Ziółkowska, 2005):

- Advancing in such areas of activity as: education, work, interests,
- Stabilising one's own identity,
- Establishing more profound interpersonal relationships, which is connected with becoming sensitive to the needs of others,
- Perceiving moral and ethical problems,
- Increasing the importance of care for the closest people just as for all the suffering and needy.

Social and cultural transformation is the source of challenge for young adults (Brzezińska, 2005). During this stage of development, there are numerous difficulties and traps which a young person has to face.

In this paper, I would like to present the process of creating my own research measure which will examine the perceived availability of social support with a young adult. Creating such a measure will allow me for exploring the studies regarding support networks for individuals. In addition, an in-depth analysis of data will make it possible to describe the group of young adults with the view to availability of social support in a difficult situation.

## METHOD

### *Selection of statements*

The first stage in formulating the questionnaire was to select as many social support-related statements as possible. With the types of social support precisely defined by Sęk (2004), the author has selected typical statements connected with the situation and feelings of a person being in a difficult situation. The list of statements to be included in the questionnaire has been formulated keeping the cognitive nature of items encompassing the specificity of statements typical of individual types of support.

Consultation of items with other psychologists was aimed at verifying whether specific situations and statements selected are actually typical of individual types of support. Differences in their opinions led to removing synonymous statements (8 items). In this way, the first version of the social support scale was created.

In addition, in the course of preparing the questionnaire of perceived social support the relation between types of social support and evaluation of social support was noted in the relevant literature (Kaniasty, 2005). To this end, the author has decided to include the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List – 40 v. General Population (ISEL-40 v. GP) in the research, which enabled determining the external and criterion validity (Zarzycka et al., 2010). One may conclude

(based on a theoretical analysis) that a positive relation will be found between the evaluation of social support and perceiving various types of social support in a difficult situation. On the other hand, relatively independent constructs are: perceived support, received support, expected support (Kaniasty, Norris, 1992; Barrera, 2000).

### *Participants*

The first version of the scale was used to survey 155 respondents (out of which 98 women and 57 men, which accounts for 63.20% and 36.80% of the surveyed group respectively). The age range was 17-50 ( $M = 25.30$ ;  $SD = 5.76$ ), out of which the age range for women was 17-50 ( $M = 22.57$ ;  $SD = 6.10$ ), and for men 17-48 ( $M = 24.82$ ;  $SD = 5.20$ ).

Twenty seven respondents indicated rural areas as their current domicile, which accounts for 17.40% of the respondents in total; the same number of respondents indicated a town with the population between 6 and 20 thousand inhabitants (27 respondents – 17.40%) as their current domicile. The largest group of respondents comprised people living in cities with the population exceeding 100 thousand inhabitants – 69 respondents, i.e. 44.50% of all the respondents.

After analysing the data regarding the education of respondents, the largest group are those holding a master's degree (65 respondents - 40.60%). The second largest group are those with the secondary education – 56 respondents (36.70%). Five respondents (3.20%) declared basic education, however due to the lack of the “upper secondary education” criterion it is not possible to clearly specify the stage of completed education.

After a detailed analysis of data, the author of this paper came to a conclusion that exclusion of 15 respondents from the sample due to their age (over 30 years of age) would be appropriate. The majority of respondents (140) are between 17 and 30 years of age. This range is referred to as “young adults”. This is a moment in life when a person is becoming more and more involved in communal life (Kowalik, 2006). In addition, decisive events in life take place which mark the direction of human socialisation. Full social development (including developing a social support network) is necessary for a young person to fully participate in communal life.

*Procedure*

The original version of the questionnaire comprised 51 statements (appendix 1) which a respondent was expected to evaluate with the use of a five-level Likert scale:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Rather disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Rather agree
5. Strongly agree

Lack of high correlations (over 0.85) between proposed items, confirmed with the indicator value other than 0, enabled including all 51 items in the questionnaire. Based on a factor analysis, 4 subscales were distinguished in the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire (results of analyses below). After an in-depth analysis of the obtained data (Cronbach's alpha, factor analysis), the author selected 24 items to be included in the final version of the questionnaire.

In the course of the research the following data about respondents was collected: sex, age, education and current domicile. The data was collected with the use of the Internet platform. Relevant information was published on the Internet with the request to complete the questionnaire. By clicking on the link, a potential respondent was able to view the electronic version of the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire, the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List – 40 v. General Population (ISEL-40 v. GP) and demographics. The survey time was approx. 1 hour. A respondent could quit at any time by closing the dialog box. A progress bar available with the questionnaire visualised the time left to complete the survey. It was impossible to finish the survey and send the replies to be added to a summary table without a complete set of replies. After the survey completion, a thank-you dialog box was displayed.

In individual surveys, the paper/pencil method would be more recommended, and therefore it is necessary to further work on the graphic side of the created method to make it clear and legible. The final version is composed of 24 statements to be evaluated with the use of a five-level scale. The questionnaire should be completed individually. If it is impossible, psychological assistance is needed in completing the questionnaire. Expected survey time is approximately 20 minutes.

## RESULTS

### *Factor analysis*

For the purposes of the factor analysis, the results of 155 respondents for the first version of the questionnaire composed of 51 statements were used. All items were qualified for analyses, no lacking data which would impair analyses was found since the procedure of Internet surveys blocked sending any incomplete questionnaires.

Before the first round of the factor analysis correlations in questions were calculated. Owing to the scale used, it was Spearman's rho in order to find items correlating too significantly (over 0.85). No such significant correlations were found, the proof of which is the indicator value other than 0. The factor analysis was preceded by Bartlett's sphericity test ( $\chi^2=3903.31$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy (KMO=0.8). The values of the two statistics are on a very good level and enable further analyses. In selecting factors the method of main components was used, and due to the possibility of factor correlations as a rotation method Promax with Kaiser normalisation was used. As a result of the first factor analysis, the scree diagram suggested selection of 6 factors (Cattel criterion), a more restrictive Keiser criterion, according to which the factor value should exceed 1, and the assumption that the smallest factor should explain 5% of the variance suggested a 4-factor solution and that is why such a solution was employed in a subsequent factor analysis with the forced selection of 4 factors.

Based on the analysis of the scree diagram, the Kaiser criterion (factor value  $>1$ ) and the assumption that the factor has to explain more than 5% of the variance, 4 factors were selected which in total explain 46.44% of the variance. Finally, 27 items were qualified.

The factor analysis selected 4 factors. In order to acquire a stable factor structure, the differential accuracy for individual statements was examined. The inclusion criterion was that the load of a statement included in a given factor should be significantly higher compared to its factor loads for the remaining 3 factors. At the beginning, items with low factor loads were eliminated (load not exceeding the value of 0.4 accepted by numerous researchers), i.e. 7 items, and also items with factor loads not significantly different for individual factors (below 0.2), i.e. 17 items.

The statistical analysis was followed by a content analysis in order to verify the content/logic consistency of this method and also in order to name the selected factors: emotional support scale, material support scale, instrumental support scale and informational support scale.



The first factor (21.07% of the variance explained) comprises 7 items related to emotional support. The second factor (10 items, 13.10% of the variance explained) comprises statements related to instrumental support. The third factor (5 items and 6.60% of the variance explained) covers items related to material support. The last factor selected also comprises 5 items and explains 5.67% of the variance, and is related to informational support.

After the analysis of reliability of the research measure being constructed, the author decided to remove items 14 and 28 from the emotional support scale and item 11 from the instrumental support scale, plus item 4 from the material support scale due to the improved Cronbach's alpha reliability statistic for a given scale. In addition, the author decided to add item 38 for the informational support scale due to Cronbach's alpha being too low for this scale.

The method will be composed of 24 items which in total explain 50.07% of the variance, assigned to 4 scales: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support and material support.

In the end, the first factor (22.71% of the variance explained) comprised 9 items related to instrumental support. The second factor (5 items, 14.18% of the variance explained) comprises statements related to emotional support. The third factor (4 items and 7.51% of the variance explained) covers items related to material support. The last factor selected also comprises 6 items and explains 5.67% of the variance, and is related to informational support.

Table 1

*The results of the factor analysis of four extract factors the reconstruction of items (N = 155)*

Item	Component			
	1	2	3	4
P 31 I expect help in developing effective preventive behaviours.	.682			
P 23 I'm addicted to decisions of others.	.660			
P 46 I know how to proceed.	.659			
P 49 Others make important decisions for me.	.652			
P 27 I need information about how to proceed in difficult situations in my life.	.626			
P 7 The solution to a problem is forced on me.	.557			
P 45 I'm not afraid of being criticised by my family.	.549			
P 12 I expect direct assistance efforts.	.544			

Item	Component			
	1	2	3	4
P 39 I view a given situation from many perspectives.	.487			
P 29 I receive emotional support from my family.		.812	.478	
P 33 I feel I can count on my family.		.804	.426	
P 21 I feel safe in my family home.		.756		
P 37 My parents show concern for me.		.726	.400	
P 1 My family and friends believe that I make the right decisions.		.612		
P 16 When necessary, my family provides me with financial support.		.405	.771	
P 24 In a difficult situation my family will help me financially.		.466	.764	
P 8 There is always somebody I can borrow money from.			.749	
P 36 If I'm in a difficult financial situation, I know I will get help.			.679	
P 2 I get a lot of valuable tips from others.				.670
P 51 Before making crucial decisions, I listen to others' advice.				.630
P 47 I search for the information that will help me solve a given problem.				.569
P 26 Others often have great ideas.				.548
P 9 There are people that spur me to action.				.539
P 38 I'm surrounded by people who help me better understand the situation I'm in.		.406		.537

### *Psychometric properties of the scale*

In the reliability analysis, the internal consistency Cronbach's alpha was used and also the split-half analysis (for even and odd statements) defined with the Guttman coefficient. The internal consistency Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale is high and is .76, and the Guttman split-half reliability coefficient is .69. Reliability of individual scales of social support types is illustrated in the table below.

Table 2

*Coefficients of internal compliance Cronbach's alpha for each scale of the questionnaire (N = 155)*

Name of the scale	Cronbach's alpha
Emotional Support	.84
Instrumental Support	.79
Material Support	.77
Informational Support	.63

Internal consistency Cronbach's alphas for three scales (emotional support, instrumental support and material support) are on a high level and are .84, .79 and .77 respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the informational support scale is on a satisfactory level and amounts to .63.

Proposed test items correlate on a moderate and high level with the general result for the scale. In addition, analyses of correlation of individual scale items with the result on a given scale (e.g. emotional support) were performed. These results are also on a moderate and high level. Excluding any of the items at this stage would significantly lower the internal consistency Cronbach's alpha both for the whole scale and for individual scales of support types.

The validity of the questionnaire being constructed was analysed with the view to its validity in terms of the content. Logical (internal) validity is understood as the extent to which the items used in a given research tool actually represent a given area subject to research, a psychological variable (Hornowska, 2001). The items used in the questionnaire meet the theory based on which the adapted research tool was created.

To determine the validity, the results for individual subscales were correlated with the general result for the whole scale. Moderate correlations between subscales and the general scale are satisfactory, because dimensions of the same construct are measured.

The validity of the tool being constructed was analysed with the view to external validity by examining the relation between the results obtained by a respondent in the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire and the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List – 40 v. General Population (ISEL-40 v. GP).

Table 3

*Spearman's rho for general results and results in the particular subscale in Perceived Social Support Questionnaire and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (N=155)*

	PSSQ- Emotional Support	PSSQ- Instrumental Support	PSSQ- Material Support	PPSQ- Information- al Support	PSSQ- Perceived So- cial Support
ISEL- Material Subscale	.28	-0.22	0.29	0.07	0.12
ISEL- Belonging Subscale	.27	-.23	.22	.20	.13
ISEL- Self-esteem Subscale	.24	-.33	.08	.07	-.04
ISEL- Evaluation Subscale	.34	-.16	.32	.27	.25
ISEL- General result	.35	-.29	.28	.19	.14

$p \leq .05$

As a result of these analyses it can be claimed that significant correlations appear between variables surveyed, however they are on such a level that it is justified to separately use both methods since they measure slightly different aspects of the social support variable.

You will find below descriptive statistics for individual subscales and the general result in order to quantitatively illustrate individual parameters.

Table 4

*Descriptive statistics for particular subscale and for general result after exclusion respondents over 30 years old (N=140)*

	Mean	Median	Variance	Standard Deviation	Skew- ness	Kurtosis
Perceived Social Support	79.25	81.00	87.99	9.38	-1.04	1.67
Emotional Support	20.16	21.00	17.76	4.21	-1.34	1.84
Instrumental Support	20.27	20.00	30.76	5.55	0.15	-0.32
Material Support	16.09	16.00	8.88	2.98	-1.12	1.63
Instrumental Support	22.75	23.00	12.43	3.53	-0.87	1.82

Descriptive statistics for subscales and the general result in a group of young adults have been presented above. For the emotional support subscale the minimum result is 5 points and the maximum result is 25 points, for the instrumental support subscale the minimum result is 9 points and the maximum result is 35 points, for the material support subscale the minimum result is 6 points and the maximum result is 20 points, for the informational support subscale the minimum result is 10 points and the maximum result is 29 points. In the general result the lowest result is 44 points and the highest result is 95 points.

You will find below typical measurement errors and confidence intervals for obtained results. Knowing what typical measurement errors are it is possible to determine the range for the true result of a respondent with 95% probability.

Table 5

*Standard errors of measurement and confidence intervals for the results (N=140)*

Scales	SEM	95% confidence intervals for the results
Instrumental Support	2.10	± 4.12
Instrumental Support	2.55	± 5.00
Emotional Support	1.65	± 3.24
Material Support	1.46	± 2.86
Perceived Social Support	4.67	± 9.15

The Perceived Social Support Questionnaire can be used in individual tests for young adults in a difficult situation or for those where there is a suspicion that such a situation will occur. It is used to learn about the social support network perceived by a respondent. If such a social support network is not perceived, it would be possible to initiate assistance efforts. The author of the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire does not exclude further exploration of the studies.

## DISCUSSION

The report presents the creation and validation analysis of the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire. The statistical analyses conducted have confirmed very good psychometric properties of the prepared questionnaire. The method meets the psychometric conditions questionnaires have to meet in research

surveys. It is of satisfactory reliability with regard to both the whole scale and individual subscales.

Following detailed analyses, the final version of the questionnaire was determined, which is characterised by very good reliability. The internal consistency Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale is .76, and the Guttman split-half reliability coefficient is .69. It is necessary to perform the survey with the use of the test-retest method in order to demonstrate stability in time. The author sees the need to further explore the studies and analyses of the questionnaire. The Perceived Social Support Questionnaire may serve as a diagnostic measure to learn about the social support network perceived by a respondent. Low-result respondents may not perceive support networks around them, and a more detailed analysis of these areas would be a starting point to initiate assistance-related efforts.

From the perspective of the welfare of an individual, it is important to locate oneself in a social network, a "spiral of friendliness", because the relations created there are characterised by sensitivity to specific needs and the ability to react to the same by offering specific help, signalling readiness to cooperate, share the feelings, mobilising resources available to an individual or a group, which consequently leads to independence and self-reliance (Kawula, 2001). In this context, M. Winiarski (2001) is of the opinion that on the one hand social support is a buffer which protects people against the loss of independence and efficiency in life, and on the other hand it is a stimulant of human strengths indispensable in overcoming difficulties, solving problems and exceeding the limits of one's abilities.

The data obtained from analyses should be confirmed and verified with further research. The data can be the source of data which allows for a broader evaluation of validity and other psychometric properties, including the possibility of creating alternative versions of a tool intended for individual social groups in a population.

## REFERENCES

- Barrera, M. (2000). Social support research in community psychology. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 215–245). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Brzezińska, A. I. (2005). *Psychologiczne portrety człowieka. Praktyczna psychologia rozwojowa* [Psychological portraits of a human. Practical developmental psychology]. Gdańsk: GWP.

- Hobfoll, S. E. (1998). *Stress, culture and community: The psychology and philosophy of stress*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Hornowska, E. (2001). *Testy psychologiczne – teoria i praktyka* [Psychological tests - theory and practice]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- House, J. S. (1981). *Work stress and social support*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Kaniasty, K. & Norris, F. H. (1992). Social support and victims of crime: Matching event, support, and outcome. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 20, 211-241.
- Kaniasty, K. (2003). *Kłęska żywiołowa czy katastrofa społeczna? Psychospołeczne konsekwencje polskiej powodzi 1997 roku* [Natural disaster or social catastrophe? Psychosocial consequences of the Polish 1997 flood]. Gdańsk: GWP.
- Kawula, S. (2001). Czynniki i sieć wsparcia społecznego w życiu człowieka [Factors and social support network in human life]. In S. Kawula (Eds.), *Pedagogika społeczna: dokonania, aktualność, perspektywy* [Social pedagogy: achievements, topicality, perspectives] (pp. 115–133). Toruń: Wydawnictwo A. Marszałek.
- Kowalik, S. (2006). Rozwój społeczny [Social development]. In B. Harwas-Napierała & J. Trempała (Eds.), *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Rozwój funkcji psychicznych* [Psychology of human development. The development of mental functions] (pp. 71–100). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Sęk, H. (2001). O wieloznacznych funkcjach wsparcia społecznego [About wildcard social support functions]. In L. Cierpiałkowska & H. Sęk (Eds.), *Psychologia kliniczna i psychologia zdrowia* [Clinical psychology and health psychology] (pp.13–33). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Humaniora.
- Sęk, H. & Cieślak, R. (2004). Wsparcie społeczne – sposoby definiowania, rodzaje i źródła wsparcia, wybrane koncepcje teoretyczne [Social support - ways to define, types and sources of support, selected theoretical concepts]. In H. Sęk & R. Cieślak (Eds.), *Wsparcie społeczne, stres i zdrowie* [Social support, stress and health] (pp. 11–29). Warszawa: PWN.
- Schwarzer, R. & Leppin, A. (1988). Social support: The many faces of helpful social interactions. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 2, 333–345.
- Zarzycka, D., Śpila, B., Wrońska, I. & Makara-Studzińska, M. (2010). Analiza walidacyjna wybranych aspektów Skali Oceny Wsparcia Społecznego Interpersonal Support Evaluation List – 40 v. General Population (ISEL-40 v. GP) [Validation analysis of selected aspects of Social Support Rating Scale Interpersonal Support Evaluation List - 40 v. General Population (ISEL-40 v. GP)]. *Psychiatria*, 7(3), 83–94.
- Ziółkowska, B. (2005). Okres wczesnej dorosłości. Jak rozpoznać potencjał młodych dorosłych? [Period of early adulthood. How to recognize the potential of young adults?]. In A. I. Brzezińska (Ed.), *Psychologiczne portrety człowieka. Praktyczna psychologia rozwojowa* [Psychological portraits of a human. Practical developmental psychology] (pp. 423–468). Gdańsk: GWP.

