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Styles of Humor of Charges and Educators and the Social Climate of Juvenile Correctional Institutions

Abstract: The article includes a presentation of the results of the empirical research, the purpose of which was to diagnose the social climate of correctional institutions for juvenile and the styles of humor presented by educators and charges of these establishments, as well as to determine the relationship between these variables. The questionnaire study (using the Social Climate Scale and Humor Styles Questionnaire) included a group of 162 charges and 52 educators from four Youth Educational Facilities. The study revealed that the social climate of Youth Educational Facilities is most similar to the “welfare-educational” type, and that in the intrapsychological and interpersonal functioning, both the educators’ and the charges’ adaptive styles of humor outweigh the non-adaptive styles. In addition, it was found that charges, through the presented humor styles, seem to have a greater impact on creating the social climate of the facilities they are staying at than their educators. The analysis of the results obtained in the context of the resilience concept encourages to treat humor in terms of a “plane of resistance”, which enables socially maladjusted youth to “bounce back from the bottom”.

Key words: humor, styles of humor, social climate of juvenile correctional institutions.

Introduction

The social climate in the context of the institution is a very broad term and can be used in various aspects. When defining climate in relation to the institution,

often terms are used like: the atmosphere, the mood, set of values, norms and beliefs, subjective picture of phenomena, the personality of the institution, a set of characteristics of the organization or behavior being a function of personality and environment, and finally – “something” which creates favorable conditions for certain attitudes and patterns of behavior (Adrjan 2008, p. 610). According to many authors (Dudzikowa 1996; Grzybowski 2015; Holmes, Marra 2002, p. 1683–1710; Miller 1996, p. 16–21), this “something”, which creates certain conditions and the atmosphere prevailing in the institution is humor, which on the one hand reflects the reality of this place, and on the other hand – shapes this place and brings to it a new quality, because “Shared laughter is a factor for improving the quality of life and the atmosphere in interpersonal relationships in the public and private sphere” (Grzybowski 2015, p. 9).

The theoretical basis of own research

The social climate of correctional institutions from the perspective of theories and selected studies

The correctional institution, regarded as an educational environment, so a specifically connected system of conditions and characteristics qualitatively differentiated and functioning as educational and social rehabilitation institution, defining the course and effects of the correctional process, is characterized in the categories of: functions, social roles, conditions, types of educational impacts, directing measures and structural conditions of the functioning of the institution. Today, it is assumed that social and relational factors have the greatest educational-correctional meaning, which are associated with the mechanisms of transmission of cultural elements, which can conceptually be described in terms of the social climate of the institution (Wysocka 2008, p. 295).

In modern social rehabilitation (correctional) pedagogy, Rudolf H. Moos's definition of the social climate is assumed (1975, 1974/1987, 1994/2003), who describes this variable in psychological terms. Moos treats social climate as a kind of personality institution (organizational personality), the formation process of which is analogous to the development of an individual's personality, i.e. it is the result of the development of a given institution in which a specific catalog of behavior of its members is developed, variously characterized, constituting a complex and structurally diverse phenomenon (dimensions, categories). The social climate is a complex sphere having its own structure, which consists of: interpersonal relationships within the institution (*Relationship Dimension*), personal development of charges of institutions (*Personal Development Dimension*), and the organizational system of institutions (*System Maintenance and System Change dimension*) (Moos 1975, p. 19–25). This phenomenon is simultaneously a process, because in spite

of its relative stability, the participants (charges, educators, other employees of the institution) are in mutual contacts which have an impact on their behavior. For Moss (1975, p. 81–96), this climate is the social atmosphere of the educational/learning environment, which gives this environment a unity and cohesion, despite its participants having different life experiences. Only such an understanding of the climate of an educational, welfare and correctional institution allows everyone to take part in its life, develop mutual contacts, cooperate in achieving objectives, support each other in overcoming difficulties, accept responsibility for the present and the future of the given facility (Skuza, Pierścińska-Maruszewska 2014, p. 95).

Based on the concept of Moos, Lesław Pytka (2008, p. 164) proposed the following, including the essence and function of the phenomenon, the definition of the social climate of the institutional educational environment: “a set of subjectively perceived by charges and educators characteristics, situations and events, which are relatively lasting effects of functioning within the adopted organizational and pedagogical system shaping motivation and behavior of individuals and social groups of the institution”. The essence of the social climate is thus limited to the subjectivity of perception of certain phenomena occurring in the institution (cf. Bratnicki, Wycisłak 1980, p. 93; Adrjan 2008, p. 610) and the durability of some of its elements, while function is illustrated by specific consequences of a specific educational atmosphere appropriate for the correctional institution. This definition allows to understand the social climate as a category analyzed both from the perspective of functioning in a given institutional arrangement (subjective perspective), and from the perspective of the whole system, whose task is to influence the behavior of the individual (objective perspective) (Wysocka 2008, p. 297).

