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Factors Affecting Self-Esteem Among Juveniles from Youth Educational Centers

Abstract: The article is an analysis of the results of the studies conducted among juveniles (boys and girls) in the case of whom the family court applied the educational means of placing them in the Youth Educational Centre. The aim of the study was to find out the correlations be-tween self-esteem, personality traits and the environmental determinants (support factors and risk factors) among juveniles (boys and girls). The total of 481 juveniles staying in Youth Educational Centers participated in the study. Applied research tools: The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (SES), in the Polish adaptation by I. Dzwonkowska, M. Łaguna and K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek, NEO-FFI by P.T. Costa and R.R. McCrae was used to diagnose per-sonality traits included in a popular five-factor model (it has been adapted into Polish by B. Zawadzki, J. Strelau, P. Szczepaniak, and M. Śliwińska) and a questionnaire concerning sup-port factors and risk factors was constructed to measure environmental determinants. The analysis model showed that the significant predictors of self-esteem were neuroticism, extra-version, conscientiousness and negative relations at school. In girls group the significant pre-dictors of self-esteem were neuroticism, conscientiousness, family support and negative rela-tions at school, while in boys group the significant predictors of self-esteem were neu-roticism, extraversion and negative relations at family.

Key words: Self-esteem, juveniles, Youth Educational Centers.

Self-esteem determines attitude towards oneself, it plays an important role in behavioral regulation and belongs to personal potentials of human health (Kofta,

Doliński 2000, p. 561). The processes of comparing and distinguishing one's own values from the values of others are the basis for the development of self-esteem (Urban 2009, p. 30). Self-esteem is an important component of self-consciousness because, without it, it is impossible to define one's own being or to isolate oneself from the environment. The individual should take into account their own capabilities when taking action by making responsible, especially difficult decisions. The basis for anticipating the effects of these actions is to assess your own abilities and capabilities. If self-esteem is positive and adequate, then the person reacts, even in difficult situations, relatively calmly and carefully. If self-esteem is overstated or understated, then the individual demonstrates an increased need for information confirming their worth. Positive feedback evokes emotions that encourage further action, and negative feedback or even lack thereof causes anxiety, fear, depression, a sense of guilt, panic or discouragement. A sense of self-worth is associated with well-being. It is also a factor neutralizing the negative effects of stress. Research in this area draws attention not only to the level of the sense of self-worth but also to its stability. A high but unstable sense of self-worth often causes negative emotional reactions such as anger and hostility. It is a manifestation of the so-called fragile sense of self-worth, which can often lead to a mental breakdown and health deterioration, as well as antisocial behavior (Borys 2010, p. 44). On the other hand, in situations where the self is under threat, people with high self-esteem are perceived negatively and are attributed with such characteristics as hostility, arrogance, vulgarity, and the inability to cooperate. People with low self-esteem, on the other hand, are received positively, they evoke more sympathy (Vohs, Heatherton 2001, p. 1103). There are many dimensions of self-esteem and it is gradual in nature. It can be described using a continuum: high – low, positive – negative, stable – unstable, overstated – understated. One may also discuss the notion of a general self-esteem when one perceives oneself in the context of a particular characteristic or specific behavior. As a subjective judgment of oneself, self-esteem remains in a different relation to the objective characteristics of the individual. One may distinguish three states of it: adequate – based on an objective assessment of one's own characteristics and competencies, understated – self-assessment is unfavorable, the individual attributes themselves with lower competencies, assessing themselves negatively, and overstated – the individual attributes themselves with attributes, competencies, and skills that they do not possess (Florczykiewicz 2010, p. 358). The self-esteem component considered as a criterion of social adjustment is self-acceptance, perceived as a result in terms of conformity between a person's values and their behavior. It is assumed that its low and high level accompanies maladjustment. High self-acceptance, which is the result of overstated (inadequate) self-esteem, has a defensive nature and it persists through the use of the mechanism of repression. When it is low, it means a discrepancy of the self, i.e. low integration of identity, which is responsible for the low level of understanding of social stimuli and conflicts (Dzwonkowska et al 2008, p. 7).