## APPENDIX I

Original statements included in the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire

1. My family and friends believe that I make the right decisions.
2. I get a lot of valuable tips from others.
3. There are numerous people that tell me how to behave.
4. I need financial help.
5. I can talk openly about my problems and difficulties.
6. I have many wise friends.
7. The solution to a problem is forced on me.
8. There is always somebody I can borrow money from.
9. There are people that spur me to action.
10. I know people I can talk to about a problem.
11. I can only rely on myself.
12. I expect direct assistance efforts.
13. My family and friends always cheer me up.
14. God is my support.
15. I get specific assistance in a difficult situation.
16. When necessary, my family provides me with financial support.
17. There are people that support me in difficult moments.
18. I have somebody to talk to when I'm in a difficult situation.
19. When I feel bad, I drink or smoke.
20. My financial standing is good.
21. I feel safe in my family home.
22. I have a feeling that people are helpful for each other.
23. I'm addicted to decisions of others.
24. In a difficult situation my family will help me financially.
25. I will always find someone who will hear me out and understands me.
26. Others often have great ideas.
27. I need information about how to proceed in difficult situations in my life.
28. I can rely on my neighbours as regards material support.
29. I receive emotional support from my family.
30. I feel better when somebody helps me.
31. I expect help in developing effective preventive behaviours.
32. There are institutions that will help me in a difficult financial situation.
33. I feel I can count on my family.
34. Work/school is my refuge from problems.
35. I learn from group work.



36. If I'm in a difficult financial situation, I know I will get help.
37. My parents show concern for me.
38. I'm surrounded by people who help me better understand the situation I'm in.
39. I view a given situation from many perspectives.
40. I have no friends.
41. I can rely on help of others in solving my problems.
42. The feeling of closeness of others gives me the sense of safety.
43. My family share with me their experiences of coping with difficult situations.
44. My family and friends confirm my conviction that I make the right choices.
45. I'm not afraid of being criticised by my family.
46. I know how to proceed.
47. I search for the information that will help me solve a given problem.
48. I get nervous when somebody tells me what to do.
49. Others make important decisions for me.
50. I don't like others influencing my decision.
51. Before making crucial decisions, I listen to others' advice.

## APPENDIX 2

Final statements included in the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire

1. My family and friends believe that I make the right decisions.
2. I get a lot of valuable tips from others.
3. The solution to a problem is forced on me.
4. There is always somebody I can borrow money from.
5. There are people that spur me to action.
6. I feel safe in my family home.
7. When necessary, my family provides me with financial support.
8. I expect direct assistance efforts.
9. My parents show concern for me.
10. I'm surrounded by people who help me better understand the situation I'm in.
11. I view a given situation from many perspectives.
12. In a difficult situation my family will help me financially.
13. Others often have great ideas.
14. I feel I can count on my family.
15. If I'm in a difficult financial situation, I know I will get help.
16. I need information about how to proceed in difficult situations in my life.

17. I receive emotional support from my family.
18. I search for the information that will help me solve a given problem.
19. Others make important decisions for me.
20. I'm addicted to decisions of others.
21. Before making crucial decisions, I listen to others' advice.
22. I expect help in developing effective preventive behaviours.
23. I'm not afraid of being criticised by my family.
24. I know how to proceed.

## CHAPTER 5

---

# Becoming a Mother as a Challenge of Early Adulthood

*Joanna Matuszczak-Świgoń*

### INTRODUCTION

Adulthood is a period of time when consecutive events and decisions are interconnected, new opportunities and goals appear. Developmental psychology understands adulthood and occurring in this period changes as an individual's response to challenges and developmental tasks including starting a family, procreation, bringing children up, taking up a job (Oleś, 2011).

The period of adulthood spreads through age 20–25 to age 65–85 and can be divided into three stages: early adulthood covers age 18–20 to age 30–35, middle adulthood 30–35 to 60–65 and late adulthood over 60–65 (Brzezińska, Appelt, & Ziółkowska, 2008). This chapter focuses on early adulthood and one of its challenges – becoming a mother.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF EARLY ADULTHOOD

*Erik Erikson's theory*

According to Erikson (1997) overcoming psychosocial crises is a driving force of human development. Crises are influenced by changing biological and environmental conditions. The sequence of developmental challenges is universal and intercultural. A developmental crisis is defined as an integral and natural link in a healthy life cycle. It is a temporary turning point, a moment which determines progress or regress, acceleration or delay, integration or disintegration. Crisis solution can be positive, desirable – facilitates further

development or negative, adverse – inhibits it. Human personality reflects the way earlier developmental phases were overcome. Successive stages follow epigenetic order: each function develops in a specific time of its dominance, simultaneously each function is influenced by other qualities developed in critical moments. Epigenetic logic indicates continuity and mutual relations between developmental achievements. When a new dilemma occurs, previous crises gain new quality. In every critical stage a person faces a developmental challenge which requires learning new abilities to tackle specific problem. The way people solve the crisis in a given phase depends on their vital energy sources and current developmental potential. After coming through each critical phase an individual develops basic virtue, such a mental characteristic which defines a person and determines effective developmental tasks realisation (Bakiera, 2013).

In the early adulthood people go through intimacy-isolation crisis. The aim is to establish lasting emotional ties with another person without losing sense of identity. The ability to engage into reciprocal intimate relationship means developing love virtue. The inability to solve this crisis, on the other hand, constitutes a danger of isolation (Erikson, 1997).

#### *Havighurst's theory of developmental tasks*

According to Havighurst (1981) developmental tasks in early adulthood include:

- Choosing a partner
- Learning to live with a partner
- Starting one's own family
- Rearing children
- Running a house
- Taking up a job
- Taking on civic responsibility
- Finding a related social group

A developmental task is defined as a challenge occurring at a certain stage of an individual's life. These tasks come from three sources: physical maturation, cultural pressure, individual ambitions and values. A positive solution causes happiness and allows to succeed in solving future tasks, whereas, a failure leads to negative feelings, criticism of the community, and problems with next tasks (Gurba, 2000).

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PREGNANCY

Pregnancy is a unique period in a woman's life. Cramer (2003) uses a term „existential shock” because it is related to a great unknown. Becoming a mother changes life in all of its aspects. It means adapting a new identity and gives a chance to complement femininity, as it engages the whole personality and allows personal development (Bartosz, 2002). According to Galinsky (1987), parenthood is an alternating experience, a daughter becomes a mother, a son – a father. Moreover, each pregnancy reflects the story of a woman's life. Her adaptation to the new role is influenced by her relations with her parents in the childhood, solving the Oedipal triangle, and the experience of separation with her parents (Brazelton, 1990). Motherhood takes various forms and is not a universal experience, however, mothers frequently have similar issues, joys, hopes and expectations about their children (Miller, 2005). Moreover, pregnancy is the first stage of a process lasting the entire life and the time of a transition; a woman has to broaden her identity and include her child as a part of herself as well as a separate being having his own characteristics. One of the most fundamental tasks of a woman in this period is to create an emotional bond with her baby. As Bielawska-Batorowicz (1995) claims, this task is about realising the autonomy of her unborn child, ascribing him characteristics and features and taking up interaction with him. The bond makes the basis of the development of such prenatal behaviours as care and protection of the unborn child (Lewis, 2008).

Sudden rush of hormones may influence the mood, thinking and memory. Even the most joyfully taken pregnancy brings some ambivalence since calling a new life into existence equals losing the old one (Raphael-Leff, 1993). A woman experiences changes in perception of herself. She needs to broaden her ego in order to include a child into the image of herself both as a part of herself and an autonomous individual. Conception causes redefining the identity as a woman must find herself in her new role. Moreover, it changes her intimate relationship, relations with her family and her role in the society (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

## MOTIVATION FOR HAVING A BABY

Feelings and thoughts which accompany the beginning of pregnancy are characterised by ambivalence: happiness mixes with fear. It happens as the conception not only gives a hope for the new beginning, but also it re-evaluates the

whole life. Furthermore, pregnancy frequently causes the shake of the self image and the image of the world. It also evokes the fear about the mother and child's health and doubts about the future. A woman wonders if she will love the baby and if the baby will love her, if she will be able to read his signals and respond to his needs. She is absorbed with questions such as: "Who is the baby?" "Do I really want to be a mum?" "Can I hurt the baby in my womb with my negative feelings?" "What kind of mother will I be?" "How will my life change?" "What will happen to my marriage, my career, my relations with family and friends?" "What will be the labour like?" "Will the baby be healthy?" (Kornas-Biela, 2004). Those issues very often appear subconsciously in dreams, nightmares and premonitions. Despite the fears, happiness surfaces as having a baby satisfies many needs: safety, affiliation, acceptance and respect, positive self-assessment, creativity, domination and care, sense of life and immortality (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

As Cramer (2003) states, the crave for having a baby comes from the nostalgia of the primary mother's love and the motherhood is related with the very first relation: becoming a parent means finding one's own parents. Among different needs and motives influencing the decision of having offspring, Bazelon (1990) distinguishes the following:

- Identifying with the mother or the maternal figure – when a daughter is lavished with attention by her mother, she starts to fantasise about being a caregiver.
- Craving for being complete and omnipotent – this narcissistic impulse derives from the will to maintain an idealised self image, duplicate our own person and realise our own ideals. The crave for being complete is satisfied by pregnancy as expecting a baby gives a chance to feel fully complete, strong and having a power to give life. Treating the baby as a complement, on the other hand, a mother sees it as an expansion of herself, an addition to her body. Then the baby strengthens the positive image of her body by giving her an additional dimension which can be proudly shown.
- Desire to merge, create symbiosis and unity with another person – wishing for unity and symbiosis with a baby is accompanied by the desire to unite with one's own mother. This desire is an important stage of the development, a fundamental dream leading to maintaining self-esteem and a key element to intimate relationships in the adulthood. A baby in the mother's womb is a promise of having a close relationship and fulfilling the childhood fantasies.
- Desire to reflect oneself in the baby – the dream about a perfectly synchronised baby which would copy the ideal self image of the mother, and would

show how good she is at being a mother. The hope is connected with the feeling of immortality as the baby will be the live proof of her existence. Moreover, a baby gives a hope for continuation of the family traditions, and embodiment of the family values. A baby is regarded as a link between generations.

- Fulfilment of wasted ideals and opportunities – parents imagine that their baby will succeed in the fields they failed. Expecting a baby gives a chance to get rid of all limitations and compromises the parents agreed to during their lifetime. Therefore, a baby is not only the extension of the mother's body, but also her unreal self image and it needs to be perfect to be able to realise all parent's potentials. On the other hand, there is an inevitable fear that the baby will turn out be a failure.
- Desire to reviving old relationships – a baby is a promise for recreating all bonds and relations from the childhood, and therefore, attributes of important people from the parents' past are ascribed to it. It is particularly clear when a baby appears as a replacement of a late parent, sibling or friend. A woman often gets pregnant after having lost a close person since parents endow their child with magical powers such as invalidating past partings, cancelling passage of time and easing the pain after somebody's death.
- Possibility to replace and separate from the mother – when expecting a baby, a woman experiences an exceptional double identification as she both identifies with her mother and the baby in her womb. As a result, she practices and works on roles of both a mother and a child which are based on her past experiences with her mother and herself being a child.

## PREGNANCY AS A TIME OF CHANGES

The conception is the beginning of an incredible story - a baby takes up residence in the mother's body, and as a result, two people live in one body. It is also a biological mystery because for the unknown reason, the body of a pregnant woman stops the immune abilities and allows another body live inside her. A baby in the mother's womb functions in a close interrelation with her but at the same time is a separate being (Raphael-Leff, 1993).

### *Changes in the perception of the body*

During the first three weeks after conception, many neurohormonal changes take place in the mother's organism. Their aim is to accustom the mother's body to new tasks. The functioning of the body is regulated by the hormones so that

it can support the baby's life. The hormones influence the disturbance of the psychophysical balance of the woman. It happens because the cerebral centre of emotions receive neurohormonal signals which is the basis of experiencing extreme feelings of an alternating charge. This stage of pregnancy is characterised by mood swings, strengthened emotional excitability, strong emotional reaction incommensurate with stimuli, tearfulness, sadness and anxiety (Bidzan, 2007). Those symptoms are accompanied by physiological symptoms, such as nausea, tingling sensation in hand and feet, increased sweating, tiredness, drowsiness, breathlessness, changes of skin and hair look, insomnia, aversion to some tastes and scents. Women frequently read those signal as inconvenience and illness symptoms, not a normal symptom of adjusting changes of the organism. The effect of a vicious circle appears as a hormone storm evokes a array of anxieties which in turn strengthen the symptoms (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

In the second trimester, the woman's silhouette changes in a visible way. For many women it is a period of happiness, pride, and the sense of maturity and completeness. For others, it is a time of degradation as they are frightened that they are becoming huge fat women. They fear that they will not be able to lose weight after giving the birth and they do not accept their growing stomach, which repels them or even represents the indecent carnal desires. A woman expecting a baby cannot control her looks because her body does not belong to her exclusively anymore; the baby grows regardless her awareness, effort and control. Her bodily odour, temperature regulation, complexion, hair structure, balance, kinaesthetic sense, sight acuity, and taste and smell acridity undergo changes. Furthermore, pregnancy cast doubts on the boundaries of the body. A woman is literally possessed by this little being growing in her belly; her heart beats along her baby's heart and it is the baby who sets the rhythm of the day. She does not have a rest neither during the day not at night (Raphael-Leff, 1993).

In the third trimester the physical changes are the most visible. Stomach and breasts grow even more. Some physical troubles appear: a woman may suffer from breathlessness, fatigue, constipation, heartburn, Braxton Hicks' contractions, back pains, varicose veins, haemorrhoids, hypersensitivity to touch, smell and colours. The majority of women start to prepare to labour by proper eating, exercising and resting (Raphael-Leff, 1993).

A baby is more and more clearly making its presence known. Some women are glad to feel more and more dynamic movements, others get anxious, angry or annoyed. The images of the baby escalate. The degree of liveliness and the attitude of a woman towards her baby influence how she reads those movements. Therefore, they can be described as gentle, rough, calm, restless or lazy. This



way specific expectations about the baby's behaviour are formed. The attitude of a woman towards her baby may be identified by the words she uses to name the feelings about the baby's movements. Its activity maybe defined as brushing, tickling, floating, making bubbles, stretching, bouncing, dancing, fluttering or blowing soap-bubbles. Sometimes it is also described as crushing, treading, exploding, devouring (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

Baby's movements and the changes in looks constantly remind a mother about the baby she is carrying. For everyone, their identity is deeply related with the image of one's own body. It is especially clear during establishing the identity in the puberty when the body rapidly changes. A similar phenomenon takes place during pregnancy, except that the changes take place even more rapidly – as it is the matter of months not years. Such drastic changes in the body destabilise the image of one's own body and create favourable conditions to organise a new identity (Stern, 1998).

#### *Changes in self- perception*

The first three months after conception are called a normal autistic period since a mother focuses on herself and withdraws from the community. She needs a lot time and energy to reach the new balance. Many women finds it difficult to switch from thinking "I" to thinking "we" and accepting limitation of their personal freedom (Kornas-Biela, 2004). They wonder if they will feel fully independent, individual and free ever again. They need to accept and work over the feeling of loss and sorrow of their previous self, life so far, freedom and independence, which often leads to a conflict, ambivalence, hostility and aggression. Flexibility and accepting inevitable changes prove their maternal maturity (Barnard, 2008).

In the first trimester, two processes dominate, namely, accepting the presence of a baby in the organism, and the differences between oneself and the baby. A woman gets used to the fact that an individual being is growing in her body (Kornas-Biela, 2004). In this period, many women fear they will not term pregnancy, and the previous miscarriages may strengthen the feeling of being prone to losing the baby (Raphael-Leff, 1993).

For a number of women the second trimester is a turning point, they finally can sigh with relief and feel that the baby is safe. In this phase, a woman more and more feels like a mother. Instead of concentrating mainly on her ailments, as it was at the beginning of pregnancy, she can focus on the growing baby. Its individuality and autonomy may be noticed clearer and clearer. Those processes are connected with sensing the baby's movements (Kornas-Biela, 1990). Ac-

ording to Bazelton, those movements are the baby's first input into the relation with the mother (1990).

Paradoxically, while setting up one's own family which is accompanied by the pressure of becoming a rightful adult, a woman feels her sensitive inner child the most, the little girl who she used to be and still is at times. Women, who were prematurely overburden with duties in their childhood, may feel that this is the last chance for their little inner girl to have some careless childhood before she has responsibilities of taking care of her own baby (Raphael-Leff, 1993).

In the third trimester, mother's experiences, especially the subconscious and unfulfilled desires from her childhood, have a big influence on her dreams and expectations towards the baby. Sometimes women who have experienced a long lasting frustration shift their unsatisfied needs to the baby with a hope that it will do it and fill in the empty space in their life (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

When the labour time is approaching, a woman is becoming more and more aware of how significant and irreversible change is happening in her life. She worries if she will prepare everything on time. She also thinks about labour; she is concerned if she will manage, if she will cope with the pain and fears complications. In this trimester, many women complain about problems with memory, concentration and quick decision making. It is caused by hormones which prepare her organism for labour. They complain about excitability, irritation, vulnerability to stress, mood swings, magnified emotions, irrational fears as at the beginning of pregnancy (Kornas-Biela, 2004). To face the unknown, many women try to predict the due date. This way they try to turn something unknown into something predictable (Raphael-Leff, 1993).

### *Changes in social relations*

Becoming a mother is a significant life event for a woman, her personal biography, and socially defined. During pregnancy the way a woman sees herself and how other people see her changes. Therefore, the transition to motherhood is regulated and monitored in the social sphere, but still experienced as very personal and intimate. Women are confronted with an array of expert, public and popular beliefs about maternity and women's beliefs and experiences are filtered through them (Miller, 2005).