According to J. Semyonov (2009, p. 95–96), the internal climate of the institution can promote the achievement of specific effects of correctional activities undertaken or it may be significant barrier and obstacle for them. This is due to the fact that certain social groups, like people, are more friendly and supportive than others, task-oriented or self-driven. They also differ in the level of stringency and control (Moos 1994/2003, p. 1). For example, a comparative analysis of the results of research conducted in the 1980s in USA, Canada, Yugoslavia and Poland, made it possible to establish that the most favorable – “therapeutic and educational” – climate prevailed in correctional institutions in Canada, Yugoslavian institutions were characterized by a “welfare-educational” climate, American – “controlling-welfare”, and in Polish correction institutions included in the study by Pytka in those years (1980), the most distant from the desired model was found – the “controlling-restrictive” climate (Pytka 2008, p. 170–173). The results of recent studies (Węgliński 2000) show that over 20 years of turbulent political, economic and cultural changes, which took place at the end of the twentieth century in Poland, a favorable evolution took place also in correctional facilities. Andrzej Węgliński’s research demonstrate that the “social climate in dormitory educational

groups has welfare-educational characteristics (Węgliński 2000, p. 219). Although in comparison with the even more favorable climate present in revalidation institutions, in correctional institutions, “there are important impediments in terms of establishing and maintaining, among minors and their educators, especially valuable relationships based on friendship, trust and emotional warmth” (Węgliński 2000, p. 221). Also, the Grzegorz Zalewski’s study (2004) revealed significant differences in the scope of social climate, depending on the type of correctional facility for juveniles. In the perception of charges, the social climate of Youth Social Adaptation Centers, open Correctional Institutions, and Correctional Facilities for girls is considerably more favorable than the climate in more restrictive facilities (closed Correctional Institutions and those with increased supervision) (Zalewski 2004, p. 78–115). Aneta Skuza’s study in 2009 revealed that the dominant social climate in Polish correctional institutions is the “controlling-restrictive” climate, in which, despite apparent attempts to create correct, friendly interpersonal relationships, too much emphasis is placed on compliance with external discipline and statutory rigor, and the elements of the climate are completely neglected, which make up the production of a therapeutic environment of an institutional community (the autonomy of charges and freedom of expression) (Skuza 2012, p. 367).

As it can be seen, the results of previous studies on the social climate in Polish correctional facilities for juveniles are very diverse and internally contradictory, which does not allow the clear identification of the social climate prevailing in these institutions. The differentiation of assessments of the type of social climate of centers for juveniles appearing in the literature may be due to the fact that each surveyed facility has its own unique socio-educational climate, which largely hinders averaging the results and generalizing conclusions in relation to all correctional facilities in the country. It should also be taken into account that the tool to study social climate – the Social Climate Scale of Correctional Institutions according to Moos (1975) in the Polish adaptation of Pytka (cf. Pytka 2008, p. 409–412) gives great freedom in interpreting the results and indicating on their basis the kind of social climate, which can sometimes distort and obscure the diagnostic picture of the studied phenomenon.

However, regardless of some interpretation and methodological difficulties resulting from the broad scope and ambiguity of the notion of the social climate, no doubt – for praxiological reasons – it is necessary in social rehabilitation. The social climate (regardless of its assessment) has a strong impact on people in the environment. Studies have shown that the social climate affects the behavior of any person, their feelings and adaptation (Moos 1994/2003, p. 1). According to Marek Konopczyński, a properly produced social climate around implemented methods can act as a motivator or lower the motivation to take action (Konopczyński 2006, p. 136), as well as shapes the emotional bond that determines the quality of social life in terms of satisfying needs, which largely shapes the quality of interpersonal relationships (Konopczyński 2009, p. 81). Moreover, as Pytka

emphasizes (2008, p. 165–167), the social climate directly affects not only the behavior but the overall personal development of charges, their self-education and self-realization, and thus the effectiveness of the social rehabilitation process and the effectiveness of the educational institution as a whole .

According to Pytka, it should also be noted that the social climate of institutions in return affects the behavior of charges and educators, which means that it is also shaped by these behaviors (Pytka 2008, p. 165–166). The social climate of correctional institutions is determined by several groups of factors: the educational axiology and methodology of educational impact, which have an indirect effect on it (Pytka 2008, p. 165–167), as well as through the formal structure of the facility and attitudes (including mostly actions and behaviors) of people from the nearest social circle (among others, educators and charges), which are among factors directly affecting the social climate of the facility (Pytka 2008, p. 165; Konopczyński 2006, p. 136; Semenov 2009, p. 95–96).

The role of humor in building an educational atmosphere and social climate of the institution

Modern research on humor can be, according to Maria Kmita (2013, p. 162), divided into two main categories: those that treat humor as a useful tool or skill used to achieve different purposes, and those with a more humanistic orientation, which emphasize the importance of humor in building a good mood, atmosphere and interpersonal relationships.

