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Strategies of handling difficult situations by young people on the example of the research among young judo athletes

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Abstract

There were 38 young judo athletes, aged from 9 to 17 years old, who took part in the research during their summer camp. There were 24 boys and 14 girls who completed the questionnaire 'My strategies of handling difficult situations' published in 'Niezbędnik Dobrego Nauczyciela' edited by prof. dr hab. Anna Izabela Brzezińska in the series IV 'Monitoring the development during childhood and adolescence TOM 5 supplement' by Anna I. Brzezińska, Julita Wojciechowska, Beata Ziółkowska, Aleksandra Kram and Marta Molińska with the subtitle 'Tool box- Early stage of adolescence – How to collect information about teenagers and his environment?' designed for teens aged: 11/12–14/15 years old. The questionnaire 'My strategies of handling difficult situations' consist of 12 statements which are grouped into three subgroups for 4 items in each describing three strategies of handling situations: 'I', 'No one' and 'Others/ Adults'. Items in strategy 'I' describes teenagers who while in difficult situation try to rely on themselves, have high sense of influencing actions and life situations.

People with 'I' strategy focus on solving the problem themselves; however, having problems with asking for help. Items describing 'No one' strategy are characterized by a passive attitude towards difficult situations. People with that approach to difficult situations avoid confrontation and do not put the blame on themselves. Items presenting 'Others/Adults' strategy describe teenagers who in difficult situations turn to adults for instructions on how to cope with them. They tend to blame others for their failures. Frequently they think that it is impossible to avoid difficult situations and their abilities are not good enough to handle them.

Accepted definitions allowed for analysis of strategies used by teenagers to handle difficult situations on the example of young judo athletes.

Gathered data was statistically processed using Excel 2006 and Statistica 7.0.

Strategies

Keywords: strategies; judo; athletes

Introduction

Nowadays young people have to meet many challenges- everyday a young man needs to cope with difficult situations that he encounters. School, peers and family make demands that require constant readiness to make decisions to meet them. It is believed that one of the most important tasks of adolescences is achieving psychological autonomy and best preparation for an adult life [1]. To meet young people educational challenges, parents are also involved. They need to support their children in decision making process showing them the alternative ways of solving problems and possible consequences not only by instructing them which the right decision is. Researches on the impact of family environment on personal self-esteem and future career showed that it influences young people's decision making abilities, their choices and self-esteem life [2]. Building in young people sense of agency and personal competences is a very important predicament in their action taking process and creating their way of life [3]. School has also a great influence on young people's decision making and action taking process because it is one of the major stress factors [4]. Among school problems we can identify: stress connected to achieved grades, tests, public performances. Researches proved that other common stress factors include: relations with peers, family and personal problems [5]. Independently from difficult situations experienced by young people and adults perspective- parents, teachers who can look at the problem as trial, it should be remembered that according to R. Lazarus and S. Folkman's stress theory subjective evaluation of the kind of the difficult situation experienced determines whether the situation is stressful or not [6]. That evaluation can be divided into primary- related to the meaning of experienced situation and secondary- related to the owned abilities which help to evaluate given situation as doable or not [7]. So a difficult situation is experienced by a man as subjective experience seen as stressful and requiring stimulating strategies to cope with it. The concept of stress is therefore frequently used as synonym for a concept of difficult situation [8,9]. Difficult situations are connected with different actions taken by people experiencing them in order to handle them [10]. Experiencing difficult situation is connected to three factors: it means endangering the realization of the important values from ones perspective, interference of the process and structure directed on achieving the goal and it evokes challenging emotions [10]. Despite experiencing difficulties teens have to take up strategies that would help them in coping with given situation. Researches done by Elżbieta Talik (2011) show that depending on experienced problem (family, school, peer group and personal) and connected stress; one can distinguish: taking up confrontational behaviours, distancing oneself, self-control, seeking support, taking up responsibilities, avoiding/ escaping the problem, planning the solution and positive re-evaluation of given difficulties [5]. On the account of presented strategies there are three different strategies of handling difficult situations: 'I' strategy (I take up

responsibilities, self-control, planning problem solving), ‘No one’ strategy (distancing oneself, escaping/ avoiding problems) and ‘others/ adults strategy (looking for the support). ‘I’ strategy describes taking up autonomic actions and decisions, ‘no one’ strategy which is characterized as non-taking any activities and waiting for the problem to go away or solve itself. ‘Other/ adults’ strategy is linked with strong dependency on others instructions how to deal with the problem, so the actions taken are rather of imitative character. The three basic and highlighted strategies of handling difficult situations can describe the direction and a kind of action taken by young people to solve them. Taking into account the validity of the problem and challenges and difficult situations teenagers have to meet, in this article, there is an attempt to describe the dominant strategy of handling with difficult situations among young judo athletes. Moreover, an attempt has been made to answer how training experience influences using above mentioned strategies.

Material and methods

There were 38 young judo athletes, aged from 9 to 17 years old, who took part in the research during their summer camp. There were 24 boys and 14 girls who completed the questionnaire ‘My strategies of handling difficult situations’ published in ‘Niezbędnik Dobrego Nauczyciela’ edited by prof. dr hab. Anna Izabela Brzezińska in the series IV ‘Monitoring the development during childhood and adolescence TOM 5 supplement’ by Anna I. Brzezińska, Julita Wojciechowska, Beata Ziółkowska, Aleksandra Kram and Marta Molińska with the subtitle ‘Tool box- Early stage of adolescence – How to collect information about teenagers and his environment?’ designed for teens aged: 11/12–14/15 years old. The questionnaire ‘My strategies of handling difficult situations’ consist of 12 statements which are grouped into three subgroups for 4 items in each describing three strategies of handling situations: ‘I’, ‘No one’ and ‘Others/ Adults’. Items in strategy ‘I’ describes teenagers who while in difficult situation try to rely on themselves, have high sense of influencing actions and life situations. People with ‘I’ strategy focus on solving the problem themselves; however, having problems with asking for help. Items describing ‘No one’ strategy are characterized by a passive attitude towards difficult situations. People with that approach to difficult situations avoid confrontation and do not put the blame on themselves. Items presenting ‘Others/Adults’ strategy describe teenagers who in difficult situations turn to adults for instructions on how to cope with them. They tend to blame others for their failures. Frequently they think that it is impossible to avoid difficult situations and their abilities are not good enough to handle them.

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Results

Gathered data are presented in a chart /Tab.1/ and on graphs /Ryc1-4/

Tab.1 Sociometric data of researched judo group- boys and girls

Group	Age	Range	Training experience	Range
Boys /n=24/	13,1 ± 2,7	9,0-17,5	5,5 ± 2,5	2,0-10,0
Girls /n=14/	13,0 ± 1,9	10,5 - 16,0	5,5 ± 2,5	2,0-9,0

* There were no differences statistically important at the level $p < 0,05$



Fig.1 Distribution of answers from group A describing 'I' strategy in relation to training experience among boys.



Fig.2 Distribution of answers from group A describing 'I' strategy in relation to training experience among girls.

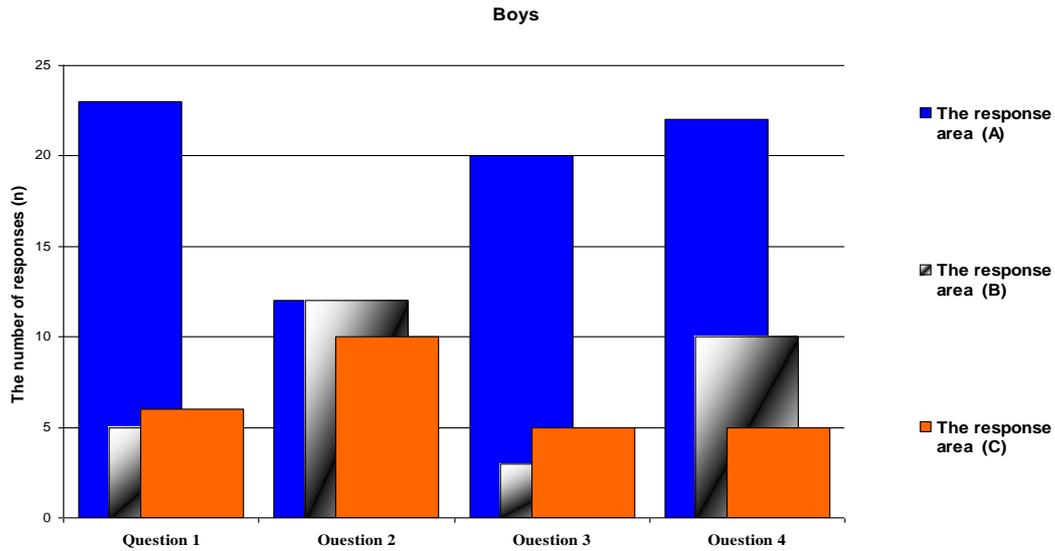


Fig.3 Frequency of answers given to particular questions about strategies A(I), B(No one), C(Others/Adults) among boys.