Motherhood is set in a socio-cultural context. A woman becomes a mother in the world's eyes. There are rules, norms, tasks, rights, duties and behaviour patterns attached to it which a woman should follow (Miller, 2005). Conception is a social issue as a child is born as a social being, member of neighbourhood, family or national communities. The way the conceived child is treated

by other people influences the mother's attitude towards it. The father's stance is important in particular. He is her biggest support, helps her accept the baby and get attached to it. If the mother does not want a baby, it is the father who can convince her to change her mind through giving her the sense of security and lavishing attention on her. His role appears to be crucial in preventing an abortion (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

The relation between the pregnant woman and her mother has a significant impact on shaping the maternal feelings, since she is her role model. Women who were brought up in an emotional coldness, indifference or dislike may show problems with accepting their roles as mothers (Kornas-Biela, 2004). As research by Dyduch-Maroszek and Humięcka present, postnatal depression is experienced more frequently by women who had very controlling and emotionally cold mothers (2010). On the other hand, if a mother appropriately reacted to her daughter's needs, the pattern of the parenthood becomes her guidelines in relations with her baby and eases bonding with it.

Glorifying pregnancy and passing over its ambivalence, the society pressurises women who feel pushed to hide their negative feelings even from themselves in order to maintain the idealised blessed state they should be experiencing. Experiences which are not corresponding to the social expectations lead to questioning their femininity. Doubts and negative feelings are passed over because the social pressure to be a good mother is enormous. There is a certain socially created picture of a pregnant woman. Women who do not meet its requirements are exposed to be called a bad mother. That is why only after giving the birth they have flashbacks of their hardships, doubts and negative feelings. The time distance enables the narration about them (Miller, 2005).

During pregnancy and a few weeks after labour, women look for professional support, so they depend on experts and others' opinions and read books. They are prone to criticism. Their doctor becomes an omnipotent and omniscient father. The awareness that she has to do with a specialist who does not see her as one of many patients but someone exceptional has a crucial meaning to her sense of safety (Kornas-Biela, 2004).

Motherhood causes a woman to become more independent from her own mother. At the same time, conception brings a daughter and her mother closer (Kornas-Biela, 2004). A transition from the position of a mother's daughter to the position of the mother of one's own baby takes place. A woman analyses and reevaluates the relation with her mother and she decides what she would like to apply, repeat and reject in her relation with her own baby, therefore, she creates a relationship with it. She wonders if she will be like her mother and

what it means (Stern, 1998). As Cramer argues, motherhood makes the daughter and the mother equal which can lead to competition (2003).

### BUILDING MATERNAL IDENTITY

The first stage after the conception is called a psychological crisis, when a woman has to apply coping strategies. A proper solution of the crisis makes the woman progress into a higher level of maturity and gain new skills, attitudes and values. After each turning point in life, which reorganises the life so far, the development becomes stronger as a result of reassessment of the situation, recognising the skills, limitations, and the inevitable ending of a certain period in life. Maturity can be defined as an increased integration of one's own incoherence and acceptance of irreversibility of time (Raphael-Leff, 2005).

As research conducted by Bidzan (2007) shows, maternal maturity is connected with such personality features as a positive self-image, and the need of empathy and affiliation. The bond between a mother and her child is determined by those features. The biggest crisis takes place during the first pregnancy because it is an utterly new situation. A woman has to adapt to a different state of her body and the baby, but what is more, she must accept new relations with the father of the baby and the people who surround her (Kornas-Biela, 2004). According to Cramer (2003), the reason of the crisis lies behind pregnancy being a threat to the self-image. As a result of the crisis, a woman feels more alert, sensitive, open, and thus better prepared for the meeting with the unknown, the newborn baby.

As Stern (1998) claims, there is no activity in a woman's life which would equally require from her full emotional engagement and presence. First pregnancy is regarded in psychoanalytic concepts as an extremely important stage in women's psychological development, because then both unconscious fears, anxieties and fantasies about a child, and depressive tendencies become more pronounced (Bartosz, 2002). From the very beginning, a child is very important to a mother, it evokes changes in her awareness, makes her sensitive and enables her to identify old, harmful and limiting patterns from her childhood.

#### *Stages of developing maternal identity*

A woman gradually learns the role of a mother. According to Stern (1998), just as a child must be physically born, a woman needs time to become a mother mentally. The last three months of the pregnancy are crucial as the mother starts to feel the fetal movement and prepares for the labour by, for instance,

taking part in a Lamaze course. The birth of a mother is a gradual process which consists of many months preceding and following the labour. In the course of becoming a mother, a woman creates a whole new mentality, which is substantially different to the previous one, and enters a new world. For some time, the appearance of a baby determines what she thinks about and fears of, redefines some values, and sets new place in the social hierarchy. It becomes an imperative identity. It lasts whole life, although, it may not be in the foreground all the time; it activates in certain moments, for example, when a child is in danger. The emergence of the new identity requires going through a few stages. At first, a woman prepares mentally for the change, then she surrenders to various emotions to learn new aspects of her personality, and finally she works hard to integrate current changes with the previous life (Stern, 1998).

Stern (1998) distinguishes three stages of becoming a mother. The first one falls at the pregnancy period, when a woman mentally prepares for the motherhood. The labour itself is also a part of the preparatory stage. A woman becomes a mother physically, but not psychologically. For nine months woman's imagination is fully absorbed with hopes, dreams, fears and fantasies of what the baby will be like, what kind of mother she will be and what kind of father her partner will turn out. The maternal identity takes the full form only after a mother comes back home and gets involved in taking care of her baby. That is when a private relation with the baby creates. This bond is influenced by all her previous relationships and the ways of experiencing closeness. The encounter with the parental responsibility ultimately causes the psychological birth of a mother: during fulfilling the new duties related with taking care of the child, a woman becomes a mother (Stern, 1998).

Raphael-Leff (1993) also distinguishes three stages of pregnancy. Each of these stages leads either to the change in the psyche or to establishing defence mechanisms. In the first phase of pregnancy, a woman is mostly absorbed with getting accustomed to the new bodily sensations, symptoms and mood swings. She is focused on herself being in a different state. The second stage begins when a woman starts to feel fetal movements. Then her attention is shifted from pregnancy to an amazing thought that a human being is growing in her. The characteristic feature of this stage is acknowledging the baby inside. A woman needs to accept the fact that she shares her body with another being and recognise that this 'tenant' is a separate individual remaining beyond her control. The third stage starts when a pregnant woman starts to think about her baby as real and able to live outside her organism in case of preterm birth. To sum up, during the three trimesters the stress is shifted from pregnancy to the child.

Brazelton (1990) also describes three stages of pregnancy. In the first one, parents get used to the piece of news about pregnancy. There are some changes in the woman's body, however, there are no signals from the baby. In the second stage, parents start to recognise the baby in the mother's womb as a being who will separate from the mother in some time. This recognition is confirmed by the movements of the baby who accents its existence this way. In the third and last phase, parents experience their baby as an individual and the baby inside the mother's womb confirms its existence by characteristic movements, rhythm and activity level. As its activity falls into a certain diurnal cycles and patterns, a mother can easily read them, give them the meaning and respond to them. It is the early way of interaction between the mother and the baby and that is the time when a mother ascribes certain features of temperament and character to the baby.

#### MOTHER'S NARRATIVE ABOUT HER CHILD IN A PRENATAL PERIOD

The period of expecting a baby is a preparatory stage of developing maternal identity. Creating the image of a child growing in the womb is an important and inseparable part of this phase. During pregnancy an important cognitive and adaptive process occurs: a woman concentrates on her new role and builds mental representations of her child. By giving meaning to her experiences during nine months of pregnancy, attributing specific features to her baby, an expectant mother becomes not only a participant of emerging relation but also its author.

Mother's narration about a child is a tool which shows how she locates him in the world, how she presents her baby, to which aspects of his behavior she pays attention, what characteristics she attributes to his activities and what expectations she has towards him. By building a narration expectant mothers create their child's identity and give meaning to their experiences from pregnancy.

Mother's narration about a child can be defined as a story about him, a story based on a child's representation in mother's mind. Therefore, the narration is a verbal reflection of this representation. Child's representation is a mental picture which consists of mother's thinking processes, feelings, expectations, fantasies, opinions, observations of her child, images of his traits, judgments about his behavior and her previous experiences. This picture includes various aspects of child's functioning and is modified in the course of his development (Cierpka, 2006).

Narration about a child shows to what extent a mother is able to give some thought to her relation with a child and express this relation in words. Fon-

agy (1997) defines reflective function as a developmental ability which allows children to react not only to specific behaviors of other people but also to their ideas about these people's beliefs, feelings, hopes, intentions and plans. In my opinion a similar process occurs when a mother constructs a story about her child. In order to build a narration in a prenatal period she has to picture not only his behaviors but also his mental states and give meaning to them. This mentalization enables her to read her child's mind. This way she tries to understand her experiences with her child and make them predictable.

A woman who is expecting a baby has her own internal story, which is filled with her personal feelings, hopes, memories and private mythology. Therefore, each story is different. During pregnancy the picture of the imaginary baby is merged with the baby in utero. According to Raphael-Leff (1993), even before the conception, a woman has an unconscious picture of her child in her internal world, and the picture is the reflection of her various important relationships.

When the baby's movements get stronger, a woman frequently feels that she has to split her attention between requirements of the outside world and responses to the trails of someone inside her to get her attention. That is the time of giving the name to the baby, ascribing some features and preferences to it, talking with it like with an imaginary friend (Raphael-Leff, 1993). A mother gives it an identity by ascribing an array of features always connected with her line of descent. In this way a mother fills in the emptiness and gives the unknown the stamps of familiarity which reduces her anxiety (Cramer, 2003). Woman's imagination works in top gear to give a shape to the life awaiting her after the child is born which now she barely comprehends. The mind during pregnancy resembles a space in which the future is build and rebuild all the time. A woman replays imaginary scenarios with imaginary characters of the baby, herself as a mother, the future father and grandparents. She tries to guess what her baby is like. The pictures are drawn by her own story, her hopes and her fears and they express her values and priorities. Each mother mentally creates her baby from her hopes, dreams and fears. She also expands her imaginations and wonders what her baby will look like when it will turn one, go to school or be an adult. It is a way of getting accustomed to a new situation. The imaginary world is a mental stage at which various possible solutions can be thought of and practised (Stern, 1998).

As Stern claims, a story of a baby which will be born and the process of stepping into motherhood are inseparably interweaved. Between the fourth and seventh month, most pictures of the baby is created and it is sketched out in details. Between the eighth and ninth month, mothers start to cancel the

meticulously build image of her baby and let the mental picture fade away. It happens because at labour the real baby first meets the imaginary baby and the mother cannot allow too big a discrepancy between them. She must protect the real baby and herself from large discrepancies between her expectations and the baby which appeared in the world. She must prepare the new place so that she and her baby can learn each other and establish a bond. According to Brazelton, three babies are born at labour, the imaginary baby made from parents' dreams and fantasies and the invisible real fetus with an individual rhythm and personality merge into the existing newborn which can be seen, heard and hugged (1990). The previous bond of a mother with the imaginary baby and the growing fetus is a base for creating an attachment to the newborn which comes to the world. However, it does not mean that the imaginary baby automatically disappears. After labour, it makes its presence known once again, although, it undergoes some modifications to adjust to the reality. The updated version of the baby has its space in the mother's mind, along with the picture of her real baby. She still looks at her baby through the prism of her desires, dreams and fears. There is a baby in her arms, there is a baby in her mind and rarely these are exactly the same babies (Stern, 1998). The newborn which appears in the world is not the same as the imaginary baby. It may arouse either a deep love with being embodiment of perfection filling in all gaps in parents, or aversion, or even hate, by reminding parents about their despised selves, resembling their disliked parent or having a flaw (Cramer, 2003).

## RESULTS

In 2012 research on mother's narration about a child during a prenatal period was conducted. The aim was to establish how an expectant mother builds a story about her developing child, check which elements recur in the narratives and find variables which differentiate between them. A narrative method was used.

The research findings support the thesis that expectant mothers are ready to build expanded and multifaceted narratives about their children. It shows that pregnant women try to guess what their child is like. Moreover, they expand their images and describe their child as a toddler, preschooler, pupil and adult. This way they grow accustomed to a new situation and prepare themselves to a new role. Such an imaginary world is a mental stage in which expectant mothers can think up and practice various possible solutions. Table 1 presents the categories distinguished in babies' characteristics and fragments which illustrate them.



Table 1  
*Categories distinguished in child's descriptions*

Child's characteristics	
Name/special nickname for a child (a kid, tot)	„Our kiddo is 22 weeks old and we know he is a boy. We decided we would call him Igor.”
Motor activity (a child fidgets, kicks)	„She is very mobile and lively. She makes many complicated movements so I often feel her activeness on my skin.”
Appearance	„They have probably already seen me. I remember when mammy a few times said: <i>What beautiful legs, feet and hands he has and a nose just like daddy</i> ”
Positive personality traits	„It is happy, satisfied, can deal with reverses of fortune, doesn't give up, has lots of friends and a family it can always rely on.”
Negative personality traits	„My child is a stubborn and defiant person who does not pay attention to others and takes only his own needs and desires into consideration.”
Family resemblance	„He is a boy of many interests and curious about the world like his father.”
Information about child's cognitive abilities	„He is very ambitious and intelligent so everything comes easy to him.”
Information about child's likings	„I love sleeping and those moments when something delicious flows in, especially chocolate, yummy.”
Information about child's mood	„I'm very happy and it won't change for sure when I leave my mummy's belly.”
Qualities which can be revealed in social contacts, relationships	„At the same time she's got lots of empathy and can notice other people's problems. She likes cooperating with people very much and learning from them.”
A child compared to an animal	„In my imagination my daughter is a small seal (I also address her like that) who lives in an ocean of amniotic fluid.”

Four dimensions dominated in characterizing a baby by expectant mothers: baby's name, data about baby's mood, motor activity and information about child's likings. First of all, giving a name to a child in the womb helps mothers to get acquainted with the unknown and become familiar with their baby. Secondly, child's motor activity enables them to read baby's signals and respond to them. Thirdly, considering baby's mood and likings aids mothers in taking

baby into consideration what constitutes a major factor determining mothers' readiness to meet their real baby after the labor.

The majority of narratives was told in the third person singular. Such a mode of narration helps to distance oneself from the topic which is crucial to put one's thoughts, feelings and images into words. Furthermore, the instruction with a book metaphor („Please tell me your child's story. Imagine he is the main character of a book, tell me about his life”) also encouraged to take such a perspective.

An idealized child's image dominated in expectant mothers' stories. In positive narratives with negative aspects pregnant women expressed positive emotions together with such feelings as fear, sense of danger, uncertainty and doubts. The sequence: joyfulness, a sense of fulfillment-fear was the most frequent set of emotions.

A baby's image built in pregnancy is usually idealized so research findings indicate similar tendency. It is also plausible that the results show the strength of “blessed state” stereotype and related to it pressure to mention only positive aspects of expecting a baby. Pregnancy is a new and difficult situation, disturbs the previous balance, even if the child is planned. Furthermore, pregnancy cannot be controlled, predicted, thus, it is unavoidable that a certain level of uncertainty, lack of feeling of safety and imperative to find new ways of coping accompany it. Ambivalent narratives are desirable because too idealized approach to maternity can hinder establishing the relationship with a real child. Moreover, idealization hampers taking care of the infant in his first months because motherhood releases various feelings: pain, sadness, guilt feeling, anger, happiness, love. Therefore, the ability to recognize and express the full gamut of emotions is vital. If a woman does not accept that she is and can be tired, doubtful and lost there is a risk that she will regard herself as a frustrated, bad mother with low self-esteem which in turn will intensify the negative feelings. Negative emotions are natural, necessary and denying them can be harmful for both a mother and a child.

When mothers imagined their baby's future they mainly considered his functioning at school, during studies, in his professional and private life. An interesting interrelation occurred: when an expectant mother describes her baby as an adult, she pictures him as a parent which can indicate that she gives a high value to parenthood. A mother wishes her unborn child to become a parent in the future. The fragments below illustrate it:

„She is a fulfilled woman. One day a man appears in her life. Mutual fascination joins them. They are getting married soon. The day she has been dreaming

about her whole life comes true. After the fabulous wedding they adopt Chris. After two years their own child comes into the world. Family lives long and happily ever after.”

„Before they got married they decided to move into a shared flat. The family soon grew bigger with a son. At that time Alice and her husband decided to set up their own company. Alice did not want to be a busy and bustling mother working long hours in a corporation. At the start running a business was very absorbing but grandparents helped them. A grandmother and grandfather looked after little Steve when his mother had to concentrate on her work. In the course of time it was easier.”

## REFERENCES

- Bakiera, L. (2013). *Zaangażowane rodzicielstwo a autokreacyjny aspekt rozwoju dorosłych* [Engaged parenthood and self-creative aspect of adult development]. Warszawa: Difin.
- Barnard, K., & Solchany, J. (2008). Mothering. In M. C. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting. Volume 3 Being and becoming a parent* (pp. 3–26). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bartosz, B. (2002). *Doświadczenie macierzyństwa. Analiza narracji autobiograficznych* [Experiencing motherhood. The analysis of autobiographical narratives]. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Bidzan, M. (2007). *Nastoletnie matki Psychologiczne aspekty ciąży, porodu i położu* [Teenage mothers. Psychological aspects of pregnancy, labour and puerperium]. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls.
- Bielawska-Batorowicz, E. (1995). *Determinanty spostrzegania dziecka przez rodziców w okresie poporodowym* [The determinants of parents' perception of a newborn in a postnatal period]. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Brazelton, T. B., & Cramer, B. (1990). *The earliest relationship: parents, infants, and the drama of early attachment*. Cambridge: Perseus Books.
- Brzezińska, A., Appelt, K., & Ziółkowska, B. (2008). Psychologia rozwoju człowieka [Human developmental psychology]. In J. Strelau, D. Doliński (Eds), *Psychologia. Podręcznik Akademicki* [Psychology. Academic handbook] (pp. 95–292). Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Chrzan-Dętkoś, M. (2010). *Depresja poporodowa okiem psychologa* [Postpartum depression seen by a psychologist]. [http://www.mamatezmoze.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=462&Itemid=6](http://www.mamatezmoze.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=462&Itemid=6)
- Cierpka, A. (2006). Narracja o dziecku a schemat interakcji wychowawczej [Narrative about a child and a model of parenting]. *Psychologia Rozwojowa*, 11(1), 45–53.