Fun and humor, as components of every institution (all places of work), on the one hand, reflect the reality of that place, and on the other – they shape the place and add to it a new quality. The current, mainly foreign research, shows that laughter, fun and humor in the institution, understood as a place of work, are tools to improve communication, introduce innovation, and increase the rights of employees (Miller 1996). Wanda J. Smith, K. Vernard Harrington and Christopher P. Neck (2000) emphasize the importance of humor in constructive conflict resolution, and John McIlheran (2006) and Janet Holmes and Meredith Marra (2002) show that humor helps to improve the coherence and enhance professional solidarity in the workplace.

Also Polish researchers interested in the functioning of educational and welfare institutions (Dudzikowa 1996; Gaś 2004, Grzybowski 2015; Petlák 2007) highlight that satisfaction, joy, laughter and humor of young people and teachers/educators translates into the climate in the facility.

Humor builds and reinforces the emotional connection between people (Ribner 2005, p. 98; Corey 2005, p. 61–62), and creating a positive atmosphere using humor reduces anxiety levels of pupils and charges (Matusiewicz 1976, Pirecki 2000; Tomczuk-Wasilewska 2009, p. 51–52). A sense of humor also makes it easy to create and nurture lasting emotional bonds – it reduces the distance between

individuals, it generates trust, a sense of understanding, harmony, mutual acceptance and belonging. Weaving in comedy/humor in relations with others increases the frequency and duration of social interaction. It is used to effectively influence the group, unload tensions and eliminate conflicts, and also to effectively manage its members, thereby it strengthens solidarity within the group and strongly consolidates it. Using humor in dealing with others positively correlates also with popularity, social attraction, enjoying a great authority and performing the role of the leader of the group. Moreover, humor clears up communication between individuals, increases their willingness to cooperate and get involved in achieving common goals, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the functioning of the group (McGhee 1994).

The social significance of humor as well as its role in creating both the welfare of the individual and the group atmosphere is highlighted by the creator of the *Humor Style Concept*: Rod Martin, Patricia Puhlik-Doris, Gwen Larsen, Jeanette Gray and Kelly Weir, who argue that humor affects the quality of interpersonal and intrapsychological functioning, and the degree of the social adaptation of an individual (Martin et al. 2003). The starting point adopted in the cited concept is the assumption that in understanding the role of humor in the functioning of an individual, the severity of a sense of humor is not as important as rather the manner and purpose with which people use it and their inter- and intrapersonal functions in everyday life. According to the above assumption, humor is presented in two dimensions: adaptability, and interpersonal and intrapsychological functions in the life of the individual, which is presented by the “2 x 2” model of sense of humor style (Martin et al. 2003). According to it, two types of humor: *affiliative humor* and *self-enhancing humor*, were recognized as important for the proper adjustment and well-being/welfare of the individual, and therefore a constructive social climate. While the other two: *aggressive humor* and *self-defeating humor*, are considered harmful and non-adaptive (Martin 2007, p. 211). It is generally accepted that adaptive humor, occurring in the form of self-enhancing humor, is a stress-coping method (Lefcourt, Martin 1986); it adds the courage to confront difficulties (Mishinsky 1977; Dixon 1980) and also results in a reduction of emotional tension, and in a situation of threat it gives a sense of control and power (Ziv 1984). This humor also improves the quality of life. In relation to difficult experiences, it eliminates the traumatic impact by mitigating the negative emotions associated with it (Lefcourt, Martin 1986) and intensifies the positive emotions (Kuiper, Martin, Dance 1992). The second form of adaptive humor – affiliative humor – helps to improve relationships with others, while strengthening ties and minimizing conflicts, which in turn contributes to increasing the attractiveness of the individual (Hornowska, Charytonik 2011, p. 7). In addition, it creates a positive atmosphere in the group, facilitates understanding, reconstructs the rules, raises morale, creates a sense of group identity and motivation to work together (Ziv 1984; Lefcourt

2001; Martin 2003; Martin et al. 2003). The situation is the opposite when using the non-adaptive form of humor: it can reduce the value of the individual or others, and thus impair the quality of human relationships and the social climate. Aggressive humor may serve to improve one's own well-being at the expense of others (Zillmann 1983), and self-defeating humor is used for coping with stress associated with trying to gain the acceptance of the environment by defensive denial and repression of one's feelings and discrediting oneself in order to gain and maintain the acceptance of others at the expense of one's own sense of value (Kubie 1971).

Behaviors associated with humor, both those of an adaptive – constructive nature, as well as those considered non-adaptive, and even harmful, are therefore an important factor in shaping the social climate of an educational institution.