In order to understand the psychosocial development of the individual, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposes to look at the environment of human life in a holistic manner, taking into consideration the physical, intrapsychic and socio-cultural systems that make up differentiated schemes. In view of the above, it can be assumed that the development of human self-esteem is made in the system of different places (family, peer group, school, etc.) and as a result of many social interactions. According to Bronfenbrenner (1988), development is a process of mutual adaptation between the human and the social environment. The environment consists of differentiated systems, closer to and farther from the individual, along with all the relationships that exist between these schemes and can influence the development of the individual. These are: a microsystem (family, classmates, school, peer group, etc.), a mesosystem (interactions between microsystems, relationships between the parents and the teacher, the child and colleagues), an exosystem (external environment, which does not directly affect the development of the individual, e.g. parents' place of work, in the case of the child it may be the older siblings' class at school), and a macrosystem (the wider socio-cultural context that is created by economy, politics, culture). In view of the above, the significance of diverse environments in human life and the process of mutual adaptation between the individual and the environment in which they function (individual – family – school – peer group) seems obvious (Kemp et al. 1997).

During the operationalization of the dependent variable, it was assumed that self-esteem is a belief regarding self-worth reflected in self-description. It is a relatively constant (positive or negative) disposition, a conscious attitude towards the self. It can be assumed that it is a certain kind of global self-esteem and refers to the physical characteristics of a person, their personality and relationships with other people. Individuals may differ in the evaluation of the individual aspects of themselves, with tendencies to positive evaluations in dimensions that are important to them or recognizing those dimensions as important for them, in the light of which their assessments are more positive than those of other people (Dzwonkowska et al. 2008).

It can be assumed that adequate, positive self-esteem is one of the key protective components of the individual. In a certain sense, it helps in coping with the various ups and downs of life. There are many different factors that influence the level of self-esteem, including at the family, community, school, and individual level. Finding these factors in these circles is one of the main themes of research that can in the future allow the development of effective ways to help vulnerable children and adolescents from increased risk groups through their practical application in early intervention and prevention measures. In general, maladjusted youth tends to feel depressed and have low self-esteem. The low level of self-perception is often a source of numerous problems in their functioning. In addition, a negative self-image results in an ever-strong search for peer acceptance in peer groups outside of school, which may encourage risky behavior

(Marsden et al. 2005, p. 427). According to the research conducted by J.F. Sowislo and U. Orth (2013, p. 213), people with low self-esteem are 80% more likely to criticize others, which allows them to feel better, tougher; whereas people with positive self-esteem tend to perceive the state of things as they are and enjoy it. In contrast, the most important factors that influence self-esteem are: the opinions and judgments that the individual hears about themselves, their successes and "failures", comparing oneself with others, i.e. certain personality traits as well as factors related to functioning in various environments (family, peer, school).

Focusing on the broader spectrum and the different levels that shape self-esteem are dictated by, among other things, the results of research confirming the emergence of new aspects of the phenomenon, depending on the viewpoint assumed and the proper level of analysis. Particular attention is drawn to the possible association of personality traits and environmental influences (the microenvironments of the family home, peer groups and schools) that affect the development of self-esteem among youths. The approach to the issue of creating one's own self requires the inclusion of interaction between the microsystems, i.e. the relationship between the individual and parents, teachers, peers, as well as aspects related to the formal functioning of the institution in a broader socio-cultural context. Since it was attempted to approach the problem of forming self-esteem in a holistic manner, when determining the independent variables, the conditions associated with personality (individual) traits and environmental factors (family, peer, school support, negative relations with the family, at school and with peers) were taken into account. It seems that approaching the problem in such a manner may be useful not only for analyzing the phenomenon, but it can also provide a fairly comprehensive basis for social rehabilitation practitioners who design preventive and corrective actions.

The purpose of the research conducted was to determine the relationship between self-esteem and the personality traits of maladjusted youth and environmental determinants (support factors and limiting factors), and to answer the question of whether there is a difference between self-esteem (understood as a positive or negative attitude toward the self) in underage girls and boys? Based on the current research and the accepted theoretical assumptions, the following hypotheses were made:

H1: Self-esteem will correlate with extroversion and will be associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness.

H2: Self-assessment will be negatively correlated with risk factors and positively correlated with support factors.