- Cramer, B. (2003). *Pierwsze dwa lata: co się dzieje pomiędzy matką, ojcem i dzieckiem* [The first two years: what is happening between a mother, father and child]. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Erikson, E. H. (1997). *Dzieciństwo i społeczeństwo* [Childhood and society]. Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy REBIS.
- Fonagy, P., Target, M. (1997). Attachment and reflective function: Their role in self-organization. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 679–700.
- Galinsky, E. (1987). *The six stages of parenthood*. Cambridge: Perseus Books.
- Gurba, E. (2007). Wczesna dorosłość [Early adulthood]. In B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała (Eds.), *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka* [Human developmental psychology] (pp. 202–229). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Havighurst, R. J. (1981). *Developmental tasks and education*. New York, London: Longman.
- Kornas-Biela, D. (2004). *Wokół początku życia ludzkiego* [Around the beginning of human life]. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX.
- Lewis, M. W. (2008). The Interactional Model of Maternal-Fetal Attachment: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health*, 23(1), 49–65.
- McAdams, D.P. (2001). The Psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(2), 100–122.
- McGuire, J. (1991). *Sons and daughters*. In A. Phoenix, E. Woollett, E. Lloyd (Eds.), *Motherhood. Meanings, practices and ideologies* (pp. 143–161). London: Sage.
- Miller, T. (2005). *Making sense of motherhood. A narrative approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Oleś, P. (2011). *Psychologia człowieka dorosłego* [The psychology of adulthood]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Raphael-Leff, J. (1993). *Pregnancy: The inside story*. London: Sheldon Press.
- Raphael-Leff, J. (2005). Psychotherapy during the reproductive years. In G. Gabbard, J. Beck, & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Oxford textbook of psychotherapy*. Oxford: University Press.
- Stern, D., N. (1998). *The birth of a mother*. New York: Basic Books.

## CHAPTER 6

---

# The Feeling of Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy vs. the Parenting Styles of Mothers Active in the Labor Market

*Katarzyna Wałęcka-Matyja and Marta Kucharska*

### INTRODUCTION

In all European Union countries, the share of women in employment is seen to have grown. Some authors (e.g., Pfau-Effinger, 1999) consider women's professional activity to be the most important social change in the past decades. This has undoubtedly resulted from the dynamics of civilization processes, such as industrialization and urbanization, as well as the aspiration of families to function according to the so-called *family independence model* (cf. Harwas-Napierała, 2010), bringing about a transformation of the woman's role in the family environment.

Professionally active women face the difficult task of reconciling family duties with responsibilities at work. They are supposed to maintain the reproduction process, take care of the children, and do most of the unpaid housework. The necessity to choose between one's family and offspring and one's work and professional development often brings about consequences of an emotional nature.

At present, motherhood is most often understood as a social role played by a woman toward a child. The feature distinguishing it from other roles is a biological and emotional bond between mother and child (Pankowska, 2005).

The literature of the subject presents a lot of research dedicated to the influence of women's professional work on their motherhood quality and the related parenting styles. Numerous authors point out a connection between parenting styles and children's behaviours and personality (Coltrane, Collins,

2001; Obuchowska, 2001; Plopa, 2005, Liberska, Matuszewska, & Freudenreich, 2013; Wałęcka-Matyja, 2013).

The fact that mothers perceive professional work as an escape from monotonous chores determines a positive correlation between the satisfaction with work and the role of a mother. The mothers who are active on the labour market experience a lower level of tension, are less irritated and spend time with their children more effectively, stimulating their intellectual development (Erwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien, 2001). According to Fedrick (1993), it is a feeling of financial security that is the main factor decreasing the frequency of experiencing tension resulting from playing so many roles at the same time.

As it results from the research of some of the authors, women who idealize motherhood, perceive it as the essence of the traditional role of a woman hardly ever achieve satisfaction with their family life. They are characterized with low self-esteem and a feeling of insecurity; in contacts with their children they are emotionally tense and show a high level of apprehension, ensuring them worse conditions for their intellectual and social development (Niemelae, 1985; Pankowska, 2005).

The results of the studies conducted so far (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2002; Rostowska, 2009) as well as the current understanding of the educational interaction between mother and child show that this interaction is connected with the level of life satisfaction experienced by the mother and her feeling of self-efficacy with regard to the actions she takes.

As a result of the above considerations, the following research questions were formulated:

Are there any socio-demographic determinants of the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and preferred parenting styles in the studied group of mothers?

Is there any relationship between age, the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the parenting style in the surveyed mothers? If so, what kind of relationship is it?

Is there any relationship between age, the level of life satisfaction, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the most frequently used parenting styles within the compared groups of mothers living in different areas? If so, what is the direction of that relationship?

Furthermore, based on the relevant literature, some research hypotheses were also put forward and subjected to verification.

H1: One's place of residence determines the type of educational influence. Mothers living in urban areas show democratic and liberal attitudes toward

their children more often than mothers living in rural areas, who prefer the authoritarian style.

- H2: In the studied group of mothers, a perceived *good* economic situation is a determinant of the feeling of satisfaction with life and the feeling of self-efficacy with regard to one's actions.
- H3: A perceived good economic and living situation is connected with choosing the democratic style.
- H4: With mothers' age, the tendency to use the democratic and liberal-loving styles grows stronger.
- H5: A higher level of mothers' satisfaction with life leads to a more frequent use of the democratic style in the upbringing of children.
- H6: The feeling of self-efficacy is connected with mothers choosing those elements of educational influence which are of a democratic nature.
- H7: The level of satisfaction with life is positively correlated with the feeling of general self-efficacy in the surveyed mothers.
- H8: In each of the groups of mothers compared with regard to the place of residence, the feeling of satisfaction with life positively correlates with the democratic style.

## METHOD

### *Participants and procedure*

The study included 130 women between 20 and 59 years of age. They were residents of large cities (45.00%), small towns (32.70%), and villages (22.30%). Most of the surveyed persons had higher education (64.60%). Secondary education was declared by 20.80% of the women, and vocational education by 14.60%. Analysis of the marital status of the surveyed mothers showed that the vast majority of them were married (82.40%), while 13.00% identified themselves as single mothers, and 4.60% lived in informal relationships. Most of the surveyed women (44.60%) reported having one child, 40.80% had two children, and 14.60% had three or more offspring. The great majority of women were active in the labor market (74.60%). The share of non-working mothers was 25.40%. Their economic situation was assessed as *average* by 49.20% of the women *good* by 46.20%, and *poor* by 4.60%.

The study was conducted from January to June 2013. It was anonymous and voluntary. Each of the surveyed women was given a set of questionnaires with instructions and was informed about the purpose of the study. In general, the respondents were willing to take part in this research project, but several were discouraged by the number of questionnaires to be completed.

### *Materials*

In order to obtain answers to the questions and hypotheses formulated above, the following methods were used:

***A Self-designed Interview.*** The questionnaire survey instrument was used to collect information concerning the socio-demographic data of the surveyed women: age, place of residence, marital status, number of children, education level, professional activity, economic situation.

***The Satisfaction with Life Scale*** (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, Griffin, 1985) (Polish adaptation – Juczyński, 2001) is a tool commonly used for measuring a person's general satisfaction with life based on the operationalization of this notion. Satisfaction with life is understood as a conscious, cognitive assessment of life, where an individual compares their own life conditions with the accepted standards. This scale has satisfactory psychometric properties (Juczyński, 2001).

***Parenting Style in the Family of Procreation Questionnaire*** (Ryś, 2004). The tool is used for measuring four parenting styles: (1) democratic style – it is characterized by emotional warmth shown to children, giving them some latitude (appropriate to their age), and making adequate demands; (2) authoritarian style – its basic elements are emotional coldness, excessive demands, and excessive control; (3) liberal-loving style – it is characterized by excessive latitude and a lack of demands on children and, at the same time, a positive and warm attitude to them; (4) liberal-non-loving style – it is used by parents who show resentment and emotional coldness toward their children, combined with a lack of demands and control. The assessment of one's parenting style is retrospective. The surveyed persons assess to what extent each statement reflects their behavior toward their children up to 12 years old (Ryś, 2004)

***The General Self-Efficacy Scale*** (GSES; Schwarzer, Jerusalem, 1993) (Polish adaptation, Schwarzer, Jerusalem, Juczyński, 2001) refers to the concept of expectations and self-efficacy formulated by Bandura (1977, 2004), related to control of one's own actions. The scale measures the strength of a person's general conviction as to their efficacy in coping with difficult situations. The stronger the conviction is, the more challenging the goals that people set for themselves and the more they get involved in the intended behavior. This scale has a good level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, reliability 0.78) (Juczyński, 2001).



## RESULTS

*Selected socio-demographic variables vs. the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the preferred parenting styles*

The study results, analyzed with the F-Snedecor test, revealed that two socio-demographic variables, i.e., one's place of residence and economic situation significantly influenced the choice of parenting styles preferred by women. The other socio-demographic variables did not have such an influence on the preferred parenting styles (number of children) or were not taken into consideration in statistical analysis due to excessive disproportions between group sizes (marital status, education level, and professional activity).

The obtained results are consistent with the ones reported by Tarkowska, who proposed that the parenting style is determined by both the characteristics of the parents (e.g., personality, education level) and those of the external environment in which the family functions. Tarkowska also showed that there is a relationship between the parents' position in the social structure and the ways in which they socialize their children (Tarkowska, 2002). It was pointed out that parenting styles can shape, to a significant extent, the phenomena of social exclusion and domination since they are inherited together with the parents' status.

The place of residence did not differentiate the surveyed groups in terms of satisfaction with life or the feeling of self-efficacy (Table 1). This may result from the fact that the surveyed women were active in the labor market, experienced the feeling of success, and were characterized by the feeling of self-efficacy, which might have arisen from the ability of reconciling their family and professional roles in a satisfactory manner.

Table 1  
*Place of residence and the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the preferred parenting styles*

Psychological variables	Place of residence			F	p
	Big city ( $\bar{x}$ )	Small city ( $\bar{x}$ )	Village ( $\bar{x}$ )		
Satisfaction with life	24.40	42.00	29.00	1.83	.16
The feeling of self-efficacy	30.53	29.19	29.38	1.24	.29
Democratic style	25.10	25.20	24.80	0.21	.81

Psychological variables	Place of residence			F	p
	Big city ( $\bar{x}$ )	Small city ( $\bar{x}$ )	Village ( $\bar{x}$ )		
Authoritarian style	6.60	8.40	9.50	4.56	.01
Liberal-loving style	19.40	20.40	18.90	3.04	.05
Liberal-non-loving style	4.90	6.50	7.20	4.76	.01

However, the place of residence differentiated the surveyed mothers with regard to adopting the liberal-non-loving style or the authoritarian style. The distribution of differences between the surveyed groups was obtained by using the Bonferroni multiple comparison test (Table 2).

Table 2  
*Place of residence and the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the preferred parenting styles- differences between pairs of variables measured by the Bonferroni test*

Dependent variable	(A) Place of residence	(B) Place of residence	Difference in mean	Standard error	p
Satisfaction with life	Big city >100 000	Small city	-.08	1.12	1.00
		Village	2.20	1.26	.25
	Small city <100 000	Big city	.08	1.12	1.00
		Village	2.28	1.34	.27
The feeling of self-efficacy	Big city	Small city	1.33	.92	.45
		Village	1.15	1.03	.81
	Small city	Big city	-1.33	.92	.45
		Village	-.20	.10	1.00
Democratic style	Big city	Small city	-.07	.64	1.00
		Village	.39	.72	1.00
	Small city	Big city	.07	.64	1.00
		Village	.47	.76	1.00

Dependent variable	(A) Place of residence	(B) Place of residence	Difference in mean	Standard error	<i>p</i>
Authoritarian style	Big city	Small city	-1.80	.92	.15
		Village	-2.94*	1.03	.01
	Small city	Big city	1.80	.92	.15
		Village	-1.14	1.10	.90
Liberal-loving style	Big city	Small city	-1.01	.54	.19
		Village	.48	.61	1.00
	Small city	Big city	1.02	.54	.19
		Village	1.40	.65	.07
Liberal-non-loving style	Big city	Small city	-1.66	.73	.08
		Village	-2.30*	.82	.02
	Small city	Big city	1.66	.73	.08
		Village	-.64	.88	1.00

It can be seen that mothers living in rural areas used the authoritarian and liberal-non-loving styles more often than those living in large cities, which corroborates hypothesis 1 (Table 2).

The obtained results can be compared to the theory of Kohn (1963), who proved that parenting styles in the working and middle classes are differentiated and related to the parents' personality traits and social characteristics. Working class parents in professions in which orders must be carried out focus on training their children for conformity and obedience in performing commands. With a view to achieving that, the preferred style is a style referred to as disciplinary or authoritarian, as it helps to develop a conformist personality in the child.

Middle class parents in professions where individual achievements and individual initiative are important try to encourage curiosity, responsibility, and creativity in their children. Therefore, they prefer a style that is liberal and authoritative at the same time, as they often represent an authority for their offspring. This forms a self-controlled personality in the child.

The family's economic status was the second socio-economic variable differentiating the surveyed group as regards satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the preferred parenting style.

Considering the results given in Table 3, statistically significant differences are seen with regard to satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the democratic style in the studied group of mothers. The Bonferroni multiple comparison test was used to analyze these differences in greater detail. The obtained results are presented in Table 4.

Table 3

*Economic situation and the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the preferred parenting styles*

Psychological variables	Economic situation			F	p
	Good ( $\bar{x}$ )	Average ( $\bar{x}$ )	Poor ( $\bar{x}$ )		
Satisfaction with life	25.50	23.00	19.50	5.56	.005
The feeling of self-efficacy	31.20	28.70	28.20	5.35	.006
Democratic style	25.90	24.50	23.70	3.75	.03
Authoritarian style	7.80	7.70	9.00	.21	.81
Liberal-loving style	20.00	19.30	19.10	.98	.38
Liberal-non-loving style	5.60	5.90	8.40	1.59	.21

Table 4

*Economic situation and the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and the preferred parenting styles- differences between pairs of variables measured by the Bonferroni test*

Dependent variable	(A) Economic situation	(B) Economic situation	Difference in mean	Standard error	p
Satisfaction with life	Good	Average	2.53*	.97	.03
		Poor	6.00*	2.31	.03
	Average	Good	-2.53*	.97	.03
		Poor	3.47	2.30	.40

Dependent variable	(A) Economic situation	(B) Economic situation	Difference in mean	Standard error	<i>p</i>
The feeling of self-efficacy	Good	Average	2.49*	.79	.01
		Poor	3.03	1.89	.34
	Average	Good	-2.48*	.79	.01
		Poor	.55	1.89	1.00
Democratic style	Good	Average	1.37*	.55	.04
		Poor	2.20	1.32	.29
	Average	Good	-1.37*	.55	.04
		Poor	.83	1.32	1.00
Authoritarian style	Good	Average	.11	.84	1.00
		Poor	-1.18	2.01	1.00
	Average	Good	-.11	.84	1.00
		Poor	-1.30	2.00	1.00
Liberal-loving style	Good	Average	.64	.49	.58
		Poor	.88	1.16	1.00
	Average	Good	-.64	.49	.58
		Poor	.24	1.16	1.00
Liberal-non-loving style	Good	Average	-.37	.67	1.00
		Poor	-2.82	1.59	.24
	Average	Good	.37	.67	1.00
		Poor	-2.46	1.59	.37

The data from Table 4 show that mothers who assess their economic situation as *good* achieve significantly higher levels of satisfaction with life and are characterized by a much higher level of self-efficacy than mothers declaring an *average* economic situation.

The obtained results are consistent with the empirical findings reported so far in this area. In the study conducted by Paszkowska-Rogacz (2002), it was proven that persons active in the labor market and satisfied with their economic

situation had a better opinion of the quality of their lives than unemployed persons having a low economic status.

Moreover, mothers declaring a high level of economic security used the democratic parenting style more often than mothers in a worse economic situation. Thus, the obtained study results confirm hypotheses 2 and 3. The results of the presented study are also in agreement with the majority of research findings in this area (cf. Pietrzyk, 2001). They clearly show that the parenting styles preferred by poorer parents tend to be closer to authoritarianism and a “strong-arm approach” than the ones adopted by more affluent parents.

Parents in a good economic situation often take their children to the theatre, cinema, and concerts, read books to them, and provide them with sports and recreation opportunities. They try to stimulate all aspects of the children’s development, and, interestingly, they perceive this as something obvious rather than imposed or exceptional (Szlendak, 2003).

The study of Palska (2002) shows that persons who are wealthy, well-educated, and in professions characteristic of the middle class most often perceive their childhood as a very good period in their life. H. Palska emphasizes that the parenting style preferred by the parents who are able to provide a warm family atmosphere, stability, and security leads to a high social position of the children, who achieve higher education, a well-paid job, and a good economic status.

*Correlations between age, the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy and parenting styles*

The next stage of statistical analysis involved determining the existence and direction of relationships between age, the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and parenting styles. The obtained results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Correlations between age, the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy and parenting styles*

Variables		Age	Satisfaction with life	The feeling of self-efficacy
Satisfaction with life	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.13	1	.99**
	Significance	.14	-	.000
The feeling of self-efficacy	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.09	.99**	1
	Significance	.32	.000	-

Variables		Age	Satisfaction with life	The feeling of self-efficacy
Democratic style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.17	.37**	.28**
	Significance	.05	.000	.001
Authoritarian style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.26**	-.37**	-.03
	Significance	.03	.000	.73
Liberal-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.03	.21*	.26**
	Significance	.70	.014	.003
Liberal-non-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.28**	-.27**	-.17
	Significance	.001	.001	.05

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Analyzing the data presented in Table 5, it can be seen that with age the surveyed mothers more often tended to show authoritarian and liberal-non-loving parenting styles. Thereby, the present study did not confirm hypothesis 4. In turn, there is a positive correlation between the level of satisfaction with life and the democratic and liberal-loving parenting styles in the surveyed mothers, which proves hypothesis 5 to be correct. At the same time, women satisfied with their lives less frequently chose the authoritarian and liberal-non-loving styles. The obtained results support hypothesis 6. In the surveyed group of mothers, satisfaction with life coexisted with the feeling of general self-efficacy (positive correlation), which confirms hypothesis 7. Higher scores on the General Self-Efficacy Scale are connected with a more frequent use of educational actions of a democratic and liberal-loving nature (Table 5).

*Correlations between age, the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and parenting styles in groups of mothers living in different areas*

As the literature on the subject suggests, the rural environment is characterized by different conditions, needs, and standards of living from the environment of urban agglomerations. The differences concern practically all spheres of life, i.e., the system of values, work, education, and parenting (Lachowski, 2004).