The primary methodological foundations of own research

Justification and purpose of the research

The interest in this issue stems from the fact that studies on the climate of correctional institutions for juveniles have not yet produced a clear answer to the question about its type and quality. Proper diagnosis of the social climate of Polish correctional institutions for juveniles is extremely important both from a practical (diagnostic and methodical) point of view as well as from the point of view of the effectiveness of correctional impacts towards minors (Moos 1994/2003; Konopczyński 2006 2009; Pytka 2008; Wysocka 2008). Additionally, this issue is particularly important in the current context of the ongoing debate over the legitimacy of the existence of correctional centers for juveniles (Correctional Institutions), and thus on the shape of the entire social rehabilitation system of minors in our country.

An equally important motive of undertaking the presented research is the complete lack of analyses observed in Polish literature on the role of humor in social rehabilitation. At the same time, the reports of Western researchers have for years emphasized the role of humor in social adjustment of individuals and in building relationships and an atmosphere in the group (Ziv 1984; McGhee 1994; Lefcourt 2001; Martin 2003; Martin et al. 2003), and they also mention humor as one of the main protection factors (resources) in the context of strengthening the resilience – resilience processes – of individuals struggling with adversity, stress, and life crises (Garmezy 1985; Masten 2007).

The aim of the research was therefore to diagnose the social climate of correctional institutions for juvenile and the styles of humor presented by educators and charges of these establishments, as well as to determine the relationship between these variables.

Research problems

According to the above, we formulated the following research problems:

How is the social climate of Youth Educational Centers assessed by their charges and educators?

Are there significant differences in the assessment of the social climate (its different dimensions) between charges and educators of Youth Educational Centers?

What is the level (severity) of each style of humor of the surveyed charges and educators?

Are there any statistically significant differences in the presented styles of humor between charges and educators of Youth Educational Centers?

Are there and what kind of relationships exist between different styles of humor and the assessment of the social climate in the study groups?

Variables and indicators

In the complex social rehabilitation reality, the analyzed variables remain together in mutual relationships and interact on the basis of feedback; however, for the needs of the presented research project it was established that the role of the dependent variable (to be explained) is played by the social climate, and the independent variable (explanatory) is humor. The indicators of the analyzed variables have been extensively described in the literature (Hornowska, Charytonik 2011, p. 6–11; Martin et al. 2003; Moos 1975; Pytka 2008, p. 168–170).

Working hypotheses

The presented study was to enable the verification of the following working hypotheses:

1. The social climate of Youth Educational Centers is evaluated rather as moderately positive (in terms of the welfare-educational or controlling-welfare climate).
2. The basis for the formulation of the above hypothesis is that the quality of the climate is linked to the type and stringency of the facility (Węgliński 2000; Zalewski 2004). Although Youth Educational Centers are institutions of a correctional nature, due to the much lower level of demoralization of the youth sent there, the level of restrictiveness of these facilities is much lower than e.g. correctional institutions.
3. Assessments of the social climate formulated by educators are more favorable than the assessment of the charges.

This assumption is due to the fact that in most (if not all) of previous studies on the social climate of educational and social rehabilitation facilities,

the assessments of educators were more favorable than the assessment of the charges (Pytko 1984, 2008; Zalewski 2004; Skuza 2012).

The level of adaptive styles of humor of educators is higher than of the charges and the severity of non-adaptive styles is higher among socially maladjusted youth than their guardians.

The basis for the formulation of the above assumptions were the results of research conducted by the authors of the styles of humor concept (Martin et al. 2003), according to which there is a positive relationship between the use of adaptive methods of humor and indicators of mental health and proper adaptation. In contrast, non-adaptive forms of humor strongly correlated with indicators of maladjustment, among others, in: hostility, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or the inability to create relationships based on intimacy.

4. There is a link of the assessment of the social climate of a facility with styles (types of) humor of charges and educators; adaptive styles of humor are associated with a more favorable assessment of the climate in the institution (especially in the dimension of interpersonal relations and personal development), while non-adaptive styles, in particular, aggressive, may reduce the quality of the social climate.

According to many authors (Dudzikowa 1996; Grzybowski 2015; Holmes, Marra 2002, p. 1683–1710; Miller 1996, p. 16–21) humor on the one hand reflects the reality of the place where it appears, and on the other hand this place is shaped and brings to it a new quality. Styles of humor considered adaptive are preferred for individual development and building a group climate, while non-adaptive styles interfere with the functioning of the individual in an intrapsychological and interpersonal area, thereby reducing the quality of the climate in the group/facility (see Kubie 1971; Martin et al. 2003; Martin 2007).

Study group and area of research

The study included a group of 162 charges and 52 educators from four purposefully-randomly selected Youth Educational Centers (MOW) in Lower Silesia. In the group of pupils for which the average age is approx. 16 years old, there were 56 girls and 106 boys, while in the group of educators (average age – 42 years) – 30 women and 22 men.

The study was conducted in Youth Educational Centers for socially maladjusted children and adolescents aged from 13 to 18 years old, placed there under the provisions of the Family Courts, requiring the use of special organization of learning, working methods, education and social rehabilitation.