Respondents

According to information from the Center for Educational Development (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji), there were 5057 charges (3129 boys in the intellectual norm,

409 boys with slight intellectual disabilities, 1427 girls in the intellectual norm and 92 with slight intellectual disabilities) in Youth Detention Centers. The necessary sample size was also established as n_b = 390 for the population of Youth Detention Center charges in Poland (only good charges in the intellectual norm were included in the selection of the sample) with a confidence coefficient of 0.90 and a maximum error at the level of 4% (Brzeziński 2004). The selection of the examined group was deliberate and random. The criterion for the deliberate selection was the type of institution in which the research subjects were placed by a family court. The selection of the institutions in which the research was conducted was random (random draw), and the sample was determined by the nature of the population (finite) and its specificity (youths against whom the Family and Minor Departments and of District Courts applied the rearing measure in the form of placement in Youth Detention Centers). The relevant research was conducted in 2014. A total of 481 charges from Youth Detention Centers (Młodzieżowe Ośrodki Wychowawcze – MOW) were examined. They are intended for maladjusted youths (committing crimes and manifesting the symptoms of demoralization), which requires the use of special organization of teaching, methods of work, care, education and social rehabilitation.

Methods

M. Rosenberg's SES Self-Esteem Scale was used, adapted by I. Dzwonkowska, M. Łaguna and K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek, which is a one-dimensional tool for evaluating the level of general self-esteem – a relatively constant disposition understood as a conscious attitude (positive or negative) towards the self. It consists of 10 diagnostic statements. The research subject is supposed to indicate on a four-level scale how much they agree with each of these statements. The reliability of the original version varied from 0.77 to 0.88 (Blascovich, Tomaka 1991).

P.T. Costa's and R. R. McCrae's NEO-FFI Questionnaire was used to diagnose the personality traits included in the popular five-factor model, known as the Big Five model; the Polish adaptation was developed by B. Zawadzki, J. Strelau, P. Szczepaniak and M. Śliwińska. The questionnaire consists of 60 self-descriptive statements, the truthfulness of which towards oneself was assessed on a five-point scale by the respondents. These 5 positions consist of five measuring scales: neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The reliability of these subscales is generally satisfactory, lower for the Openness and Agreeableness scales than for the others.

A supporting factors and risk factors questionnaire was developed to measure environmental determinants, including: family support, peer support, school support, negative family relationships, negative school relationships, relationships with peers involved in antisocial behavior. It consists of 35 diagnostic statements.

The research subject is supposed to indicate on a five-level scale to what extent they agree with each of them. The reliability of the resulting scales is from 0.679 to 0.873.

Results and discussion

Table 1 lists the basic statistical parameters of the variables examined.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the examined variables

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
SES	479	28.16	5.71
NEU	481	24.44	7.29
EKS	481	28.97	6.25
OTW	481	23.21	4.94
UGD	481	25.72	6.02
SUM	481	30.42	7.15
NRR	476	17.07	7.54
WRD	476	18.16	5.48
NRS	476	8.98	3.79
WRW	475	18.95	4.63
RRP	475	13.94	4.61
WSZK	475	11.42	4.25

SES – self-esteem, NEU – neuroticism; EKS – extroversion; OTW – openness to experience; UGD – agreeableness; SUM – conscientiousness; NRR– negative relations with parents, WRD – family support; NRS – negative relations at school; WRW –peer support; RRP – relations with people (peers) engaged in criminal activities; WSZ – school support.
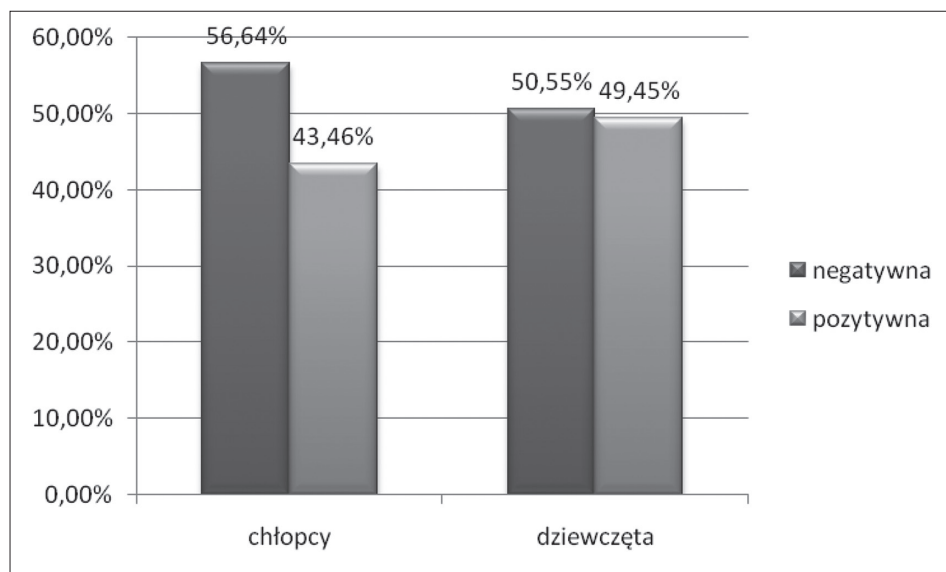Source: own research.