According to the results given in Table 6, in all the compared groups of mothers, the democratic style was used more often and the authoritarian one less frequently with increasing levels of satisfaction with life, which supports hypothesis 8.

Table 6

*Correlations between age, the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy, and parenting styles in groups of mothers living in different areas*

Place of residence		Age	Satisfaction with life	The feeling of self-efficacy
BIG CITY				
Age	<i>r</i> -Pearson	1	-.05	.14
	Significance		.727	.27
	<i>N</i>	59	59	59
Democratic style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.10	.27*	.17
	Significance	.47	.04	.20
	<i>N</i>	59	59	59
Authoritarian style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.19	-.33*	.11
	Significance	.15	.01	.43
	<i>N</i>	59	59	59
Liberal-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.11	.25	.10
	Significance	.39	.06	.43
	<i>N</i>	59	59	59
Liberal-non-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.30*	-.24	-.004
	Significance	.02	.07	.97
	<i>N</i>	59	59	59
SMALL CITY				
Age	<i>r</i> -Pearson	1	.03	-.02
	Significance		.86	.88
	<i>N</i>	42	42	42
Democratic style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.27	.40**	.47**
	Significance	.08	.01	.002
	<i>N</i>	42	42	42
Authoritarian style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.16	-.31*	-.08
	Significance	.30	.05	.59
	<i>N</i>	42	42	42



THE FEELING OF SATISFACTION AND SELF-EFFICACY...

Place of residence		Age	Satisfaction with life	The feeling of self-efficacy
Liberal-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.007	.05	.15
	Significance	.97	.75	.33
	<i>N</i>	42	42	42
Liberal-non-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.02	-.24	-.46**
	Significance	.88	.12	.002
	<i>N</i>	42	42	42
VILLAGE				
Age	<i>r</i> -Pearson	1	-.28	-.24
	Significance		.14	.21
	<i>N</i>	29	29	29
Democratic style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	-.09	.52**	.19
	Significance	.64	.004	.31
	<i>N</i>	29	29	29
Authoritarian style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.18	-.44*	-.02
	Significance	.34	.02	.90
	<i>N</i>	29	29	29
Liberal-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.08	.28	.55**
	Significance	.68	.14	.002
	<i>N</i>	29	29	29
Liberal-non-loving style	<i>r</i> -Pearson	.42*	-.36	.08
	Significance	.02	.06	.68
	<i>N</i>	29	29	29

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Both women coming from large cities and from the country show a tendency to use the liberal-non-loving style with age, which means a lack of interest in children and their affairs, giving them excessive latitude, and having a negative attitude to them. In the group of mothers from rural areas, a positive correlation was observed between the use of the liberal-loving style and the level of self-efficacy, whereas in the group of women from small towns, there was a negative correlation between the liberal-non-loving style and the feeling of self-efficacy.

## DISCUSSION

Today motherhood is one of the roles a woman can choose. Modern society accepts different forms of motherhood, which gives mothers an opportunity to raise children and look after the home, trying to reconcile childcare with pursuing their interests, as well as balancing a professional career and motherhood. The mother's choice of a lifestyle is most frequently determined by the economic situation of the family.

For women following the dual-role pattern, one of the basic challenges is to reconcile the responsibilities of professional work and those of motherhood. In the face of the necessity to continuously develop one's qualifications, be more flexible due to longer working hours, and reduce the time dedicated to family life and recreation, such a situation may cause numerous conflicts both of an intrapsychic and interpersonal nature. On the other hand, professional activity may become a source of social support and satisfaction with life not only in terms of one's economic status, but also motivation. What is interesting, in the 21st century, the model of a woman able to perfectly reconcile housework with professional work is becoming a thing of the past. The feminist author Rich wrote that the faces of motherhood has started to change, describing the situation at the beginning of the 1970s (Rich, 2000). It is increasingly apparent that contemporary mothers are starting to express openly their strong, sometimes negative, emotions resulting from the fact that it is impossible to reconcile everything. What is more, there is public tolerance for this kind of behavior. It is assumed that a moderate level of involvement in both roles, i.e., those of a mother and an employee, is advantageous for both the woman's relationship with the child and the family and performance at work. It is worth mentioning that at present more children are born in those countries where more women are active in the labor market (e.g., France). It is assumed that women would like to reconcile motherhood with professional activity if they were provided with appropriate conditions guaranteed by legal regulations supporting pro-family policy and equal parental rights and responsibilities.

The results presented in this work confirm that some socio-demographic factors (place of residence, economic situation of the family) and psychological factors (the feeling of satisfaction with life, the feeling of self-efficacy) influence the preferred parenting style in the group of professionally active mothers. These results can be summarized as follows: a happy mother means a happy child in the long term. Mothers satisfied with their life, aware of the effectiveness of their actions, enjoying good economic conditions, active in the labor market, and

living in cities preferred the parenting styles advantageous for child development, such as the democratic and liberal-loving styles. It can be predicted that children of well-educated and wealthy mothers will cope better with literacy skills and that their development will be stimulated in many ways, for example, in terms of artistic skills, learning foreign languages, and promoting desirable character traits, which will undoubtedly become valuable resources for them in obtaining a good professional position in the future.

## REFERENCES

- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and Differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106, 676-713. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.106.4.676.
- Coltrane, S., & Collins, R. (2001). *The sociology of marriage and the family. gender. love and property* (ed.5). Belmont. CA: Wadsworth.
- Erwins, C., Buffardi, L., Casper, W., & O'Brien A. (2001). A relationship of women's role strain to social support role satisfaction and self-efficiency. *Family Relations*, 50, 230-238. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2001.00230.
- Harwas-Napierała, B. (2010). Rodzina w kontekście współczesnych zagrożeń [The family in the context of contemporary threats]. In T. Rostowska & A. Jarmołowska (Eds), *Rozwojowe i wychowawcze aspekty życia rodzinnego* [Developmental and educational aspects of family life] (pp. 11-21). Warszawa: Difin.
- Juczyński, Z. (2001). *Narzędzia Pomiaru w Promocji i Psychologii Zdrowia* [The measurement tools in Promotion and Health Psychology]. Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych PTP.
- Kohn, M.,L. (1963). Social class and parent-child relationships: An Interpretation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 68(4), 471-480.
- Lachowski, S. (2004). *Być dzieckiem rolnika* [To be a child of the farmer]. *Niebieska Linia*, 5, 3-6.
- Liberska, H., Matuszewska, M., & Freudenreich, D. (2013). Percepcja postaw rodzicielskich matek i ojców a zachowania agresywne córek i synów [Perception of parental attitudes of mothers and fathers and aggressive behavior daughters and sons]. In D. Borecka-Biernat (Ed.), *Zachowania agresywne dzieci i młodzieży* [Aggressive behavior of children and adolescents] (pp. 78-98). Warszawa: Difin.
- Obuchowska, I. (2001). *Portret psychologiczny dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym. Style rodzicielskiego wychowania i wychowawcze problemy* [Psychological portrait of preschool children. Styles of parental education and educational problems]. Warszawa: Polska Fundacja Dzieci i Młodzieży. Typescript.
- Palska, H. (2002). *Bieda i dostatek. O nowych stylach życia w Polsce końca lat dziewięćdziesiątych*. [The poverty and prosperity. The new styles of life in Poland end of the nineties]. Warszawa: IFiS PAN.

- Pankowska, W. (2005). *Wychowanie a role płciowe* [Education and sex roles]. Gdansk: GWP.
- Paszkowska-Rogacz, A. (2002). Atrybucja przyczyn pozostawania bez pracy a poczucie dobrostanu osób bezrobotnych [Attribution the causes of unemployment and a sense of well-being of the unemployed]. In T. Rostowska & J. Rostowski (Eds.), *Rodzina-rozwój-praca. Wybrane zagadnienia* [Family-development-work. The selected issues] (pp. 223–237). Łódź: WSI.
- Pfau-Effinger, B. (1999). Change of family policies in the socio-cultural context of European societies. *Comparative Social Research*, 18, 135–159. doi: 10.1017/S0047279404008232.
- Pietrzyk, A. (2001). Style wychowania dzieci w polskich rodzinach ubogich i zamożnych. Podobieństwa i różnice [Style of raising children in Polish poor and wealthy families. Similarities and differences]. *Problemy Rodziny*, 2, 29–34.
- Plopa, M. (2005). *Psychologia rodziny* [A psychology of the family. Theory and research]. Elbląg: EUHE.
- Rich, A. (2000). *Zrodzone kobiety. Macierzyństwo jako doświadczenie i instytucja*. [Born women. Motherhood as the experience and institution]. Warszawa: Sic!
- Rostowska, T. (2009). *Aktywność zawodowa małżonków a jakość ich życia*. [The professional activity of the spouses and their quality of life]. In T. Rostowska (Ed.), *Psychologia rodziny. Małżeństwo i rodzina wobec współczesnych wyzwań* [Psychology family. Marriage and family to contemporary challenges] (pp. 102–118). Warszawa: Difin.
- Rostowski, J. (2006). Nierówność zawodowa kobiet a doświadczanie zadowolenia i jakości życia w miejscu pracy [Inequality of women's professional experience of satisfaction and quality of life in the workplace]. In T. Rostowska (Ed.), *Jakość życia rodzinnego. Wybrane zagadnienia* [Quality of family life. The selected issues] (pp. 43–70). Łódź: WSI.
- Ryś, M. (2004). *Systemy rodzinne. Metody badań struktury rodziny pochodzenia i rodziny własnej*. [Family systems. Research methods of family structure- family origin and of their own family]. Warszawa: Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej MEN.
- Szlendak, P. (2003). *Zaniedbana piaskownica. Style wychowania a nierówność szans edukacyjnych*. [Neglected sandbox. Parenting styles and inequality of educational opportunities]. Warszawa: Instytut Służb Publicznych.
- Tarkowska, E. (2002). Czy dziedziczenie biedy? Bariery i szanse edukacyjne młodzieży wiejskiej z gminy Kościelec [Is the inheritance of poverty? The barriers and educational opportunities for rural youth in the commune Kościelec]. In K. Korzeniowska & E. Tarkowska (Eds.), *Lata tłuste. lata chude...Spojrzenia na biedę w społecznościach lokalnych* [Years greasy. lean years ... looks at poverty in local communities] (pp. 161–186). Warszawa: IFiS PAN.

Wałęcka-Matyja, K. (2013). Zachowania agresywne adolescentów jako efekt stylu wychowania w rodzinie pochodzenia [Aggressive behavior of adolescents as a result of parenting style in the family of origin]. In D. Borecka-Biernat (Ed.), *Zachowania agresywne dzieci i młodzieży* [Aggressive behavior of children and adolescents] (pp. 99–123). Warszawa: Difin.



## CHAPTER 7

---

# The Future Time Perspective in Parenthood of Young Adults with Intellectual Disability

*Celina Timoszyk-Tomczak and Elżbieta Pieńkowska*

### INTRODUCTION

The upbringing and caring of a child with intellectual disability is exceptional in a few aspects. Parental help, supervision and support do not terminate along with the emerging of adulthood. The need of controlling and supervising a disabled adult offspring is often present and intense. The future perspective of a child becomes for a parent the emotional burden, especially when cognitive, emotional and social deficits cannot be denied and society do not make any reasonable offers for adults with intellectual impairments. It is evident that the true acceptance of a child, the factual recognition of dynamics of all ongoing intra- and interpersonal processes is required.

Intellectual disability of a child constitutes a factor that modifies intrafamilial relations as well as family functioning in a society. The information about child's disability is experienced by parents as a stressor that can activate many others (Donovan, 1988; Flynt & Wood, 1989; Minnes, 1997; Orr, Cameron, & Day, 1991). Firstly, it is a stressful event attached to emotional dimension of parenthood that strongly influences a relation between a parent and a child. Secondly, intellectual disability is described as a chronic stressor that gives temporal perspective to the coping strategies launched by parents and the whole family system. It generates many difficult situations in a family life cycle and, co-exists with other stressors and includes significant indicator of unpredictability and ambiguity.

Being a parent of a disabled child is treated by a family system as a specific demand or challenge that is subjectively assessed and defines the intensity of psychological stress experienced by parents.

The well-balanced time perspective is described as a mental capacity of easily swinging between time perspectives according to assigned social roles, performed tasks, situations and personal resources (Boyd & Zimbardo, 1999). The stable time perspective facilitates taking advantage of knowledge, energy and emotions that stem from one's past in present activity and in constructing the individual future (Boniwell & Zimbardo, 2004).

Taking into account parental adjustment and particular context of a child development, it is essential to focus a time perspective – especially on its future aspect. What is typical of development in adulthood – e.g. independence, leaving home, the “empty-nest syndrome” – may differ according to parents of an intellectually disabled young person.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TIME PERSPECTIVES

Taking into consideration the exceptionality of a process of upbringing and assistance of intellectually disabled offspring, it can be assumed that the future time perspective acquires a remarkable value. The analyses of strategies of constructing one's own future and aims for future during adulthood point to the biological, psychological and social dimensions of developmental context. A temporal perspective is not a static phenomenon, but it alters with age (Fingerman & Perlmutter, 1995).

The terms of temporal perspective and temporal orientation are closely linked to each other and are hard to differentiate (Timoszyk-Tomczak & Bugajska, 2012). Some authors view a temporal perspective very broadly (e.g., Lens & Moreas, 1994; Nuttin, 1985; Zaleski, 1989, 1988; Zimbardo & Boyd, 2009), whereas others define a temporal orientation as such (e.g., Łukaszewski, 1983; Nosal & Bajcar, 2004; Nurmi, 1994; Trempała & Malmberg, 1998). Some put in the centre of attention temporal competences (Uchnast, 2006) and attitude towards time (Nuttin, 1985; Zaleski, 1989).

Nowadays the Zimbardo and Boyd's (2009) conception of temporal perspectives is very popular since it is clearly operationalised in the interesting measure that is being verified in many research (e.g., Sircova et al., 2007). Zimbardo and Boyd (2009) state that the perception of time is comprised of emotional functioning, a personal time perspective and the pace of actual societal life. In the past, Zimbardo (1990) focused his attention on such aspects of a temporal



perspective as commitment and perseverance in carrying out distant aims, planning and foreseeing future, hedonistic concentration on present- time, fatalistic concept of present – time and time pressure. As the research in this domain expanded, the conceptualisation of this topic evolved. The Zimbardo and Boyd's temporal perspective is mostly subjective and subconscious – but the degree of consciousness may vary. An individual uses his temporal perspectives for coding, storing and evoking personal experiences what serves to shape expectations and goals, to set out with trials of foreseeing unpredictable events and to create imaginary scenarios.

A temporal perspective varies in every human being and its form and content may be connected with a mode of healthy habits (Boyd, Keough, & Zimbardo, 1999) or tendency to risky behaviour (Boyd, Keough, & Zimbardo, 1997). The temporal dimension of human existence is grounded in every human lifestyle (Boyd & Zimbardo, 2009) and reflects personal attitudes and values associated with time.

Zimbardo and Boyd (2009) enumerate six time perspectives that indicates permanent models of individual profiles of perceiving time:

- a) two past perspectives: negative and positive
- b) two present perspectives: hedonistic and fatalistic
- c) and finally two perspectives linked to future time: future and transcendental.

The positive or negative past perspectives encompass attitudes towards past though these are not simple objective registration of good or bad experiences. Both present perspectives relate to actual reality. The hedonistic one bases in the need of pleasure and taking advantage of life and venting life energy, whereas the fatalistic option includes lack of self – efficacy. The future and transcendental perspectives focus on ability of setting goals and plans for an individual personal future. These goals may reach far beyond one's own physical death.

The research that used Zimbardo and Boyd's questionnaire (1999) show that people that possess the balanced time perspective may easily move from one temporal domain to another depending on a situation and personal tasks. Such individuals report to be happier (Boniwell & Zimbardo, 2004), socially and professionally fulfilled (Boniwell et al., 2010) and emotionally and physically healthier (Oyanadel & Buela-Casal, 2010) .

There are a lot of theoretical and empirical interpretation of temporal orientation in polish psychological literature (e.g., Liberska 2004; Łukaszewski, 1983; Nosal & Balcar, 2004; Zaleski, 1994; Trempała, 2000;).

The multidimensional analysis has been conducted by Nosal and Bajcar (2004) and effects in depiction of mental time models and temporal profiles.

Generally, people differ from each other in perception of space extension and in positioning oneself on the subjective time continuum. And this fact results in individual activity. The authors suggest that both terms: a time perspective and a temporal orientation should not be used interchangeably. A time perspective describes the mental time – space that represents psychological time (Nosal & Bajcar, 2004) and refers to the consciousness of locating one’s individual existence on time continuum – therefore determines an individual temporal organization (Nosal & Bajcar, 2004). A temporal orientation encompasses a temporal perspective and the activity organization in time as well. “A temporal orientation includes the global time representation in mind (past, present and future) and the structure of subjective aimed behaviour. The connection of time and activity is a hallmark of a temporal orientation” (Nosal & Bajcar, 2004, p. 50). Consequently, a temporal orientation is broader than a time perspective. A temporal orientation consists of structural and functional aspects. The latter refers to time, the former includes the integrity of functioning.

The process of shaping a time perspective as well as a temporal orientation is influenced by internal and external context (Timoszyk-Tomczak & Bugajska, 2012). A future time perspective may be restrained by unfavourable socio-cultural or cultural factors (Nuttin, 1984).

The instable life situation, unpredictability and uncertainty or psychological stress may form a reason of resigning from future planning. Such a decision might turn out to be adjusting. When people perceive their future as a field of uncertainty, it will lead to passive awaiting rather than active forming own future. The awaiting attitude decreases disappointment of failure in reaching goals and facilitates habituation to external reality.

Lack of a time perspective, especially its future aspect, characterizes individuals interested in immediate satiating psychological needs and as such is easily seen among children and primitive cultures.

Although such a tendency seems to be natural for very young people, for most adults such a conduct is a sign of maladjustment and might have harmful consequences. For the self-reliant active people future cannot be an escape from reality, but should be the realm of inspiring objects that manages and integrates their activity.

---

## TEMPORAL DIMENSION IN PARENTHOOD OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

From sociological point of view parenthood is described as individual expectations concerning maternity and fatherhood which includes socially shaped values, attitudes and anticipations towards women and men in their parental roles (Cusinato, 1994). It may be analyzed from two perspectives: subjective and culture-rooted. The subjective perspective underlines that a parental role is gradually formed during individual development and experience in a lifespan. The culture-rooted perspective is an effect of cultural transmission of social standards of performing parental roles. It enables the dialectical conceptualization of relation between parenthood and being a parent. The meaning of parenthood precedes, co-exists and is located in one's personal interpreting of a parental role (Cusinato, 1994, p. 84).