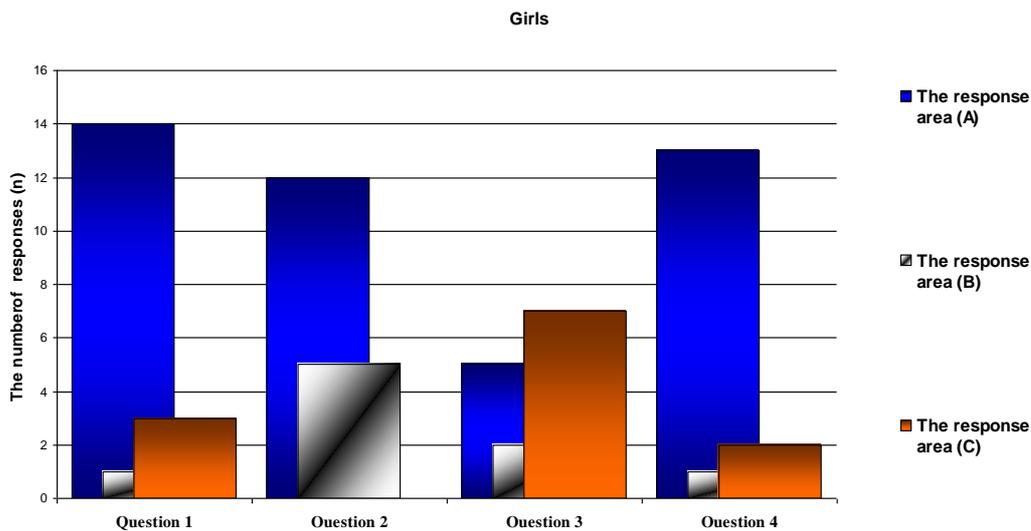


Fig. 4 Frequency of answers given to particular questions about strategies A(I), B(No one), C(Others/Adults) among girls

Discussion

Results presented in Tab. 1 show that researched group of boys and girls practicing judo can be directly compared as their age and training experience are at the same level. Graph on Fig.1 shows the distribution of answers from group A describing 'I' strategy in relation to training experience among boys where there is statistically important $R^2=0,62$ relation in taking up responsibilities and independent actions in difficult situations along with training experience. Described relation allowed to say that the length of training experience significantly influences taking strategy A- 'I' as well as on sense of will and ability to take up actions when needed. Researchers of Owczarek, 2009 and Turosz, 2003 conducted among athletes shows that taking actions to solve the problems promote achieving better results at the highest sport level [11,12,13].

Graph on Fig.2 shows distribution of the answers from group A 'I' strategy in relation to training experience among girls . Similarly to Ryc.1 there is a visible relation between answers given connected to A strategy 'I' and the length of training experience. This relation; however, is at the lower level than in boys group. It is also important to mention the age of puberty among groups. However, strategies for handling difficult situations among young people are still developing depending on age and life experience, so it is worth analysing possible changes of these strategies along with aging.

Overview of the researches on teenagers difficult behaviours show that in researches on this topic there are few factors mentioned: low self-esteem, strong relying on peer acceptance, low society support and also there is a special emphasis on demographic factors [14]. Those factors have significant importance in choosing by young people a strategy for handling difficult situations.

Graph on Fig.3 shows the distribution of answers for strategies A (I), B (No one) and C (Others/Adults) among researched group of boys. Results show the trend among boys in choosing strategy A- 'I' which suggests possessing a strong sense of will and their influence on given situations. The most differentiated strategies were declared by the boys at question number 2 related to their reaction to strong emotions like anger or sadness. One of the components of experiencing difficult situation are emotions which especially in young age can influence the way of seeing and evaluating the situation and variability of choosing the way of coping with evoked emotions.

Graph on Fig. 4 shows the distribution of answers for strategies A (I), B (No one) and C (Others/Adults) among researched group of girls. Presented data shows similar to boys' tendency to take actions while in difficult situation, so choosing strategy A- 'I', which can suggest that sex do not determine choosing the strategy of coping with difficult situation among teenagers.

The detailed analysis of graphs Fig.3 and Fig.4 allow noticing that there is differentiation in reactions toward failure related to sex. Prevalent number of boys declared using strategy A- 'I' in which they try to analyse the problem and find the constructive solution to failure. Among girls there in opposite tendency- they tend to retreat in the face of difficult situation.

There is an explanation to that behaviour: during socializing roles in life, which is determined by society, boys are taught to fight for their goals and girls are taught to be nice and sensible. It is also worth mentioning that outside circumstances of conducting tests among sex differentiated group, because of ability to focus and possible side effect of 'placebo' in tested group [15,16,17].

Despite the reaction to failure it is worth supporting young people in their autonomous decision making process. Sense of will and taking responsibility for their actions while in young age is a good base for young people to efficiently handle difficult situations in the future.

Conclusions

1. The length of training experience shows significant relation to handling difficult situations by young people and autonomous actions to solve the problem.
2. Failures connected with unsuccessful attempt to solve a difficult situation cause different reaction according to sex- wherein girls tend to retreat the difficult situation.

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