The average value calculated for global self-esteem is 28.16 and is slightly lower than the average score obtained in adaptation research among youths aged 15–19, which was 28.24, indicating a slightly lower global self-esteem in minors. For neuroticism, this index was 24.44, for extroversion – 28.97, for openness to experience – 23.21. On the other hand, in the following scales: agreeableness – the index was 25.27, and conscientiousness – the index was 30.42. The analysis of the sense of the level of influence of risk factors (negative relationships at school, negative relationships in the family, relationships with demoralized peers and peers engaged in criminal activities) and protective factors (family support, peer support, school support) found that it was quite diverse. The family support

coefficient was 18.16, for peer support it was 18.95, and for school support it was 11.42. The result on the scale of negative relationships in the family amounted to an average of 17.07, negative relations at school – 8.98, relationships with people engaged in criminal activities – 13.94.

Self-esteem in maladjusted youth and gender

To answer the research question: what is the global self-esteem of youths, and are there differences in the level of self-esteem (understood as positive or negative attitude towards oneself) between underage girls and boys? An average value was calculated and self-esteem levels were created. To determine the level of self-esteem in the examined minors, the research results were subjected to visual categorization in the SPSS program. After dividing the set into percentiles, two levels of self-esteem were obtained – low (negative) and high (positive).

The average value calculated for the results of the entire group examined is 28.16 and is slightly lower than the average result obtained in adaptation research among youths aged 15–19, which was 28.24, indicating a lower global self-esteem in minors. The overall self-esteem index in women turned out to be higher ($\bar{x} = 28.69$) than in men ($\bar{x} = 27.94$). However, the differences are not statistically relevant (U M-W; H = 0.171; p = ni.).

Graph 1. Respondents' self-esteem level
Source: own research.

Analysis of the obtained results indicates that over half (56.64%) of boys have a negative image of themselves. In the case of self-esteem levels in minors girls, it can be observed that it is slightly higher than boys. 50.55% of girls have a negative image of themselves. The research results show that both people with very high and the very low self-esteem are present in the examined population. The obtained result indicates that the group is highly diversified in terms of such variables as general self-esteem. However, in general, maladjusted youth tends to feel depressed and have low self-esteem. The low level of self-perception is often the cause of numerous problems in their functioning. In addition, a negative self-image results in an ever-strong search for peer acceptance in peer groups outside the school, which may encourage risky behavior (Marsden et al. 2005). According to the research conducted by J.F. Sowislo and U. Orth (2013), people with low self-esteem are 80% more likely to criticize others, which allows them to feel better, more strict; whereas people with positive self-esteem tend to perceive the state of things as they are and enjoy it.

As indicated, lower self-esteem was a characteristic of underage boys rather than girls in the examined group. However, the group of minor girls also indicated a slight majority of people with a negative self-image. This may point to matters associated with incompetent upbringing, that is the process of purposeful and conscious development of a child's identity by the parents. If a child grew up in the belief that they are not perfect, they had to struggle for the attention of their parents and fulfill their whims, but never received praises or encouragement in return, then, as a result, such behavior of the parents shaped a sense of "inferiority" in them. In view of the above, the source of low self-esteem may be negative experiences from the past when the child's actions or behavior was over-criticized or when the individual experienced physical or psychological violence from the family, the environment or peers. It can also be assumed that low self-esteem is the cause of internal conflicts, which lead to distrust, disbelief or aggression and violence against others, and as a result, to maladjustment. Students with low self-esteem become difficult in cohabitation within a peer group or in a class. Evaluating their abilities as low, they do not undertake tasks or quickly abandon them, become discouraged and become passive. They are more afraid and still feel threatened, especially in the face of new tasks and new situations. They function on the sidelines of class and school life, which leads to truancy, and consequently, court interference in their lives and families.

It is therefore worth emphasizing that knowing the level of self-esteem in youths is of great importance to therapists, teachers, and educators because it can help them in the selection of effective working methods and in understanding the causes of antisocial behavior, as well as the inadequate and seemingly unmotivated emotional reactions of their charges. A social rehabilitation educator has a significant influence on the development of self-image in minors. This is associated with the fact that if they do not adjust the tasks to minors' abilities in

the course of their classes, they expose them to failures and defeats, that is why all educational activities should be planned in such a manner so as to take into account not only the physical but also the mental side of the pupils. Failure to observe this principle leads to the development of an inadequate image of oneself in adult life.

Self-esteem in most people takes on a critical form at the end of adolescence and once shaped, it does not change easily. This applies above all to global self-esteem, which speaks of a general human attitude towards oneself (Potocka-Hoser 1985). In social rehabilitation practice, it is important to know the time and circumstances when low self-esteem entered a charge's life (recent or as a result of early experience). Depending on these circumstances, appropriate pedagogical influences, which are designed to counter negative patterns of thinking about oneself, should be exerted. In view of this problem, it is important to get acquainted with the methodology of creative social rehabilitation work, which helps to develop a stronger inner self-sense and self-belief, **ensuring a fuller, implicitly better life for a young person.**

Self-esteem and psychological and environmental factors

In order to check the relationships between self-esteem and the dimensions of personality and environmental (support and protective) factors, Rho Spearman's correlation analysis was first performed. The results of the correlations obtained are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Correlation between self-esteem and personality traits of minors and environmental factors

	Self-esteem		Self-esteem boys		Self-esteem girls	
	Rho Spearman	p	Rho Spearman	p	Rho Spearman	p
NEU	-0.390**	0.000	-0.370**	0.000	-0.538**	0.000
EKS	0.321**	0.000	0.334**	0.000	0.270**	0.000
OTW	0.068	0.138	0.069	0.270	0.112	0.098
UGD	0.242**	0.000	0.218**	0.000	0.192**	0.004
SUM	0.390**	0.000	0.352**	0.000	0.424**	0.000
NRR	-0.269**	0.000	-0.300**	0.000	-0.157*	0.020
WRD	0.194**	0.000	0.126*	0.043	0.217**	0.001
NRS	-0.412**	0.000	-0.331**	0.000	-0.314**	0.000
WRW	0.235**	0.000	0.157*	0.012	0.149*	0.028

	Self-esteem		Self-esteem boys		Self-esteem girls	
	Rho Spearman	p	Rho Spearman	p	Rho Spearman	p
RRP	0.038	0.404	0.045	0.489	0.005	0.944
WSZK	0.002	0.959	0.060	0.341	0.169*	0.013

** correlation is significant at the level 0.01 (two-sided); * correlation is significant at the level 0.05 (two-sided).

Source: own research.

The analysis showed moderate or weak correlations between self-esteem and neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness ($p < 0.001$), while openness to experience was not related to self-esteem. Such results were obtained both in the group of boys and the group of girls. The correlation between self-esteem and extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness is positive, which denotes a positive relation. As the level of these personality traits increases, self-esteem increases as well. The correlation of self-esteem with neuroticism is negative, i.e. the relation is negative. As neuroticism increases, self-esteem decreases. The strongest correlations were found for traits such as: "conscientiousness" and "neuroticism" and "self-esteem". The analysis of the research results indicated significantly moderate or weak correlations of self-esteem with family support, peer support (in girls with school support) and negative family and school relationships. The correlation of self-esteem with protective factors related to family support, school support (girls), peer support is positive, which means positive dependence, and makes it possible to assume that as the level of these factors increases, self-esteem increases as well. If we consider the correlation between self-esteem and risk factors, we can observe a negative correlation, which results in a decrease of self-esteem in maladjusted youth. The dependencies between these variables present themselves as follows: with increasing family support (parental care, the nature of the relationship with parents) and peer support (good relationships with peers and peer acceptance), the overall level of self-esteem increases. On the other hand, the lower the level of negative relationships in school and the lower the level of negative family relationships, the higher the level of self-esteem. The research hypothesis provided for this problem area can be considered as confirmed. When analyzing the value of the coefficients, it is worth noting that most of them did not exceed 0.50, which indicates a moderate and low potency of the relationships between the analyzed variables.

It should be emphasized that self-esteem has moderately positive relations with extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness, and negative relations with neuroticism, and it is not significantly related to openness to experience. One should also note that the obtained results are in line with the results of Schmitt's and J. Allik's research (2005 p. 623). This allows us to assume that people with low neuroticism (emotionally stable, calm, able to cope well with stress),

high agreeableness (sympathetic to others, willing to help), high conscientiousness (motivated to act) and high extroversion (friendly, cordial), have a higher self-esteem than those whose personality traits are intensified to the contrary.

According to the results of the research, the interpersonal environment plays a key role in shaping self-esteem (according to Bronfenbrenner's 1979 theory, assumed at the beginning), that is the quality of the relationship between the individual and the world, especially in relations with persons of significance (parents, peers, school). Self-esteem is formed under the influence of assessments made by those who decide on the life of the young person. A particular role is played by four areas of interaction: support from parents and peers, and a low sense of negative school and family relationships. The quality of social influences thus has a significant impact on the content and the structure of the self, defining the possible scope of eventual educational influences. If an individual can sense social support, the changes that occur in their identity are aimed at achieving consistency of the content of the self with social norms (in such a situation self-esteem increases), and then we can observe the progress of adaptation, or otherwise – its regression. In this case, it should be noted that social support is an important factor constituting self-esteem in youths, and changes in these areas result in changes in the identity of minors.

In order to examine the effect of all the analyzed variables on the level of self-esteem, a linear regression analysis was performed, in which the explained variable was self-esteem, and the explaining variables were personality traits and risk factors and protective factors related to self-esteem. A hierarchical regression was applied using the input method. The first model included neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness, and the second included four risk and communal support factors: negative parental relationships, family support, negative school relationships, peer support. Diagnostics of the observation revealed seven outlying observations for which the z-score was greater than three. These were the observations numbered 6, 16, 19, 246, 272, 426, 478 and they were excluded from the analysis. Both models proved significant, the first model explains 33.5% and the other 39% of the variance of the explained variable. The results of the above analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the regression analysis for model 1 and 2

	ANOVA	Corrected R_2	F changes
Model 1 (neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness)	$F(4; 463) = 59.81$; $p<0.001$	0.335	–
Model 2 (neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness, negative relationships with parents, family support, negative relationships at school, peer support)	$F(8; 459) = 38.97$; $p<0.001$	0.394	$F(4; 459) = 12.29$; $p<0.001$

Source: own research.

The relevance of the developed models means that they explain the researched phenomenon better than the average. This means that the proposed set of variables, both in the first and second model, affects the level of self-assessment in youths. Regression coefficients are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Non-standardized and standardized regression coefficients

Model	Variables	Coefficients		T-Student test	
		non-standardized B	standardized Beta	t	Significance
1	(Constant)	24.270		15.517	0.000
	Neuroticism	-.278	-.382	-9.864	0.000
	Extroversion	.137	.162	3.816	0.000
	Agreeableness	.071	.080	1.941	0.049
	Conscientiousness	.168	.223	4.855	0.000
2	(Constant)	27.879		15.149	0.000
	Neuroticism	-.256	-.353	-9.368	0.000
	Extroversion	.098	.116	2.771	0.006
	Agreeableness	.032	.036	.899	0.369
	Conscientiousness	.122	.162	3.589	0.000
	Negative relations with parents	-.130	-.026	-.586	0.558
	Family support	.348	.071	1.643	0.101
	Negative relations at school	-1.285	-.230	-5.093	0.000
	Peer support	.359	.061	1.471	0.142

Source: own research.

The relevance of the regression coefficients was verified using the t-Student test, which tests the null hypothesis and shows that the coefficient does not differ significantly from zero. Analysis showed that in the first model, the important predictors of self-esteem turned out to be neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness, while in the second such a role was played by the following: neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness and negative relations in school. The analysis of the research results obtained in this study showed that the second model explained a higher percentage of variance and was therefore adopted as the final model for interpretation. The equation for this model can be written as follows:

Self-esteem = 27.88 -0.256*Neuroticism + 0.098*Extroversion + 0.122*Conscientiousness -1.285*Negative relations at school.

As the above equation suggests, self-esteem – regardless of the variables analyzed – assumes a constant value (27.88). Extroversion and conscientiousness have a positive effect on self-esteem, which means that when they increase, its level increases as well. Neuroticism and negative relationships at school have a negative effect on self-esteem – as they increase, self-esteem decreases. The strongest predictor turned out to be neuroticism (β = -0.335), and in second place – negative school relations (β = -0.230), for which the absolute value of the standardized Beta coefficient is the greatest. Other variables: agreeableness, negative relationships with parents, family and peer support are not important self-esteem predictors.

In the next step of the analysis of the obtained results, it was verified which of the personality traits and environmental factors allow to predict self-esteem in the examined maladjusted youth group. The conducted regression analysis showed that self-esteem predictors in the group of minor boys are personality traits (neuroticism, extroversion) and negative family relationships that explain 29% of the variance of the dependent variable. In the group of minor girls, the self-esteem predictors are neuroticism and conscientiousness and environmental factors (family support, negative relationships at school), these explain 44% variance of the dependent variable.

Table 6. Self-esteem predictors in the group of minor boys

	B	Standard error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	26.805	3.073		8.722	.000
Neuroticism	-.211	.046	-.261	-4.620	.000
Extroversion	.138	.055	.163	2.506	.013
Negative family relations	-1.188	.480	-.154	-2.477	.014

R = 0.54; R^2 = 0.29
Source: own research.

According to the results of the research conducted in the boys group, extroversion positively influences self-esteem, i.e. its level increases as it grows. Neuroticism and negative family relationships have a negative effect on self-esteem – as they increase, self-esteem decreases in the group of minor boys. The strongest predictor turned out to be neuroticism (β = -0.261), for which the absolute value of the standardized Beta coefficient is the highest.

Table 7. Self-esteem predictors in the group of minor girls

	B	Standard error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	25.993	3.178		8.180	.000
Neuroticism	-.312	.040	-.425	-7.740	.000
Conscientiousness	.206	.047	.262	4.381	.000
Family support	1.368	.518	.161	2.642	.009
Negative relations at school	-1.762	.551	-.188	-3.195	.002

$R = 0.67$; $R^2 = 0.45$

Source: own research.

In the group of minor girls, conscientiousness and family support have a positive influence on self-esteem. A higher level of support and higher conscientiousness are conducive to increased self-esteem. Neuroticism and negative relationships at school have a negative effect on self-esteem – that means as they increase, self-esteem decreases. The strongest predictor, just like in the boys group, turned out to be neuroticism $\beta = -0.425$.

Conclusion

The analysis of the research results shows that the discussed personality traits and social environment characteristics, depending on the configuration and context, may have an effect that supports or distorts self-esteem in youths. In the group of socially maladjusted people, we mostly deal with unstable self-esteem or a lowered level of self-esteem. A sense of it being in danger occurs when the individual is not sure of their own worth and has no confidence that the task they have undertaken will be successful. Maladjusted people often react with excessive fear and frustration to possible failures. The sense of danger may be rooted in the process of upbringing, and may also be determined by specific personality traits (extroversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism). High anxiety and ongoing threats in terms of negative school relationships result in low self-esteem and significant discrepancies between the real and the ideal concept of the self. An essential element in such a situation in diagnostic and educational work is the need to verify individual impact programs and to measure the effectiveness of the actions taken against youth in the context of the different areas of functioning of young human beings. This is an aspect related to the verification diagnosis that is aimed at verifying the accuracy of the obtained diagnostic image.

In view of the research results obtained, it is important to point out that getting to know the relationships between self-esteem and its conditions are impor-

tant for therapists, teachers, and educators because it can help them in selecting effective working methods and in understanding the causes of antisocial behavior, as well as the inadequate and seemingly unmotivated emotional reactions of their charges. A social rehabilitation educator has a significant influence on the development of self-image in minors. This is associated with the fact that if they do not adjust the classes conducted and the tasks proposed to minors' abilities, they expose them to failures and defeats. That is why educational activities should be planned in such a manner so as to take into account not only the physical but also the mental side of the pupils. Failure to observe this principle may as a consequence lead to the development of an inadequate image of oneself in adult life.

Self-esteem in most people takes on a critical form at the end of adolescence and once developed, it does not change easily. This applies above all to global self-esteem, which speaks of a general human attitude towards oneself (Potocka-Hoser 1985, p. 31), which in social rehabilitation practice means that it is important to know the time and circumstances when low self-esteem entered a charge's life (recent or as a result of early experience). Depending on these circumstances, appropriate pedagogical influences, aiming at counteracting negative patterns of thinking about oneself, should be exerted. From the perspective of the topic discussed above, it is important to learn the methodology of creative social rehabilitation work, which is able to help develop a stronger inner sense of self and self-confidence, thereby **ensuring a fuller and (implicitly) better life for a young person.**

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