Intellectual disability notably modifies performing parental role during familial life cycle and exhorts and strengthens vulnerability in transition periods in offspring's development. Transition periods are mainly defined by cultural dimension of parental tasks and challenges which require from a parent the necessity of adjusting to those social demands. These demands are characteristic turning points for parents to adequately decode child's developmental needs and ongoing changes and to reform their models of rearing.

Young adulthood (and earlier often adolescence) is a stage when parents of a disabled offspring are frequently culturally abandoned. It is due to the fact that a society works out the clear scenarios for parental activity stimulating self-sufficiency, independence and leaving home by a young adult without disability. The parents of young people with intellectual impairments are left alone and have to seek individually for optimal solutions. Undoubtedly, it appears to be an overwhelming task in view of earlier stresses stemming from the first diagnosis and ambiguous attitude of society towards functioning of disabled young adults.

Young adulthood is the phase in a development of an intellectual disabled individual that strengthens parental awareness of the unaccomplished and continued stage of dependence in parent – child relations. That is why it is averse to the natural process awaited in a family functioning. The parents become aware that they are challenged to create a joint future for them and their adult offspring inseparably. It leads to the period in a family lifespan that enhances the necessity of constructing future time perspectives for parental duties and the reality of future social existence of an adult with intellectual impairments.

Adolescence and early adulthood are stages that activate temporal dimension in care-giver activities and in his relations with adolescent or adult child due to the developmental challenges:

- a) adjusting to the adult implications of disability;
- b) deciding on an appropriate residence
- c) recognizing the need for continuing family and parental responsibility
- d) dealing with special issues of sexuality (Selingman & Darling, 2006, p. 154).

Parents of a developmentally disabled child frequently have no occasions to encounter the dynamics of relations in parenthood that stimulate independence and self-sufficiency what can eventually lead to the “empty – nest syndrome”. The parent carers acknowledges the certain social demands directed towards them which require assigning a brand new dimension of future perspective of a young person and parental participation in that process. Darling (Selingman & Darling, 2006) points that the stage of middle adolescence marks the moment in child development when parents come to terms with the fact that their offspring is unable to achieve true independence. That is why it is necessary to launch the process of reformulating the principles of individual performing one’s parental role.

Being a parent of an intellectually disabled child (regardless the degree of disability) is inevitably connected with consenting to a greater amount of child’s dependence on parents in its lifespan.

Future time perspective is clearly activated in the stage of young adulthood because it is a time when past developmental achievements and actual tasks prepare an individual to effective, self-sufficient and independent functioning in the longest period in a human life. Being aware of a child’s overall deficits and experiencing uncertainty and lack of trust towards extra-familial forms of accommodation and support for intellectually disabled, a parent builds the specific future time perspective for himself as a caregiver and for a child as a care recipient.

Eventually, it may lead to emerging of the negative–emotion based dimension of perceiving offspring’s future focused on foreseeing and predicting various risk factors. It is comprised of continuing child’s dependence on a parent in a lifespan and the conviction about the lack of the unambiguous view of functioning of a young adult with intellectual disability in society. McConkey and Smyth (2003) conclude that the group of parents of a child with intellectual impairments expresses more and stronger fears and their perceptions of risk were different from, and greater than, those of their children. The parents were especially concerned about hazards such as getting hurt crossing the

street, sexual predation or unexpected pregnancy. The parents are emotionally overwhelmed while thinking of their offspring's future, because they are afraid of the consequences of failures he or she may experience. Consequently, they try to protect their adult child from situations they believe to pose risks to individuals with impaired judgment and reasoning ability (Selingman & Darling, 2006). Perske (1972) argued that failure, however, is a normal part of adult life and individuals with disabilities should have the right to experience failure along with success.

Timoszyk-Tomczak and Bugajska (2012) clearly points to the fact that a man in the face of strong equivocation, unpredictability and stress may refrain from constructing own future and take passive expectancy on instead. If society forms no obvious offers for adult population with intellectual impairments and the parents, building the temporal perspective may be the effect and cause of plausible fears of child's well - being outside a family. It brings about such a parental situation, where the relations with a disabled child become inadequately controlling, overprotective and, consequently, leads to avoiding thinking about the future. The latter may only be a short-term coping strategy in view of the parental gradual decrease in physical strength and health. Then, the parents start to reconsider their former decisions and incorporate temporal future dimension into their activity in relation with own disabled child in adulthood.

Cairns and colleagues (2012) conducted the research on a sample of older<sup>1</sup> parents caring for offspring with learning disabilities over a prolonged period of time in order to describe formative factors that shape parental activity in a family life cycle. A detailed analysis of retrospective recognition of parental needs and perception of their disabled child's future served as a background to emerge following subsequent aspects of parental experiences:

1. becoming familiar with the fact that their child had a learning disability in the early years to the present day;
2. the many obstacles parent carers have faced and continue to face trying to ensure the best for their offspring and themselves;
3. the current situation of parents that evokes ever present awareness of their health, ageing and making decision to continue in their role as a carer;
4. perceptions of parents' own future and the future of their dependent offspring (Carins, Brown, Darbyshire, & Tolson, 2012, p. 76-77).

The results of this qualitative study revealed a number of themes that were a feature of the complex and challenging experience of caring for an offspring

---

<sup>1</sup> The parents were aged between 65 and 89 years.

with intellectual disability. The elaborated categories consolidated the fact that parent carers' primary concern was well-being of their dependent offspring and ensuring that they gave them the best chance in life. The four main themes were described as: "A life not foreseen", "Going it alone", "Reaching a decision" and "Nearing the end".

Cairns (2012) evidently indicates that the parental temporal model is strongly influenced by the parent carer role and it activates a wide spectrum of activities aimed at providing an intellectually disabled adult with safe and secure existence.

Additionally, the author emphasizes that quantity and quality of social support the parents are capable to find and get, are the significant factors that may influence the parental mode of constructing future perspective. The parents focus their attention on the necessity of continuing their role as a carer and supervisor during the whole life cycle and of making it centre of attention in their individual and family functioning ("A life not foreseen"). It is grounded in the past when professional counseling about a disabled child's condition concentrated mainly on the defective model of intellectual disability and left parents with no room for their voicing individual needs and expressing intense feelings.

The mentioned above research revealed that equivocation and unpredictability of one's own future and his disabled offspring were the effects of lack of adequate emotional and informative support on distinctive features of intellectual impairment and competent parental functioning ("Going it alone"). Even if a parent works out a sense of personal fulfilment that describes his inter- and interpersonal dimensions and views the caring relationship as mutually beneficial (not emotionally overwhelming), he still builds his future perspective inseparably on his role as a care giver.

## SUMMARY

The future time perspective is an immanent part of every human functioning (Boyd & Zimbardo, 2009). Young adulthood is a stage which itself includes a temporal dimension, because it activates various and autonomous strategies of constructing one's own future. Intellectual disability is a specific factor that modifies parental activity in many aspects, especially those naturally aimed on stimulating offspring's self-sufficient, independent and responsible making choices in personal life. In such a case a parent takes a responsibility for his child's future and its quality. At the expense of the parents' multidimensional time perspective, emerges the future that is focused indivisible on performing a social role as a parent carer (Cairns et al., 2012).

The temporal depletion or refraining from planning own future may be adjusted (Timoszyk –Tomczak & Bugajska, 2012). However, it cannot be grounded as an enduring aspect of personality and mechanism regulating individual activity, because as such may pose danger to development or sense of happiness of subsequent stages in life.

Once intellectual impairment is viewed as an unpredictable chronic stressor in a cycle of family life, it will be necessary to consider constructing a balanced time perspective as an effective coping strategy to optimise parental activity towards a disabled young adult.

## REFERENCES

- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56–95.
- Boniwell, I., Ivanchenko, G. V, Linley, P., & Osin, E. (2010). A question of balance: Time perspective and well-being in British and Russian samples. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5(1), 24–40.
- Boniwell, I., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2004). Balancing one's time perspective in pursuit of optimal functioning. In P. A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 165–180). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Boss, P. (2003). *Family stress management. a contextual approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Boyd, J., Keough, K. A., & Zimardo, P. G. (1997). Present time perspective as a predictor of risk driving. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 23(6), 1007–1023
- Boyd, J., & Zimardo P.G. (1999). Putting time in perspective. A valid, reliable, individual-differences metric. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17(6), 1271–1288.
- Boyd, J. N., & Zimbardo, P.G. (2006). Constructing time after death. The transcendental-future time perspective. In L. Storm, M.A, Thalbourne, N.C., Jefferson (Eds.), *The survival of human consciousness. Essays possibility of life after death* (pp. 35–54). New York: McFarland & Co.
- Boyd, J, & Zimbardo, P.G. (2009). *Paradoks czasu [Time paradox]* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Nauk.
- Burack, J., Hodapp, R., & Zigler, E. *Handbook of mental retardation and development*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Byrne, E., & Cunningham, C. (1985). The effects of mentally handicapped children on families – a conceptual review. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 26(6), 847–864.
- Carins, D., Brown, J., Darbyshire, & Tolson, D. (2012). The need for future alternatives: an investigation of the experiences and future of older parents caring for offspring



- with learning disabilities over a prolonged period of time. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 41, 73–82.
- Cottis, T. (2009). *Intellectual Disability, Trauma and Psychotherapy*. East Sussex: Routledge.
- Cusinato, M. (1994). Parenting over the family life cycle. In L. L'Abate (Ed.), *Handbook of developmental family psychology and psychopathology* (pp. 7–35). John Wiley & Sons.
- Donovan, A. (1988). Family stress and ways of coping with adolescents who have handicaps: maternal perceptions. *American Journal of Mental retardation*, 92(6), 250–258.
- Erickson, M., & Upshur, C. (1989). Caretaking burden and social support: comparison of mothers of infants with and without disabilities. *American Journal of Mental retardation*, 94(3), 250–258.
- Fingerman, K. L., & Perlmutter M. (1995). Future time perspective and life events across adulthood *Journal of General Psychology*, 122(1), 95–112.
- Flynt, S., & Wood, T. (1989). Stress and coping of mothers of children with moderate mental retardation. *American Journal of Mental Retardation*, 94(3), 278–283.
- Flynt, S., Scott, R., & Wood, T. (1992). Social support of mothers of children with mental retardation. *Mental Retardation*, 50(4), 233–236.
- Glidden, L. (1993). What we do not know about families with children who have developmental disabilities: Questionnaire on Resources and Stress as a case study. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 97(5), 481–495.
- Glidden, L., & Zetlin, A. (1997). Adolescence and Community Adjustment. In S. Luthar, J. Burack, D. Cicchetti, & J. Weisz (Eds.), *Developmental psychopathology* (pp. 507–527). Cambridge: University Press.
- Kościelska, M. (2004). *Niechciana seksualność. O ludzkich potrzebach osób niepełnosprawnych intelektualnie* [Unwanted sexuality. About human needs of intellectually disabled]. Warszawa: Santorski & Co
- Keough, K. A., Boyd, J., N., & Zimbardo, P. G. (1999). Who's smoking, drinking and using drugs. Time perspective as a predictor of substance use. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 21(2), 149–164.
- Lens, W., & Moreas, M. A. (1994). Future time perspective: An individual and a societal approach. In Z. Zaleski (Ed.), *Psychology of future orientation* (pp. 23–38). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL.
- Liberska, H. (2004). *Perspektywy temporalne młodzieży. Wybrane uwarunkowania*. [Youth's temporal perspectives. Selected background] Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Łukaszeński, W. (1983). Orientacja temporalna jako jeden z aspektów osobowości. [Temporal orientation as an aspect of personality]. In W. Łukaszeński (Ed.), *Osobowość – orientacja temporalna – ustosunkowanie do zmian*. [Personality - temporal orientation – attitude towards changes] (pp. 5–39). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.



- McConkey, R., & Smyth, M. (2003). Parental perception of risks with older teenagers who have severe learning difficulties contrasted with the young people's views and experiences. *Children and Society*, 17(1), 18–32.
- McCubbin, H., & Figley, C. (1983). *Stress and the family. Coping with normative transitions*. Bristol: Routledge.
- Minnes, P. (1997). Mental retardation: the impact upon the family. In J. Burack, R. Hodapp, & E. Zigler (Eds.), *Handbook of mental retardation and development* (pp. 693–712). Cambridge: University Press.
- Nosal, C., & Bajcar, B. (1999). Czas w umyśle stratega. Perspektywa temporalna a wskaźniki zachowań strategicznych [Time in a strategist's mind. Temporal perspective and indicators of strategic behaviours]. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne*, 5, 55–68
- Nosal, C., & Bajcar B. (2004). *Czas psychologiczny: wymiary, struktura, konsekwencje* [Psychological time: the dimensions, structure and consequences.] Warszawa: PAN
- Nurmi, J-E. (1994). The development of future-orientation in a life-span context. In Z. Zaleski (Ed.), *Psychology of future orientation* (pp. 63–74). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL.
- Nuttin, J. (1984). *Motivation, planning, and action: A relational theory of behaviour dynamics*. Leuven & Hillsdale, NJ: Leuven University Press & Erlbaum.
- Nuttin, J. (1985). *Future time perspective and motivation*. Leuven University Press-Erlbaum, Leuven-Hillsdale.
- Obuchowska, I. (1999). Dzieci upośledzone umysłowo w stopniu lekkim [Children with mild intellectual disability] In I. Obuchowska (Ed.) *Dziecko niepełnosprawne w rodzinie* [A disabled child in a family] (pp. 212–251). Warszawa: WSiP.
- Orr, R. Cameron, S., & Day, D. (1991). Coping with stress in families with children who have mental retardation: an evaluation of the Double ABCX Model. *American Journal of Mental Retardation*, 95(4), 444–450.
- Oyanadel C., & Buela-Casal G. (2010). The perception of time: Influences on physical and mental health. *Universitas Psychologica*, 10(1), 149–161.
- Paczkowski, E., & Baker, B. (2007). Parenting children with and without developmental delay: The Role of Self-Mastery. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 51, 435–446.
- Perske, R. (1972). The dignity of risk. In W. Wolfensberger (Ed.), *Normalization: The principle of normalization in human services* (pp. 194–200). Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation
- Pilecka, W., & Pilecki, J. (1996). Warunki i wyznaczniki rozwoju autonomii dziecka upośledzonego umysłowo [The conditions and indicators of autonomy development of an intellectually disabled child]. In W. Dykcik, (Ed.), *Spółeczeństwo wobec autonomii osób niepełnosprawnych* [Society towards the autonomy of intellectually disabled] (pp. 31–48). Poznań: ERUDITUS.
- Prestley, M. (2003). *Disability: Life course approach*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing.

- Seligman, M., & Darling, R. (2007). *Ordinary families, special children. A systems approach to childhood disability*. New York: The Guilford Press
- Sircova, A., Boyd, J., Davydova, I. S., Fieulaine, N. Mitina, O.V., Nepryaho, T. L., Nikitina, E.A., Semyonova, N. S., Yasnaya, V. A., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2007). The phenomenon of time perspective across different cultures: Review of researches using ZTPI Scale *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 4, 19-31.
- Sidor, B. (2001). Trudności przeżywane przez rodzinę dziecka z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną [Difficulties in a family with an intellectually child]. In D. Kornas-Biela (Ed.), *Rodzina: źródło życia i szkoła miłość* [Family: a source of life and training in love] (pp. 393–405). Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Timoszyk-Tomczak C., & Bugajska B. (2012). *Przyszłościowa perspektywa czasowa w starości* [ The future time perspective in old age.] Szczecin: US
- Trempała, J., & Malmberg, L.E. (1998). The anticipated transition to adulthood: effects of culture and individual experience on Polish and Finnish adolescents' future orientations. *Journal of Psychology*, 132(3), 255–266.
- Trempała, J. (2000), *Modele rozwoju psychicznego: czas i zmiana* [Modes of mental development: time and change]. Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Akademii Bydgoskiej.
- Twardowski, A. (1999). Sytuacja rodzin dzieci niepełnosprawnych [The condition of a family with disabled children]. In I. Obuchowska (Ed.), *Dziecko niepełnosprawne w rodzinie* [A disabled child in a family] (pp. 18–54). Warszawa: WSiP.
- Uchnast, Z. (2006), Temporal competencies-concepts and the method of measurement. In Z. Uchnast (Ed.), *Psychology of time. Theoretical and Empirical Approaches* (pp. 143–162. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Zaleski, Z. (1988). Transpersonalne „Ja”: osobowość w trzech wymiarach czasowych. [Transparent Self: personality on three temporal dimensions]. *Przegląd Psychologiczny*, 31, 931–945.
- Zaleski, Z. (1989). Lęk przed przyszłością. Ramy teoretyczne i wstępne dane empiryczne [Fear of future. Theoretical frames and preliminary empirical data]. In. A. Januszewski, Z. Uchnast, & T. Witkowski (Eds.), *Wykłady z psychologii w KUL w roku akademickim 1987/88* [Lectures on psychology in KUL in 1987/88] (pp. 221–236). Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL.
- Zaleski, Z. (1994). *Psychology of future orientation*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Zimbardo, P. G. (1990). *Strategies for Coping with Social Traps: Time Perspectives Influences*. Paper presented at the 98th Annual Convention of American Psychological Association, Boston, August.

## CHAPTER 8

---

# Mid-Life Transition in Men and Women – Different Ways of Psychological Functioning in Middle Age

*Elżbieta Kluska and Piotr Łabuz*

Numerous research into mid-life transition show that there are different ways of going through this transition period in life and that it affects both men and women (Fiske & Chiriboga, 1990; Livson, 1981; O'Connor & Wolfe, 1991; Oleś, 1995; Tamir, 1989). It is interesting though whether there exists universal ways of experiencing mid-life transition same for men and women or whether there are specific aspects differentiating male and female mid-life experiences. The purpose of the article is to show differences between male and female psychological functioning in midlife and to attempt to answer the question how sex impacts going through mid-life transition.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF MID-LIFE TRANSITION IN MEN AND WOMEN

Idiographic research show that the way people experience mid-life changes is to the great extent individualized however it has certain universal aspects (O'Connor & Wolfe, 1991). According to some researchers these aspects are similar for both men and women (Levinson, 1986; Levinson & Gooden, 1985), for others mid-life transition is sex specific (Gutmann, 1976; Tamir, 1982, 1989) and the rest points out similarities and differences (Hunter & Sundel, 1989; O'Connor & Wolfe, 1991). Therefore one may observe that in mid-life research there are some controversies regarding sex.