Research method and tools

The self-report study used two research tools. The first is the Social Climate Scale (SKS) of the Correctional Institution by Moos (1975), in the Polish adaptation

of Pytka (2008, p. 409–412). It consists of 90 questions, contains 9 subscales, making up 3 dimensions of the social climate: “Interpersonal relationships” (subscales: “Involvement”, “Maintenance” and “Expression”), “Personal Development” (subscales: “Autonomy”, “Practical focus”, “Focus on personal problems”) and “Organizational system” (subscales: “Order and organization”, “Clarity of objectives” and “Educational control”). The clinical psychometric parameters of the Polish version of the SKS obtained in the study are satisfactory (Pytka 2008, p. 167–172; Zalewski 2004, p. 59–62).

The second research tool is the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) developed by R. Martin, P. Puhlik-Doris, G. Larsen, J. Gray and K. Weir (Martin et al. 2003), in the Polish adaptation of Elżbieta Hornowska and colleagues (Hornowska, Charytonik 2011). It is a self-report method studying expression, in which the subject determines the severity of behaviors involving responses with humor (Hornowska, Charytonik 2011, p. 8). The questionnaire contains 32 statements, includes 4 scales, each of which contains 8 positions corresponding to the individual dimensions of sense of humor. The clinical psychometric parameters of the Polish version of the HSQ are good and do not differ from the corresponding parameters of the original method (Martin et al. 2003; Hornowska, Charytonik 2011).

The organization and course of the research process

The first phase of field research was carried out from October 2015 to January 2016. The collected data were then statistically analyzed: the normality of the distribution of the analyzed variables was verified using the Shapiro-Wilk test, the descriptive statistics were calculated (arithmetic means (M), standard deviations (SD), median (Me), variance (W), the Chi-squared test was conducted to determine the equinumerosity of the compared groups, and then the Mann-Whitney U test was applied to compare the results obtained by the two studied – statistically not equinumerous – groups. The relationship between the analyzed variables (separately in individual research groups) was determined using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Statistical analysis was performed using the computer program PQStat (v.1.6.2. 64-bit).

Presentation and discussion of own research results

Assessment of the social climate of Youth Educational Centers

The table below presents a summary of the arithmetic means of the social climate obtained from the charges and educators of Youth Educational Centers (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Assessment of the social climate of Youth Educational Centers from the perspective of the charges and educators (summary of arithmetic means (M).

Charges (N1 = 162)				Educators (N2 = 52)			
Subscale	M1	Dimension	M1	Subscale	M2	Dimension	M2
Involvement	7.617	Interpersonal relationships	7.016	Involvement	8.365	Interpersonal relationships	8.263
Emotional maintenance	7.802			Emotional maintenance	9.019		
Expression	5.630			Expression	7.404		
Autonomy	6.969	Personal development	7.01	Autonomy	7.269	Personal development	8.429
Practical focus	6.938			Practical focus	8.961		
Focus on personal problems	7.123			Focus on personal problems	9.058		
Organizational order	7.401	Organizational system	6.697	Organizational order	8.077	Organizational system	6.987
Clarity of objectives	6.555			Clarity of objectives	7.481		
Control	6.136			Control	5.404		

Source: own study.

The above table shows that charges give the highest assessment to the subscales “Emotional maintenance” ($M_1 = 7.802$), “Involvement” ($M_1 = 7.617$) and “Organizational order” ($M_1 = 7.401$), while the lowest to the subscales: “Expression” ($M_1 = 5.30$), “Control” ($M_1 = 6.136$) and “Clarity of objectives” ($M_1 = 6.555$). The situation differs slightly from the perspective of educators, who assess the following subscales: “Focus on personal problems” ($M_2 = 9.058$), “Emotional maintenance” ($M_2 = 9.019$) and “Practical focus” ($M_2 = 8.961$), while the lowest assessments are received by the subscales: “Control” ($M_2 = 5.404$), “Autonomy” ($M_2 = 7.269$) and “Expression” ($M_2 = 7.404$). Most discrepancies therefore relate to the assessment of subscales within the first two dimensions of the social climate: charges assess higher involvement and the tendency for emotional maintenance shown by charges, while educators more eagerly emphasize their role in supporting the personal development of charges by focusing on solving their personal and practical problems. The observed differences in the assessments of individual subscales translate into a difference in the assessment of the dimensions of the social climate. Hence, educators assess the highest the dimension “Personal development” ($M_2 = 8.429$), while the charges – “Interpersonal relations” ($M_1 = 7.016$). The lowest assessment of both groups of respondents was attributed to the third dimension, i.e. the “organizational system”.

Such a system of factors/dimensions suggests that the social climate of the respondents of the facilities is of a “welfare and educational” character, focused

primarily on meeting needs and stimulating the development of charges, taking place in a rather correctly developed interpersonal relationships based on involvement and emotional support. At the same time it must be noted that – part of the first dimension of the social climate – “therapeutic potential” of educator-charge interpersonal relations seems to be strongly limited by the level of emotional expression of charges, low assessed in both groups.

In attempting to determine the quality of the social climate of the facility it is assumed that the higher the scores obtained in the first six subscales (first two dimensions of the climate) and the lower they are in the last three (the third dimension), the more favorable the climate of the given institution. In addition, the greater the discrepancy between the assessment of educators and charges, the less favorable the social climate of the facility.

While meeting the first criterion for a favorable social climate of respondents of Youth Educational Centers was confirmed by the above results, the second criterion – the existence of possible discrepancies in assessments of charges and staff – can slightly complicate the unambiguous assessment of the quality of the climate in the surveyed institutions (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Comparison of assessment of the social climate of charges and educators (Mann-Whitney U test)

Dimension of Social Climate	Charges (N1 = 162)		Educators (N2 = 52)		Mann-Whitney U test			
	Me1	Average of ranks	Me2	Average of ranks	U	p (exact)	Z	P (asymptotic)
Interpersonal relationships	22	94.663	25	147.490	2132.5**	0.0001	5.369**	< 0.000001
Personal development	22	90.796	26	159.538	1506**	0.0001	6.989**	< 0.000001
Organizational system	20	102.364	21	123.5	3380*	0.0307	2.156*	0.0310

* for p = 0.05, ** for p = 0.001.

Source: own study.

Statistically significant differences were revealed between the assessments of the social climate made by the charges and educators in all analyzed dimensions of the social climate. According to the accepted assumption (hypothesis 2) and the results of previous studies (Pytka 1984, 2008; Zalewski 2004; Skuza 2012), the assessments of educators are more favorable than the assessments of charges, which indicates different perception of social rehabilitation reality depending on their social role performed.

To sum up, the results obtained allow to fully confirm the first two research hypotheses about the type of social climate of the surveyed facilities and the differences in its assessment from the perspective of educators and youth.

Styles of humor of charges and educators of Youth Educational Centers

Behavior related to humor is an important factor shaping the social climate of educational institutions. Especially valuable for building and improving the quality of the social climate is adaptive humor; non-adaptive humor may worsen the well-being of individuals and interpersonal relations.

Table 3 shows the mean values of the severity of different types of humor in the group of charges and pedagogical staff of Youth Educational Centers.

Table 3. Styles of humor of educators and charges of Youth Educational Center (descriptive statistics)

Humor styles	Charges (N1 = 162)				Educators (N2 = 52)			
	M1	SD	Min.	Max.	M 2	SD	Min.	Max.
Affiliative	42.099	8.765	15	56	41.654	7.015	26	55
"I" reinforcement	35.376	8.250	9	55	38.077	5.519	25	51
Aggressive	28.716	7.989	9	51	22.365	5.584	11	37
Self-defeating	26.309	7.950	8	50	23.5	7.560	8	47

Source: own study.

As seen in the table above, in both groups affiliative humor dominates ($M_1 = 42.099$; $M_2 = 41.654$), second place went to "I" reinforcement humor ($M_1 = 35.376$; $M_2 = 38.077$), further – aggressive humor ($M_1 = 28.716$; $M_2 = 22.365$), and finally self-defeating humor ($M_1 = 26.309$; $M_2 = 23.5$). Such a layout shows the advantage of adaptation – favorable – styles of humor in creating the social climate of the surveyed institutions. Thus the results do not support some of the assumptions of the *Humor Styles Concept* (Martin et al. 2003), which might suggest that maladjusted persons will exhibit more non-adaptive humor than adaptive humor. In the case of the surveyed minors, this happens perhaps because in them, the process of adjustment disorder is not yet very advanced, especially since the majority of respondents were directed to Youth Educational Centers for the first time because of the failure to attend school, and not committing a criminal offense. Second, the prevalence of adaptive forms of humor in charges of Youth Educational Centers may be the effect of the welfare-therapeutic measures performed in these centers, aiming to improve the intrapsychological and interpersonal func-

tioning of juveniles (this topic requires further research). However, regardless of the way these optimistic findings are explained, one may probably venture to say that adaptive humor, which “survived” in these young people and helps them to function despite the experienced hardships and adversity, can be considered as an important factor in protecting and enhancing the process of *resilience*, understood as “bouncing back” from the bottom (Prince-Embury 2006, p. 1).

Although the results obtained by the surveyed youth are optimistic, they turn out to be a little less favorable – in line with hypothesis 3 – when compared with educators (Tab. 4).

Table 4. Comparison of the styles of humor of charges and educators (Mann-Whitney U test)

Humor styles	Charges (N1 = 162)		Educators (N2 = 52)		Mann-Whitney U test			
	Me1	Average of ranks	Me2	Average of ranks	U	p (exact)	Z	p (asymptotic)
Affiliative	42.5	108.818	43.5	103.394	3998.5	0.5843	0.549	0.5832
“I” reinforcement	36	102.775	37	122.211	3446.5*	0.0485	1.971*	0.0486
Aggressive	29	119.636	22.5	69.692	2246**	0.0001	5.064**	<0.000001
Self-defeating	26	113.101	23	90.048	3304.5*	0.0191	2.337*	0.0194

* for $p = 0.05$, ** for $p = 0.001$.

Source: own study.

The above table shows that in the case of three styles of humor (“I” enhancement, aggressive and self-defeating) there are statistically significant differences against the charges between young people and their educators. The severity of the “I” enhancement humor is in charges significantly lower than in the case of staff, and the severity of both non-adaptive styles in the group of surveyed minors is significantly higher than in their educators. This difference (at $p = 0.001$) clearly revealed itself in the case of aggressive humor, which the charges exhibit far more than their guardians. This observation is consistent with previous findings of the author about humor in social rehabilitation (Karłyk-Ćwik 2015, p. 67–78).

It should also be noted that in the case of affiliative humor there were no statistically significant differences between the juveniles and the educators, and the comparison of the means (Tab. 3) reveals an even higher level of this humor in the group of youth. This result indicates a large role of the social (group) aspect of the correctional institutional process. Indeed, it is the affiliative humor that serves to improve relations with other people and creates a positive atmosphere in the group. So let’s take advantage of this “social attitude” of participants in the social rehabilitation process to develop – using humor that clearly activates the social/interpersonal dimension of their functioning – constructive interpersonal skills to strengthen the process of social adaptation.

Styles of humor of charges and educators and the social climate of Youth Educational Centers

The relationship between styles of humor and the dimensions of the social climate were analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient for the group of charges (Tab. 5) and educators (Tab. 6).

Table 5. The relationship between social climate and humor in the group of subjects (N = 162) (Pearson correlation coefficient)

Social Climate Dimension	Affiliative humor		Reinforcing humor		Aggressive humor		Self-defeating humor	
	R	value p	r	value p	r	value p	r	value p
Interpersonal relationships	0.293**	0.00015	0.308**	0.000065	-0.121	0.125	-0.126	0.111
Personal development	0.320**	0.000033	0.277**	0.000355	-0.082	0.297	0.072	0.362
Organizational system	0.039	0.617	0.124	0.117	-0.219*	0.005	-0.115	0.146

* for p = 0.05, ** for p = 0.001.

Source: own study.

The present study showed that there are statistically significant (at p = 0.001) positive correlations between adaptive styles of humor of charges (affiliative and “I” enhancing) and the “social” dimensions of the climate of the surveyed institutions (“Interpersonal relationships” and “Social development”), which means that the greater the severity of adaptive humor exhibited by the surveyed juveniles, the better the quality of their interpersonal relations and more intensive personal development. It was also found that the severity of aggressive humor of charges remains at a somewhat weaker (at the level of p = 0.05), negative relationship with the organizational system of the facility, which means that the more aggressive humor behavior is presented by the surveyed youth, the less stable and thus less safe the organizational system of the facility (assuming the existence of feedback between the analyzed variables this relationship can also be explained as follows: the less stable and clear/understood the organizational system is in terms of the prevailing rules and principles, the more humor (and not only) behaviors appear among charges which have the characteristics of aggression). The results fully confirm the last of the hypotheses concerning the relationship between styles of humor of charges and the climate developed by them in the Youth Educational Center.

The situation is quite different in the group of educators (Tab. 6).

Table 6. The relationship between the social climate and humor in the group of educators (N = 52) (Pearson correlation coefficient)

Social Climate Dimension	Affiliative humor		Reinforcing humor		Aggressive humor		Self-defeating humor	
	R	value p	r	value p	R	value p	R	value p
Interpersonal relationships	0.114	0.419	0.245	0.079	-0.051	0.719	-0.316*	0.0223
Personal development	0.083	0.559	-0.013	0.926	-0.072	0.609	-0.226	0.107
Organizational system	-0.069	0.628	0.072	0.612	-0.290*	0.037	-0.416*	0.002

* for p = 0.05.

Source: own study.

It turns out that there was no significant relationship found between the constructive – adaptive – activity based on the sense of humor of educators (adaptive humor styles) and the prevailing social climate in the institution, which seems to be created mainly by charges, rather than educators. It is the opposite in the case of non-adaptive styles of humor of educators, which both make up statistically significant relationships with the two dimensions of the social climate of the facility: interpersonal relationships and the organizational system. Aggressive humor creates a negative relationship with the assessment of the organizational system, which can be interpreted that more humor behaviors of an aggressive nature – in this case fulfilling a defensive function – are presented by those educators who do not perceive the organizational system of the facility as providing organizational support, a clear framework, and structure for their correctional activity. On the other hand, the more aggressive behavior they exhibit, the more they weaken the regulatory abilities of that system (they disorganize it). The second form of non-adaptive humor presented by educators – self-humiliating humor – seems to have an even greater negative impact on the social climate created by the staff, because they remain in statistically significant relationships with up to two dimensions of the social climate of Youth Educational Centers. The self-defeating humor of educators creates a significant negative relationship not only with the organizational system but also the dimension of “interpersonal relationships”. In the first case, the presented non-adaptive humor is probably used (in the same way as aggressive humor) by educators to cope with the lack of organizational security. In the second case – the relationship of self-humiliating humor of educators with the quality of interpersonal relations they create with the charges – also,

as it seems, the essence of the problem is the sense of security and self-esteem of educators, but this time in the area of relations with the charges. Because the self-defeating humor is used for coping with stress associated with trying to gain the acceptance of the environment by defensive denial and repression of one's feelings and discrediting oneself in order to gain and maintain the acceptance of others at the expense of one's own sense of value (Kubie 1971). Therefore, educators through self-humiliating humor try to "get closer" to the charges, but the emotional and "image" costs borne by them are too high and make the overall balance – assessment – of interpersonal relations made by educators low (it is lower along with the increase of the amount of such behavior manifested). Secondly, educators presenting a lot of humorous behavior of self-humiliating character may be perceived by the pupils as weak, inauthentic and unreliable, which further worsens the quality of their relations.

To sum up, it is worth noting that humor of charges seems to have a greater – positive – impact on creating the social climate of Youth Educational Centers than humor of educators, which acts at best in a weak and rather negative way. Skuza's study on the role of pedagogical staff and charges in building the social climate of correctional institutions for juveniles (2012) led to similar conclusions. They show that no factors (with the exception of seniority), both of a professional (e.g. self-assessment of competences), as well as of a biographical character, analyzed in educators, do not affect the development of individual dimensions of the social climate of correctional facility, which means that the "social climate in studied correctional facilities is created by the charges" (Skuza 2012, p. 380).

Summary and conclusions

The studies allowed to establish the following facts regarding the analyzed variables (social climate and styles of humor of charges and educators) and their mutual relations:

The social climate of studied Youth Educational Centers is closest to the "welfare-educational" type, however, significant differences between evaluations formulated by the charges and educators suggest caution in evaluating its quality.

In the intrapsychological and interpersonal functioning, both the educators' and the charges' adaptive styles of humor outweigh the non-adaptive styles. In both groups affiliative humor dominates, second place went to "I" reinforcement humor, further – aggressive humor, and finally self-defeating humor.

The dominance of adaptive styles of humor among socially maladjusted youth allows to think with optimism about its internal "resilience" and the ability to reverse the broken process of socialization with the use of the existing potentials/resources, e.g. sense of humor or social orientation of constructive humorous activity.

Although the results obtained by the surveyed youth in the area of the severity of different types of humor are optimistic, they turn out to be a little less favorable when compared with educators (especially in the case of aggressive humor).

It has been proven that there are statistically significant (at $p = 0.001$) positive correlations between adaptive styles of humor of charges (affiliate and strengthening the "I") affiliative and "I" enhancing) and the "social" dimensions of the climate of the surveyed institutions ("Interpersonal relationships" and "Social development") It was also found that the severity of aggressive humor of charges remains at a somewhat weaker (at the level of $p = 0.05$), negative relationship with the organizational system of the facility.

No significant correlation was found between adaptive styles of humor presented by educators and the prevailing social climate in the institution. However, statistically significant ($p = 0.05$) relationships of non-adaptive styles of humor of educators with the two dimensions of the social climate of the facility: interpersonal relationships and the organizational system.

The charges, through the presented humor styles, seem to have a greater impact on creating the social climate of the facilities they are staying at than their educators.

The interpretation of the obtained results in the context of the concept of *resilience* seems to be especially valuable, according to which both the humor and social climate may constitute important protective factors and the plane of "resistance", which enables socially maladjusted youth to bounce back from the bottom, and in consequence to reverse the negative process of socialization (Garmezy 1985; Konopczyński 2008; Masten 2007; Prince-Embury 2006). The presented study revealed that a valuable resource, that is humor, is used only by the charges, and educators unfortunately do not appreciate it properly and do not use the potential of humor. It is worrying, because according to Hugues Lethierry (2001, p. 115) "humor can be a valuable contribution to education. Every teacher, every speaker knows, or at least should know, how much it contributes to lessons, conferences or any other event serious by nature. It helps make them infinitely more »digestible« for most listeners. It is said that the humorist sways those he made laugh". It is worth, therefore, for the sake of improving the quality of the social climate of correctional institutions for juveniles, strengthen and develop adaptive humor – which for the charges is a kind of "plane of resistance" and for educators – invaluable "tool" of social rehabilitation work.

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