Mid-life transition is categorized as developmental crisis and happens usually at age 35 to 45 (Kroger & Haslett, 1991; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Sherman, 1987; Tamir, 1982). The impact of mid-life change touches every area of a person's life – family, professional, personal, physical, emotional and spiritual – and affects person's perception and interpretation of the world, goals, tasks, roles and search for the meaning in life. Therefore, the mid-life transition may lead to changes in lifestyle, taking care of theretofore neglected needs and relationships and making choices that redirect career paths or personal life (Oleś, 2000, 2011).

The literature of the subject features certain sex specific aspects. The first is related to emotional changes that in case of men and women have opposing directions. Female emotionality usually moves toward features recognized as typically "male", i.e. firmness, self-confidence, autonomy. On the other hand, male emotionality more often veers toward typically "female" features, such as care, tenderness, emotional closeness or empathy (Miluska, 1996; Oleś & Baranowska, 2003). The second involves doing mid-life inventory, assessing wins and losses, looking back at seized and missed opportunities and asking oneself whether the "life's dream" (a representation about one's life shaped in early adulthood) has been fulfilled. Life's dream, a reference point for life inventory, has a different character in men and women. For women, important aspects are personal and family happiness and professional achievements (Levinson, 1996). Men's life's dream is mostly related to personal achievements and self-actualization. Hence, in taking the inventory men are more focused on professional successes and failures than on emotional bonds or relationships (Oleś & Kowalczyk, 2004). Another sex specific aspect is the approach to first signs of old age at the onset of midlife (gray hair, wrinkles, fading beauty, less energy). Usually, women get more anxious than men for whom mature age may be to their advantage (Banister, 1999; Roberts & Newton, 1987). Yet another aspect deserves attention: biological and emotional. Having reached forty years of age women start perceiving early menopausal symptoms. It causes both somatic and emotional changes. Therefore women tend to experience higher levels of anxiety, emotional tension, fear, fatigue, mood swings and lowered self-esteem that may affect their day-to-day functioning and interpersonal relations (Banister, 1999; Borowska-Tokarska, 1998).

A key issue researched recently is the sex difference in the structure of mid-life transition. Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) were among the first ones to present the structure of the male mid-life transition as a two dimensional model: Satisfaction versus Dissatisfaction and Open Confrontation versus Denial. On the basis of the abovementioned dimensions they arrived at four paths of

development: Transcendent-Generative, Anti-Hero, Pseudo-Development and Punitive-Disenchanted. The results of the research conducted by Oleś (1995, 2003) on a group of both men and women allowed for a comparison between sexes and showed significant differences. Three dimensions of mid-life transition were established for men: Aggravation of Crisis, Psychological Maturity, Acceptance of Fate And Death (Oleś, 1995) and five for women: Life Inventory, Maturity, Awareness of Negative Changes, Depression and a Feeling of Self-actualization (Oleś & Baranowska, 2003). Dimensions led to profiles describing different approaches to mid-life transition. Using his three factor structure Oleś (1995) defined five types of experiencing mid-life transition: Adapted, Crisis Prone, Eternal Boy, Wise Man, Mature. The five factor structure for women was used by Żońnierkiewicz (2006) to define four types of experiencing mid-life transition by women: Adapted, Effective, Crisis prone A, Crisis prone B. However the research on male and female group was done using two separate methods with different amounts of statements differing in content. The male group answered *Mid-life Crisis Questionnaire; version for men* that has 76 statements including 19 male specific. The female group took *Mid-life Crisis Questionnaire; version for women* that has 68 statements including 11 female specific. Additionally, research on men preceded the one on women by 10 years, so it targeted a different cohort. These factors might have caused the revealed differences both in the structure and type of transition between men and women.

Having in mind the abovementioned drawbacks a new method unified for both sexes was created to once again test the structure of mid-life transition in men and women. It is called *Mid-Life Transition Questionnaire* (Kluska, Łabuz, Mrugalska, & Oleś, 2013). The research produced a four factor structure universal for men and women consisting of the following dimensions: Feeling of Self-actualization, Aggravation of Crisis, Need for Change and Life Inventory. The results in every dimension allow to create profiles that describe ways of psychological functioning of middle aged people. Achieving a high score in different dimensions indicates high concentration of a given mid-life transition aspect.

It is interesting therefore whether profiles obtained by men and women are different and whether they reveal different types of sex specific ways of experiencing mid-life transition. The following research question was posed: What are the ways of experiencing mid-life transition by men and women? It is an explorative question because its purpose is to group people with similar results in particular dimensions (similar profile) and differentiating them from other groups, whose profiles are significantly distinct. It was explored what profiles show up and whether differences between groups are sex related.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The research involved 335 people, 163 women (48.7%) and 172 men (51.3%) aged 30 to 50 years with secondary and university education. The subjects were chosen by quota sampling (network design) in two organisations (*Dojrzewalnia Róż* and *Facet po 40*) whose members are middle aged people. Participation in the research was voluntary and did not involve any kind of monetary or other type of gratification.

### *Materials*

The research was conducted using an original tool titled *Mid-Life Transition Questionnaire - MLTQ* (Kluska et al., 2013) one version for men and women, which was administered in an electronic format. The MLTQ is designed to measure intensification of essential factors related to going through mid-life transition. It demonstrates satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  from .76 to .94) and stability (test-retest from .77 to .84). It consists of personal data section (pseudonym, age, marital status, education, age), set of instructions about the questionnaire together with a rating scale (5 – *definitely true*, 4 – *true*, 3 – *difficult to rate*, 2 – *not true*, 1 – *definitely not true*) and 60 statements about changes related to midlife. The respondents were asked to rate statements using the rating scale. The questionnaire was administered individually and on average took from 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

## RESULTS

In order to discover different forms of psychological functioning of men and women in mid-life transition we used non-hierarchical cluster analysis, *k-means*. The purpose of the analysis was to find subgroups with similar results in four dimensions of the mid-life turn: Feeling of Self-actualization, Aggravation of Crisis, Need for Change and Life Inventory. It was done separately for the male and female group to be compared. A solution with three large clusters for women and four clusters for men was chosen (Drawing 1). The following are the three clusters in the female group:

Cluster I. The largest group, including 43.80% of the subjects (71 people), characterized by average scores on three scales: Feeling of Self-actualization, Aggravation of Crisis, Life Inventory and a heightened score on the scale Need for Change. This cluster was named *Balanced Developmental* (BD).

Cluster II. Including 40.70% of female respondents (66 people). It has a visible heightened score on the scale Feeling of Self-actualization, an average score on Need for Change and visibly lowered scores on Aggravation of Crisis and Life Inventory. Named *Mature Developmental* (MD).

Cluster III. The smallest group, including 15.50% of the research sample (25 people). Visibly lowered score on the scale Feeling of Self-actualization and visibly heightened scores on the remaining three scales: Aggravation of Crisis, Life Inventory, Need for Change. The cluster was named *Crisis* (C).

In order to check the statistical significance of differences between identified clusters with respect to four MLTQ factor variables a MANOVA variance analysis was carried out. The result was statistically significant differences between all groups with respect to intensification of individual dimensions of mid-life turn ( $p < .001$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Hochberg test revealed statistically significant differences between individual groups ( $p < .05$ ). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Comparison of three female clusters with respect to scores on four MLTQ subscales: Feeling of Self-actualization (SA), Aggravation of Crisis (AC), Need for Change (NC) and Life Inventory (LI): MANOVA variance analysis and post hoc Hochberg's test*

MLTQ scales	Mean and standard deviation for female types				Difference significance	
		Cluster I (BD) (N = 71)	Cluster II (MD) (N = 66)	Cluster III (C) (N = 25)	F	Groups
SA	M	3.17	4.04	2.41	138.89**	BD - C* BD - MD* C - MD*
	SD	0.48	0.39	0.43		
AC	M	2.79	2.11	3.64	113.82**	BD - C* BD - MD* C - MD*
	SD	0.43	0.44	0.47		
NC	M	3.79	3.42	3.72	8.8**	BD - C BD - MD* C - MD
	SD	0.47	0.55	0.56		
LI	M	3.03	2.27	3.49	104.59**	BD - C* BD - MD* C - MD*
	SD	0.37	0.40	0.48		

\*\* F significant at  $p < .001$  (df = 2, 161)

\* Significance at  $p < .05$  in reference to differences between groups labeled BD, C, MD

And here are four clusters for the male group:

Cluster I. Group including 29.60% of subjects (51 people) with average scores on all four scales: Feeling of Self-actualization, Aggravation of Crisis, Life Inventory and Need for Change. Named *Balanced* (B).

Cluster II. Group including 26.20% of subjects (45 people). It is characterized by visibly heightened scores on the scales: Feeling of Self-actualization and Need for Change, visibly lowered score on the Aggravation of Crisis and an average score on Life Inventory. The cluster is referred to as *Developmental* (D).

Cluster III. Group including 26.10% of researched men (42 people). It is characterized by a slightly lowered score on the scale Feeling of Self-actualization and visibly heightened scores on the remaining three scales: Aggravation of Crisis, Need for Change and Life Inventory. It is called *Crisis* (C).

Cluster IV. The smallest group including 19.80% men (34 people) is characterized by visibly heightened score on the scale Feeling of self-actualization and visibly lowered score on the Aggravation of Crisis, an average score on Need for Change and a slightly lowered score on Life Inventory. Named *Mature* (M).

MANOVA variance analysis showed statistically significant differences between all groups with respect to intensification of individual mid-life turn dimensions ( $p < .001$ ). Post hoc comparisons using the Hochberg test revealed statistically significant differences between individual groups ( $p < .05$ ). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of four male clusters with respect to scores on four MLTQ subscales: Feeling of Self-actualization (SA), Aggravation of Crisis (AC), Need for Change (NC) and Life Inventory (LI): MANOVA variance analysis and post hoc Hochberg's test

MLTQ Scale		Mean and standard deviations for male types				Difference significance	Groups
		Cluster I (B) (N = 51)	Cluster II (D) (N = 45)	Cluster III (C) (N = 42)	Cluster IV (M) (N = 34)		
SA	M	3.21	3.71	2.87	3.85	34.54**	D – C – C* M*
	SD	0.50	0.37	0.54	0.54		D – C – M B D – M – B* B*



MLTQ Scale		Mean and standard deviations for male types				Difference significance	
		Cluster I (B) (N = 51)	Cluster II (D) (N = 45)	Cluster III (C) (N = 42)	Cluster IV (M) (N = 34)	F	Groups
AC	M	2.97	2.37	3.16	1.96	101.46**	D - C - C* M*
	SD	0.35	0.49	0.50	0.42		D - C - M* B* D - M - B* B*
NC	M	3.24	3.87	3.81	2.92	43.00**	D - C - C M*
	SD	0.39	0.42	0.44	0.39		D - C - M* B* D - M - B* B
LI	M	3.26	3.34	3.70	2.64	52.74**	D - C - C* M*
	SD	0.38	0.35	0.32	0.38		D - C - M* B* D - M - B B*

\*\* F significant at  $p < .001$  (df = 3,171)

\* Significance at  $p < .05$  in reference to differences between groups labeled D, C, M, B

### CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF EXPERIENCING MID-LIFE TRANSITION

Several different ways of experiencing mid-life transition were determined. Preliminary analysis revealed that three types obtained for men and women have a similar distinctive configuration of high and low scores on MLTQ scales. Each of the determined ways of experiencing mid-life transition was characterised and male and female types of similar profile significantly distinct from other were paired up. Profile characteristics and descriptions of psychological personas of a typical representative of each group are given below.

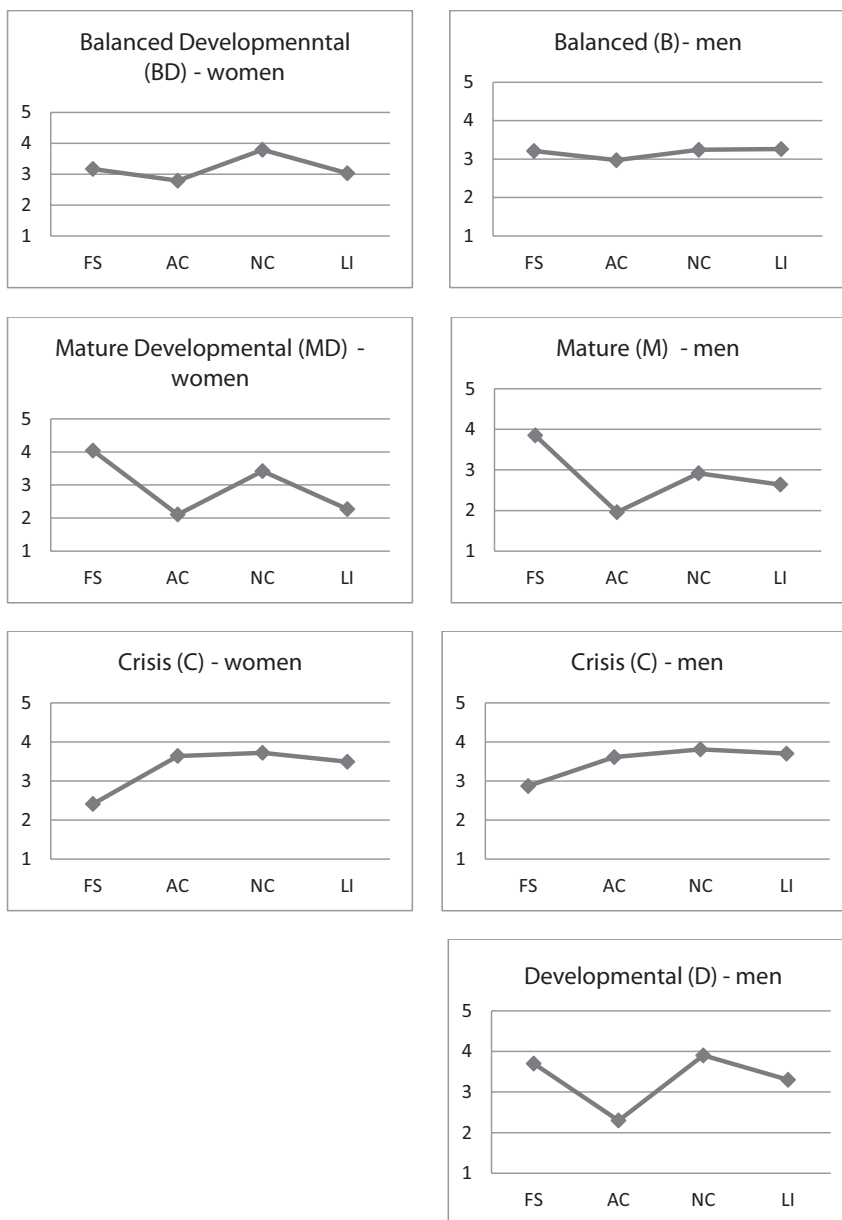


Figure 1  
 Charts presenting three types of mid-life turn experienced by women and four types experienced by men

*Types: balanced and balanced-developmental*

The first group belongs to the *Balanced* path and includes 43.8% of women and 29.6% of men. The results of the analysis presented in Table 3 confirm that male and female profiles differ and that the women group has a significantly heightened score on the scale Need for Change. The remaining dimensions are concentrated around mean of the distribution and do not differ between profiles.

Table 3

*Differences in intensification of individual factors of MLTQ between female Balanced Developmental profile and male Balanced profile*

Skala MLTQ		Mean and deviations		Difference significance, done post hoc using Hochberg's test	
		BD - women N = 71	B - men N = 51	Difference in mean value	Significance
SA	M	3.17	3.21	-0.04	$p > .05$
	SD	0.48	0.50		
AC	M	2.79	2.97	-0.18	$p > .05$
	SD	0.43	0.35		
NC	M	3.79	3.24	0.55*	$p < .05$
	SD	0.47	0.39		
LI	M	3.03	3.26	-0.22	$p > .05$
	SD	0.37	0.38		

A typical representative of the group experiencing mid-life transition in a *Balanced* way is rather not inclined to make radical changes in life and should not experience mid-life crisis. They see their life as mediocre. In this profile, differences between sexes are in the area of a heightened need for change in case of women. Women have a greater need than men to make changes in life. Maybe they would like to start achieving their own goals and pursue their own plans and become more independent. It might be the result of their greater involvement in child rearing and family care in the first part of life and hence smaller chances of self-actualization compared with men.

*Types: mature and mature-developmental*

The *Mature* path group includes 40.70% of the researched women and 19.80% of men. The results of the analysis presented in Table 4 confirm that male and female profiles differ and that the women group has a significantly heightened

score on the scale Need for Change and a lowered score on the scale Life Inventory. The remaining two dimensions do not differ between profiles.

Table 4

*Differences in intensification of individual factors of MLTQ between female Mature-Developmental profile and male Mature profile*

MLTQ Scale		Mean and deviations		Difference significance, done post hoc using Hochberg's test	
		MD - women N = 66	M - men N = 34	Difference in mean value	Significance
SA	M	4.04	3.85	0.18	$p > .05$
	SD	0.39	0.54		
AC	M	2.11	1.96	0.14	$p > .05$
	SD	0.44	0.42		
NC	M	3.42	2.92	0.49*	$p < .05$
	SD	0.55	0.39		
LI	M	2.27	2.64	-0.37*	$p < .05$
	SD	0.40	0.38		

People experiencing transition in a *Mature* way enter the new phase in life very naturally. A typical representative of this path has a very high Feeling of Self-actualization. They are fulfilled, have a sense of meaning in life and feel that they have pursued their desires. They do not fear old age and its symptoms, but rather treat it as something natural that may bring new experiences, possibilities and life goals. There is congruence between who they are and their age and they do not think that age limits them in any way. They are future, not past, oriented and think about what still might happen to them rather than delve upon once taken decisions. A *Mature* type man will not be prone to make radical changes in life, but will rather be inclined to take reasonable and prudent decisions supporting the status quo of a satisfactory life. In case of women there might be desire for development and openness to changes resulting from a willingness to start a new phase in life, not from a negative assessment of to-date functioning.

### *Crisis type*

The third cluster is a group belonging to *Crisis* path including 15.50% of women and 26.10% of men. The results of the analysis presented in Table 5 confirm that male and female profiles differ and that the women group has a significantly lowered score on the Feeling of Self-actualization scale. The remaining

dimensions of the mid-life turn concentrate significantly above mean and do not differ between profiles.

Table 5

*Differences in intensification of individual factors of MLTQ between female Crisis profile and male Crisis profile*

MLTQ Scale		Mean and deviations		Difference significance, done post hoc using Hochberg's test	
		C - women N = 25	C - men N = 42	Mean difference	Significance
SA	M	2.41	2.87	-0.46*	$p < .05$
	SD	0.43	0.54		
AC	M	3.64	3.61	0.03	$p > .05$
	SD	0.47	0.50		
NC	M	3.72	3.81	-0.09	$p > .05$
	SD	0.56	0.44		
LI	M	3.49	3.70	-0.21	$p > .05$
	SD	0.48	0.32		

People experiencing the mid-life transition in a crisis like way grapple with changes related to older age: changing physiology, visible ageing symptoms, lowered endurance and fitness, lack of energy, etc. At the same time, they fear these changes and therefore might dream about stopping time and remaining “eternally young”. They do not feel that they are reaching their potential and they do not feel fulfilled. They tend to believe it is all due to past mistakes and missed opportunities. They have a great need to make some changes in life, probably because they feel it is their last chance to do that (“now or never” phenomenon). *Crisis* type people either see their life in a negative light (women) or think that it is mediocre (men) and fear that they will not have enough time to make changes that would improve it. Such approach may generate negative emotions, fears and disorientation that only deepen the crisis.

#### *Developmental type*

The fourth group representing a *Developmental* style of experiencing mid-life transition was distinguished only in the male group (26.20%). It has visibly heightened scores on the following scales: Feeling of Self-actualization and Need for Change, visibly lowered score on the Aggravation of Crisis and an average score on Life Inventory (see Drawing 1).

The men going through the mid-life turn in a *Developmental* way feels rather fulfilled in his life. At the same time, he is interested in constant development and he is ready for changes. He has made many plans and set many goals for future. This type is highly motivated to reach higher and be active. He does not perceive passing time as a limitation. Quite to the contrary, he tries to seize all available opportunities. There is acceptance of a natural change process related to ageing. He has a tendency to reflect upon his life and to analyze past decisions and their consequences. This is his foundation for taking decisions for the future and making courageous life changes.

## DISCUSSION

The obtained results illustrate that going through and experiencing mid-life transition in middle age might take three main paths similar for men and women: *Balanced*, *Crisis*, *Mature*. In these paths, there are certain intersexual differences showing that women in the *Mature* and *Balanced* path are more prone to making changes in their life than men. An increased need for change might result from their changing emotionality and veering toward “typically male” emotions (Miluska, 1996; Oleś & Baranowska, 2003), what might give rise to greater need for independence, self-determination or individuality. Intersexual difference was also found with respect to life inventory in the *Mature* path. In this case Life Inventory turned out to be higher in men than in women. This means that men are more critical towards their achievements and decisions than women. This finding is consistent with data showing that women take the inventory in two areas: private and professional and hence have a greater chance for the inventory to be positive. It is enough that inventory is positive in one of the areas to compensate for a possible negative inventory in the other. Taking the inventory men take into consideration only their professional life and hence have a greater risk of negative inventory – lack of successes in professional life cannot be in any way compensated (Levinson, 1996; Oleś & Kowalczyk, 2004).

An interesting result is the fourth *Developmental* path that emerged only for the male group. The composition of its profile leads to supposition that a person experiencing the transition in this way is willing to make huge, spectacular changes at midlife. For one thing, they are satisfied with how they function at present, for another, they have strong need to bring about some shifts. The path exists only for men probably because they more often than women are prone to huge life-altering shifts. Surely, women also tend to make such changes but perhaps make them less spectacularly. The profile analysis reveals that in the

case of women changes are a part of the remaining profiles, since in every cluster the Need for Change in the female group is above average and in two paths, *Balanced* and *Developmental*, it is significantly higher than in the male group.

It is also worth mentioning that although types of mid-life transition discovered by other researchers (Farrell & Rosenberg, 1981; Oleś, 1995; Żołnierkiewicz, 2006) differ (mainly due to taking into consideration different dimensions of themed-life turn) they also fall into main four categories presented in this paper. The *Crisis* path will include Anti-Hero, Pseudo-Developed, Punitive-Disenchanted (Farrell & Rosenberg, 1981); Crisis Prone and Eternal Boys (Oleś, 1995); Crisis Prone A and Crisis Prone B (Żołnierkiewicz, 2006) and *Crisis* revealed here. The *Mature* path will include Transcendent-Generative (Farrell and Rosenberg, 1981); Mature, Wise Men (Oleś, 1995) and *Mature* and *Mature-Developmental* disclosed here. The *Developmental* path incorporates the following types: Effective (Żołnierkiewicz, 2006) Developmental described here and the *Balance* path: Adapted – male group (Oleś, 1995), Adapted – female group (Żołnierkiewicz, 2006) and *Balanced* revealed here.

The above comparison lists four main types of mid-life transition: Crisis, Mature, Developmental and Balanced within which appear certain differences arising from individual and sex related differences. Therefore the questions arise: What causes people to experience the transition in a specific way? Are there determining factors? If yes, is it possible to impact and alter them? On what stage should intervention supporting a person in adaptive dealing with the transition take place? Is it possible to finally experience the turn in a developmental or mature way even if a person goes through mid-life crisis? These are some of the questions that require further research. Nonetheless, it is worth remembering that although a person may fall into one of the categories they still experience the turn in a very individualized way. Hence, every intervention requires a very personal approach and taking into consideration specific changes a person is going through.

## REFERENCES

- Banister, E. M. (1999). Women's midlife experience of their changing bodies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(4), 520–537. doi:10.1177/104973299129122045
- Borowska-Tokarska, A. (1998). Psychologiczny obraz kobiety w okresie menopauzy [Psychological picture of women in menopause]. *Zdrowie Psychiczne*, 1-2, 120–133.
- Farrell, M. P., & Rosenberg, S. D. (1981). *Men at midlife*. Boston: Auburn House.

- Fiske, M., & Chiriboga, D. A. (1990). *Change and continuity in adult life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gutmann, D. (1976). Individual adaptation in the middle years: Developmental issues in the masculine mid-life crisis. *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 9(1), 41–59.
- Hunter, S., & Sundel, M. (1989). *Midlife myths: issues, findings, and practice implications*. Sage Publications.
- Kluska, E., Łabuz, P. M., Mrugalska, A., & Oleś, P. (2013). Kwestionariusz Przełomu Połowy Życia – konstrukcja i charakterystyka psychometryczna [Mid-Life Transition Questionnaire (MTQ) – psychometric construction and characteristics]. Unpublished data raw.
- Kroger, J., & Haslett, S. J. (1991). A comparison of ego identity status transition pathways and change rates across five identity domains. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 32(4), 303–30.
- Levinson, D. J. (1986). A conception of adult development. *American Psychologist*, 41, 3-13.
- Levinson, D. J. (1996). *The seasons of a woman's life*. New York: Knopf.
- Levinson, D. J., Darrow, C., Klein, E., Levinson, M., & McKee, B. (1978). *The seasons of men's life*. New York: Knopf.
- Levinson, D. J., & Gooden, W. E. (1985). The life cycle. In H. I. Kaplan & B. J. Sadock (Eds.), *Comprehensive textbook of psychiatry* (pp. 1–13). Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins.
- Livson, F. B. (1981). Paths to psychological health in the middle years: Sex differences. In J. A. Clausen, N. Haan, M. P. Honzik, & P. B. Mussen (Eds.), *Present and past in middle life* (pp. 195–221). New York: Academic Press.
- Miluska, J. (1996). *Tożsamość kobiet i mężczyzn w cyklu życia* [Identity of men and women in life cycle]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- O'Connor, D., & Wolfe, D. M. (1991). From crisis to growth at midlife: Changes in personal paradigm. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 12(4), 323–340. doi:10.1002/job.4030120407
- Oleś, P. (1995). *Kryzys „Połowy życia” u mężczyzn: Psychologiczne badania empiryczne* [Mid-life crisis in men: Psychological empirical research]. Lublin: RW KUL.
- Oleś, P. (2000). *Psychologia przełomu połowy życia* [Psychology of midl-life transition]. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Oleś, P. (2011). *Psychologia człowieka dorosłego* [Adult psychology]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Oleś, P., & Baranowska, M. (2003). Przełom połowy życia u kobiet [Mid-life transition in women]. In J. Meder (Ed.), *Problemy zdrowia psychicznego kobiet* [Mental health problems of women] (pp. 151–160). Warszawa: Komitet Redakcyjno-Wydawniczy Polskiego Towarzystwa Psychiatrycznego.



- Oleś, P., & Kowalczyk, M. (2004). Przełom „połowy życia” u kobiet i mężczyzn: implikacje dla wieku średniego i starszego [Mid-life transition in men and women: implications for midlife and older]. *Lęk i Depresja*, 9, 57–68.
- Roberts, P., & Newton, P. M. (1987). Levinsonian studies of women's adult development. *Psychology and Aging*, 2(2), 154–163. doi:10.1037/0882-7974.2.2.154
- Sherman, E. (1987). *Meaning in mid-life transitions*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Tamir, L. M. (1982). *Men in their forties: The transition to middle age*. New York: Springer.
- Tamir, L. M. (1989). Modern myths about men in midlife: An assessment. In S. Hunter & M. Sundel (Eds.), *Midlife myths: Issues, findings, and practical implications* (pp. 157–179). Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Żołnierkiewicz, B. (2006). *Retrospektywna analiza zmian osobowości w okresie połowy życia u kobiet* [A retrospective analysis of personality changes during mid-life in women]. Unpublished MA thesis. Warszawa: SWPS.



## AUTHORS' NOTES

---

**KATARZYNA ADAMCZYK** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development Psychology and Family Studies at the Institute of Psychology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. Her Ph.D. thesis focused on psychological factors associated with singlehood in young adulthood. She has published several papers in the field of singlehood, including the book *Selected psychological circumstances of singlehood in young adulthood*, and articles, such as *Perceived social support and mental health among single vs. partnered Polish young adults* (with Chris Segrin), and *Why does not Polish psychology like the term 'single'?*. Her current primary areas of interest include subjective well-being, and mental and physical health of single young adults. She is currently carrying out a research project financed by the Polish National Science Centre which concerns attitudes towards marriage, love and sex among single and partnered young adults. Katarzyna Adamczyk is also the author of the Polish adaptation of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988), published in 2013 in *International Review of Social Psychology*.

**JAN JĘDRZEJCZYK** graduated from University of Warsaw with MA degree in Psychology. His master thesis focused on quality of life, negative emotions, emotion regulation and cardiac symptoms among patients with cardiac pacing. His main research areas are psychopathology (he has published article about link between bipolar disorder and creativity in *Nowiny Psychologiczne*), effectiveness of psychotherapy and emotion regulation. He has experience in research projects on psychotherapy, addiction and psychological functioning among patients with heart disease. He runs his own business which focuses on coaching and soft skills training. He is also psychotherapist in training and research coordinator in PRIZM Coaching Association.

**ELŻBIETA KLUSKA** – graduate of the Psychology Faculty at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, at present attending Interdisciplinary Doctor Studies in Psychology Faculty at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw (SWPS). Her doctor research project concentrates on positive aspects of mid-life turn and conditions of personality development in middle age. Coauthor of the Mid-Life Transition Questionnaire (MLTQ), one version for men and women. Holder of the Polish Psychologists' Association' (PPA) scholarship in London, where she was a part of a research-implementation

program City i Ty, the result of which are, among other things, a scientific article and a development program for women.

**MARTA KUCHARSKA** - Psychologist, Psychosocial Skills Trainer and Assistant at the University of Lodz in Institute of the Psychology Department in the field of Social Psychology and Family Research. She finished Coach Training School KRT and completed her psychology internship at the York University in the Department of Health. She collaborates with Research Institute - Polish Mother's Memorial Hospital, where she delivers intensive consultations for women who are suffering of high-risk pregnancies. She currently works for Urban Public Health Center, cooperates with NGOs and Cortus Centrum. She regularly provides workshops, seminars on conscious parenting, addiction prevention, social skills development and healthy lifestyle for children, youth and adults.

**PIOTR ŁABUZ**, graduate of the Psychology Faculty at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw (SWPS), at present attending Interdisciplinary Doctor Studies at SWPS in the Psychology Faculty. His research interests focus on mid-life transition, psychology of happiness and effective goal achievement. Coauthor of Mid-Life Transition Questionnaire (MLTQ) one version for men and women.

**JOANNA MATUSZCZAK-ŚWIGOŃ** is a psychologist, graduate from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. She works at an oncology and hematology unit and a daily psychiatric ward. She has published a few articles in the field of motherhood, such as *Mother's narrative about a child in a prenatal period*, *Prenatal university*, and *Building maternal identity*. Her current primary areas of interest include psychological aspects of motherhood after the experience of cancer and quality of life during and after cancer treatment.

**ELŻBIETA PIĘNKOWSKA** – Ph.D., Institute of Psychology, Department of Developmental Psychology of Szczecin University; Her main scientific interests are focused mainly on the sexuality of young people with intellectual disability, especially on verifying environmental variables that influence and support the sexual development of intellectual disabled individuals; She runs educational workshops for parents and their disabled offspring on sexual developments and sexual expression during an individual lifespan.

**MAŁGORZATA RĘKOSIEWICZ**, MA, is a PhD student at Doctoral Studies in the Institute of Psychology at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. Her PhD thesis focuses on identity development among individuals with intellectual disability in the period of late adolescence and emerging adulthood. The three-year-long study is realized within the framework of a grant financed by the Polish National Science Centre. Małgorzata Rękosiewicz is an author of a monograph *Path to adulthood. Identity of people with intellectual disability* and scientific papers on identity formation and transition to adulthood. Within the scope of her current scientific interest there are: psychology of intellectual disability, psychology of education – particularly integrative education, and developmental psychology – identity development and transition to adulthood, in particular.

**MAGDALENA SZAWARSKA** is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Psychology at Warsaw University. Her primary areas of interests include topics from the field of economic psychology, such as individual differences in attitudes towards money and concentration on its possession. She also carries out research dedicated to materialism, consumer behaviour and well-being. She is a member of Academic Association of Economic Psychologists and a member of Association for Consumer Research.

**CELINA TIMOSZYK-TOMCZAK** – Ph.D., Institute of Psychology, Department of General Psychology of Szczecin University; Author: *The Strategies of Constructing Individual Future Perspective* (2003, Szczecin, US); Co-Author: *The future Time Perspective in Old Age* (2012, Szczecin, US, with B. Bugajska); Her main scientific interests are focused on psychology of emotion and motivation and temporal psychology; She conducts the research on strategies of constructing individual future perspective and their conditions and on modifications of temporal perspective in various situations and developmental periods.

**KATARZYNA WAŁĘCKA-MATYJA** holds a PhD degree in psychology. Since 2001 she has been working at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Lodz, first as an assistant, and since 2008 as a lecturer in the Department of Social and Family Studies. She has extensive experience of research and teaching. PhD. K. Wałęcka-Matyja's research interests cover two main areas, family psychology and psychological problems concerning functioning of people with disabilities. The scientific achievements of PhD. Katarzyna Wałęcka-Matyja include a monograph *"The family structure and diversity of social behavior and personality of young people"* and 55 articles in journals and scientific monographs. The most important ones: *The personality and self-acceptance of young people from complete families, incomplete families and reconstructed families* (2014), *Indywidualizm adolescenta a system wspólnoty rodzinnej w perspektywie psychologicznej* (2013), *Psychologiczne profile radzenia sobie ze stresem przez matki młodzieży z niepełnosprawnością a poczucie własnej skuteczności* (2013), *The otherness of the modern family and empathy of adolescents* (2011). In the period between 2001 and 2014, PhD. Katarzyna Wałęcka-Matyja has also actively participated in over 30 nationwide and international scientific conferences.

**KATARZYNA WOJTKOWSKA** is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Social Psychology at the Faculty of Psychology, Warsaw University, Poland. Her master thesis focuses on emotional intelligence, emotion regulation strategies, satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors. She continues interest in this subject and in a Ph.D. thesis focuses on psychological and organizational factors associated with organizational and counterproductive work behaviors. The source of such behaviors is seen in the emotions and this aspect is explored. She is coach, soft skills trainer and academic lecturer. She conducts emotion regulation training and psychology of eating seminary. Beyond the scientific activity, she is a CFO in PRIZM Coaching Association and a member of FR Department in Slow Food Youth-Warsaw.

**MONIKA WYSOTA** is a Ph.D. student in the Institute of Psychology in Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Department of Human Development Psychology and Family Studies). Her Ph.D. thesis focused on the family factors associated with transition to adulthood. She is interested in human development in the life cycle, interpersonal communication, family psychology and psychotherapy. In addition she works as a psychotherapist in private psychological office.

**ANNA KATARZYNA ZALESZCZYK** is a Ph.D. Student at the Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw, Poland. Graduate of Psychology at the Catholic University of Lublin. During master's studies was at the semi-annual scholarship at the University in Tromsø in Norway. In the circle of her scientific interests are social psychology, psychopathology, psychology of stress, forensic psychology and criminology, but particularly interested in social exclusion. Her Ph.D. thesis will be focused on social support of the people at risk of social exclusion.



The authors take up the significant issue regarding the changes that take place in the psyche of teenagers entering the phase of adulthood. The topic is raised in the context of developmental tasks and social challenges teenagers need to face. Increasing interest in mental resources, individualization of developmental paths and the ways in which young adults overcome encountered difficulties has inspired numerous theoretical and empirical investigations in the world's literature of the subject. The book *Various aspects of young adults' functioning* is part of this stream of scientific research.

The publication fills the gap in the literature of the subject concerning research on the psychosocial functioning of individuals in the period of young adulthood. High speed of social changes and the related changing conditioning of life and choices of teenagers, long period of being financially dependent resulting from extended education and the high unemployment rate in Poland, as well as delayed – as compared to the previous century – decisions to take on marital and parental roles, and many more different psychosocial phenomena – all these require from researchers a fast, meticulous and methodologically innovative approach to the issues discussed.

The book in question meets all the requirements. The authors approach this socially crucial subject in an innovative and comprehensive way.

**From the review by Elżbieta Rydz, Ph.D.,**  
*Assistant Professor, Chair of Developmental Psychology,*  
*the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin*