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Parental stress, aggression, and pressure and the withdrawal of a parent from a relationship with the child: A structural approach

The aim of this study was to test a theoretical model assuming that a parent's aggression arises as a result of experiencing stress in relation to their child. Subsequently, it was checked whether the parents' aggression is negatively related to the development of their children. Hundred fifty-four parents of children aged 3 to 6 took part in the first study. The second study was conducted on 80 children between 6- and 10-years old attending school and on their parents. The model was tested using structural equation systems, data mining algorithms performed a cluster analysis that grouped the subjects based on similarity in the variables described in the model. The results revealed that the relationships in the model ranged from moderate to high. Parents who used pressure, aggression, and withdrawal to the greatest extent had the highest levels of parental stress.

Keywords: parental stress, aggression, pressure, withdrawal

Stres rodzicielski, agresja i presja oraz wycofanie się rodzica z relacji z dzieckiem: podejście strukturalne

Celem niniejszej pracy było przetestowanie modelu teoretycznego zakładającego, że agresja rodzica powstaje w wyniku doświadczania stresu w stosunku do dziecka. Następnie sprawdzono, czy agresja rodziców jest negatywnie związana z rozwojem ich dzieci.

W pierwszym badaniu wzięło udział 154 rodziców dzieci w wieku od 3 do 6 lat. Drugie badanie przeprowadzono na 80 dzieciach w wieku od 6 do 10 lat uczęszczających do szkoły oraz na ich rodzicach. Model został przetestowany przy użyciu systemów równań strukturalnych, algorytmy eksploracji danych przeprowadziły analizę skupień, która pogrupowała podmioty na podstawie podobieństwa zmiennych opisanych w modelu. Wyniki pokazały, że zależności w modelu wahały się od umiarkowanych do wysokich. Rodzice, którzy w największym stopniu stosowali presję, agresję i wycofywanie się, mieli najwyższy poziom stresu rodzicielskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: stres rodzicielski, agresja, presja, wycofanie

Parental aggression is identified with parental mistakes (in some theories) that is, behaviors which have a negative impact on the child's development (Gurycka, 1990; 2008; Millon & Davis, 1996). A model reconstructed on the basis of Antonina Gurycka's theory (1990) explains the causes of parents' aggressive behavior towards their child. In addition to the parent's aggressive behavior, the model also describes two behaviors characteristic of difficult and stressful situations, namely, the use of parental pressure and withdrawal from the upbringing situation. Underlying this behavior is a stress reaction, which is conditioned by the inability to develop in children these personal qualities that their parents want them to develop.

In other words, the described model presents the causes of parental aggression, pressure, and withdrawal as a consequence of experiencing stress related to the upbringing effort. This stress arises as a result of the inability to achieve the parental goals set for the child by the parent, namely development by the child the personal qualities that the parent wants the child to develop.

The purpose of the described research was to check whether the reconstructed model accurately describes the relations between these variables. Additionally, we sought an answer to the question of how much of the test sample is experiencing parental stress prompting them to use aggression or withdrawal from the relationship with their child.

According to Gurycka (1990; 2008), the parent's aggressive behavior is the result of the formation of a specific mental representation of the child held by the parent. The relation of this representation with aggressive behaviors towards the child is the subject of testing in the current study. This representation involves perceiving a child as particularly threatening, uncomfortable, and unnecessary in the situation in which the parent has found themselves (Gurycka, 1990; 2008). It is significant, therefore, that according to Gurycka, the aggressive attitude of a parent towards their child is caused not only by the parent's experience of stress but also by holding a specific mental representation of their child that can be developed in stressful situation. This representation focuses on perceiving the child

as unnecessary, being a burden and an impediment, but also as threatening and dangerous for the parent.

According to this theory, the parent uses aggression to defend against the child. When the relationship with the child is so difficult for the parent that it becomes a threat to the parent's psychological wellbeing, this creates such a discomfort that the parent begins to apply a series of undesirable behaviors towards the child either forcing something on the child (*exerting pressure*), withdrawing from the relationship with the child, or using aggression against the child as an attempt to reduce the tension.

Therefore, the reconstructed model was created by first measuring which personality traits parents want their children to develop and measuring whether the parents are able to shape these personal characteristics in their children. Next, the model tests the process of stress, of the formation of mental representations, and of shaping the tendencies towards using pressure, aggression, and withdrawal from the upbringing situation (i.e., from the relationship with a child).

Theoretical model

The current study verified the correctness of the model reconstructed on the basis of the Gurycka's theory (Gurycka, 1979; 1990). The main variable from which the analysis of the entire process starts is *discrepancy*. This is the basic exogenous variable of the model. When a parent cannot achieve a chosen parental goals (i.e., the child does not develop those personal characteristics that the parent wants it to develop), the parent experiences stress. This is the first hypothesis formulated on the basis of the model. In Figure 1, it is marked with the symbol *H1*. As a result of experiencing stress, a negative representation of the child is formed in the mind of the parent. This is the second research hypothesis drawn from the tested model (*H2*). A parent who has developed a negative mental representation of their child may exhibit one of the stress reactions: withdraw from a relationship with a child (*H3*), exert pressure on the child (*H4*), and/or react with aggression by attacking and unloading anger on the child (*H5*). The aim of the research was to test this model's validity, to determine how strong the relations among the variables are, and how much of the studied population experiences the dynamic described by these relations.

The following hypotheses were put forward:

H1: The discrepancy between the personality traits that parents want to develop in their children and the level of their actual development in the children is associated with the formation of parental stress (i.e., experiencing parental difficulties).

H2: Parental stress is associated with the parent's formation of a negative mental representation of the child, consisting of perceiving the child as particularly threatening, uncomfortable, and unnecessary in the upbringing situation.

H3: When a parent develops a negative representation of the child, they react with withdrawal.

H4: Shaping a negative mental representation of the child is related to the pressure the parent exerts on the child.

H5: When parents have the negative representation of their child, they use aggressive behavior towards child.

Method

Purpose of research

The aim of the research was to test the theoretical model presented in Figure 1. In order to do so, three research questions were put forward:

1. Can an aggressive reaction of the parents towards their children result from parental stress, that is, the parents experiencing stress and difficulties in their relationship with their children?

In addition, an attempt was made to analyze how many parents in the tested sample experienced strong stress in relation to their children and reacted with the use of pressure, aggression, or withdrawal from the relationship with the children. Thus, the second research question formed was:

2. How much of the tested sample is accurately described by the relations in the theoretical model?

Finally, it was tested whether, on the basis of the variables described in the model, one can predict the level of pressure, aggression, and withdrawal from the relationship with the child used by the parent. This was the subject of the third research question:

3. Is it possible to predict the level of parental pressure, aggression, and withdrawal from the relationship with a child based on the variables described in the theoretical model?

Research sample and procedure

Study 1. The first study was carried out on the Internet. The research sample consisted of parents of preschool children aged 3 to 6 years. Participants were recruited online.

The research sample was comprised of 154 people: 119 mothers (77.2 % of the sample) and 35 fathers (22.7% of the sample).

In the sample there were 85 parents of boys (55.2% of the sample) and 69 of girls (44.8% of the sample). Children aged 3 years constituted 39.2% of the sample (45 children), aged 4 years – 16.2% of the sample (25 children), aged 5 years – 24% of the sample (37 children), and aged 6 years – 36.5% of the sample (47 children).

Measurement tools

The following research tools were used in the study.

The discrepancy scale. The *discrepancy scale* (Szymańska & Dobrenko, 2017) measures three traits that parents want to shape in their children and three traits that they do not want to shape in their children. In addition, the scale measures the level of development of these features in the children. Parents are asked to mark, on a scale from -7 to 7, how much they want their child to develop a particular trait listed as a parental goal and to indicate how much the child has developed this trait. An example question concerning a parental goal that a parent wants to shape in their child is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

First pairs of questions in the discrepancy scale test on parental goals

<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Please list three traits that are especially important to you as a parent and for which you make an effort to make sure your child develops them.</p> <p>Trait one: (enter trait name here)</p> <p>Mark how important this trait is to you as a parent, the extent to which you wish your child to be like this.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(-7) definitely not like this (7) definitely like this</p> <p>Mark the extent to which (write your child's name) has developed the trait in question.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(-7) definitely has not (7) definitely has</p>
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If the child has developed the trait that the parent wanted, then the measure of discrepancy was equal to 0. If the child did not develop that trait, then the discrepancy was maximal, and was $7 - (-7) = 14$. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed the existence of two factors in the scale:

1) *Discrepancy from the positive goals:* Measures the distance between the trait desired by the parent and the child's development of that trait. The factor

loadings of the scale were $\lambda_1 = .86$, $\lambda_2 = .82$, $\lambda_3 = .75$. Reliability: CR = .85. Variance extracted: VE = .66.

2) *Discrepancy from negative goals*: Measures the distance between the trait the parent does not want their child to develop and the child's development of that trait. The factor loadings of the scale were $\lambda_4 = .70$, $\lambda_5 = .79$, $\lambda_6 = .80$. Reliability: CR = .81. Variance extracted: VE = .59.

The CFA model had a good fit to data, $\chi^2(8) = 28.632$, $p < .005$, CFI = .975.

Experienced parental difficulties scale (stress). This scale measures the level of parental stress, that is, the difficulties experienced in the relationship with the child. The scale consists of one factor explaining 74.97% of the variability of all results. The scale consists of 8 questions. The reliability of the scale is very good, $\alpha = .965$. Reliability calculated by means of intra-class correlation is RO2 = .773.

Coping with Stress scale. This scale consists of 15 questions measuring the parents' response to stress in the parenting situation. The scale has four factors, in the present study two scales were used:

Withdrawal. The strongest factor explains 24.27% of the variability of the results and measures the withdrawal of the parent from the upbringing situation. This factor is correlated with Avoidance – Oriented Coping, $r = .342$, $p < .05$, and with Distraction, $r = .512$, $p < .05$ in the *Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations* (CISS, Endler & Parker, 1990a; 1990b; 1994; Strelau et al., 2005). Its reliability is $\alpha = .893$ and RO2 = .583.

Pressure. Explains 16,435% of the variability of the results and measures coping through the use of pressure. Its reliability is $\alpha = .917$ RO2 = .787.

The representation scale. This scale examines the parent's mental representation of the child based on the perception of the child as particularly threatening, uncomfortable, and unnecessary in the upbringing situation. The scale has good reliability, $\alpha = .865$ RO2 = .444. This scale was developed by psychology students at WSAP in Bialystok under the leadership of Szymańska.

The aggression scale. This scale measures the parent's tendency to use verbal, physical or symbolic attacks as well as threats or degrading in relation to a child. The scale consists of two factors. The first factor explains 37% of the variability of the results. It measures the use of humiliation and cruel behavior towards the child. The second factor explains 16.7% of the variability of the results, and it measures vindictiveness towards the child. The reliability of the scale is $\alpha = .822$. In order to check the convergent validity of the tool, the scale was correlated with Gurycka's scale of the parent's aggression against the child (Gurycka, 1990). The correlation of scales proved the validity of the tool, $r = .648$, $p < .005$. This scale, developed by psychology students at WSAP in Bialystok under the leadership of Szymańska.

Data analysis method

The following methods were used for analysis.

Structural equation systems. The systems were used to determine the strength of the relations among the variables described in the theoretical model presented in Figure 1 and to determine whether the presented model fits the data accurately. The structural models tested the hypothesis that the model reconstructed on the basis of theory does not differ from the empirical model. If this hypothesis cannot be rejected on the basis of the results, then the model cannot be rejected as incorrect.

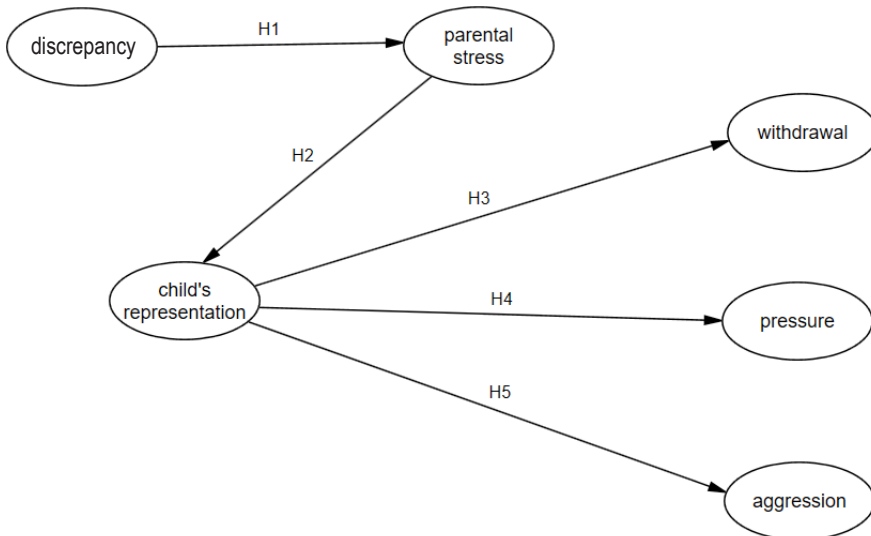


Figure 1. The theoretical model

Generalized *k*-means cluster analysis. Algorithms of the data mining method tested how many clusters of people similar to each other in terms of the variables described in the theoretical model can be distinguished in the data set. The algorithms tested how many of the respondents had high scores in the variables related to experiencing stress, that is, the discrepancy, experienced difficulty, negative mental representation of the child and in response to stress by withdrawing from the upbringing situation, exerting pressure, or exhibiting aggression.

Artificial neural network. The task of the network was to build predictions, that is, to determine whether, based on the variables described in the model,

the parents' results in aggression, exerting of pressure, and withdrawal from the relationship with the child can be predicted. If it turned out that they can, then it could be stated that the variables presented in the model are good predictors of parents' aggressive behavior.

Results

Testing the theoretical model – results of the structural equation systems

The results obtained by means of structural equations revealed that the relations between the variables in the model ranged from moderate to high. The relation between discrepancy and parental stress was moderate and amounted to $\beta = .461$, $p = .022$.

The discrepancy explained 21.25% of the variability of parental stress. When a child developed other characteristics than those that the parent wanted it to develop, the level of parental stress increased. The relation between parental stress and the parent's mental representation of the child was $\beta = .621$, $p < .005$. Stress explained 38.56% of the variability of the parent's negative mental representation of the child. Thus, when a parent experienced stress, he or she began to perceive their child as threatening to, uncomfortable, and unnecessary.

The parent's mental representation of the child was related to the parent withdrawing from the parental situation at a high level, $\beta = .758$, $p < .005$, and to the parent's aggressive behavior towards the child, $\beta = .837$, $p < .005$. It was also moderately linked with the use of pressure, $\beta = .689$, $p < .005$. A parents' negative mental representation of their children explained 62.25% of the variability in the parents' withdrawal from raising the children. The variable of representation explained 47.47% of the variability in pressure scores. Representation explained 70% of the variability in the parents' use of aggression towards their children.

Together with the increase of the parent's mental representation of their child as threatening and unnecessary, the parent's aggressive behavior, pressure, and withdrawal from the relationship with the child increased. The relations between the variables are presented in Figure 2.

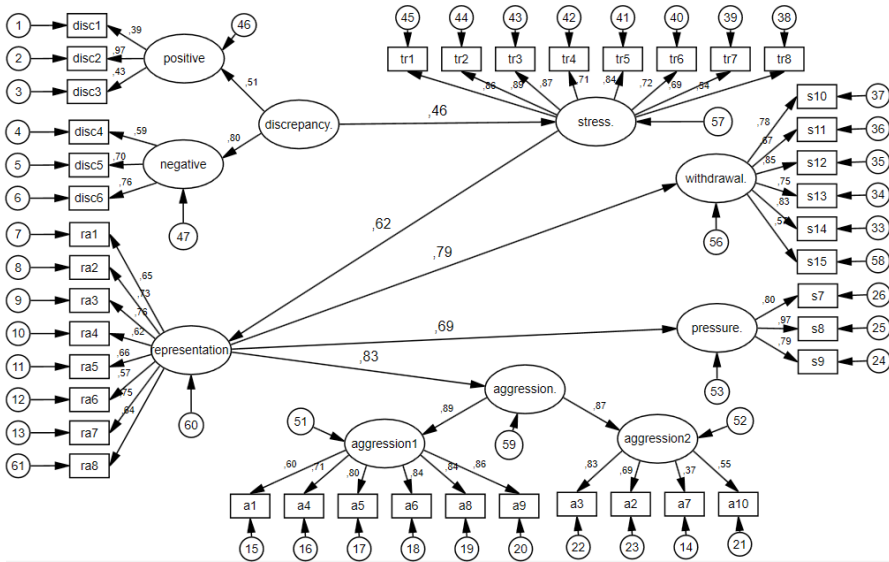


Figure 2. A graph presenting the results of the structural equations systems

Note: Explanations to this figure see pp. 86–87.

The model fit the data accurately, as indicated by both RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) statistics not exceeding the critical value of .08 and χ^2/df not exceeding the critical value of 2.5 (Hair et al., 2006). The model's fit statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Fit statistics of the model tested by means of structural equations systems

Fit indexes	Value	Value recommended H0 for nonrepudiation	Level of statistical significance
χ^2	1547.396		$p < .001$
df	770		
n	154		
χ^2/df	2.010		
RMSEA	.080	< .06 < .08	90% probability

Profiles distinguished by stress levels, use of aggression, pressure, and withdrawal

Cluster analysis was performed using all of the variables in the model. Data mining algorithms programmed in the generalized *k-means* cluster analysis procedure distinguished the clusters of people on the basis of their results on the variables described in the theoretical model. The *v - cross validation* method was used. The algorithms themselves determined the number of clusters in the set, their number was not limited by the researcher. The algorithms have selected three clusters. They are presented in Figure 3.

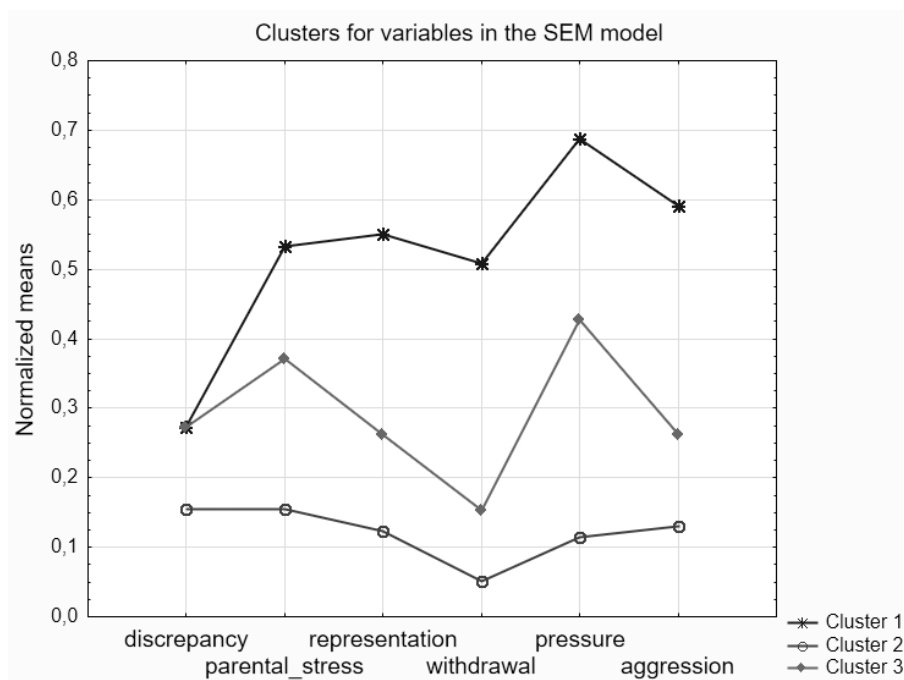


Figure 3. Results of the generalised k-means cluster analysis for variables in the structural model

The first cluster included 13% of the entire sample (20 people). Parents belonging to this cluster displayed an average level of discrepancy, that is, the inability to achieve parental goals. They were characterized by the highest level of stress among all of the clusters, as well as by holding negative mental representations of their children an high levels of aggression, pressure, and withdrawal. Table 3 presents means for clusters and the number of people belonging to them.

Table 3.

Means of clusters and the number of cases classified to clusters

	discrepancy	stress	representation	withdrawal	pressure	aggression	Number of cases	Percent (%)
1	211.70	9.85	31.40	19.30	17.20	32.50	20	13.07
2	120.89	.65	7.03	1.94	2.85	7.16	84	54.90
3	212.55	0.79	14.89	5.83	10.67	14.44	49	32.02

The second (most numerous) cluster included 55% of the sample (84 people). These were the parents who were characterized by the lowest scores in all variables. It was the cluster of people who did not experience high stress and who rarely displayed aggressive behaviors, withdrawal, and exerting of pressure in the relationship with their children.

The third cluster included 32% of the sample (49 people). They were characterized by average results in all variables. They were the people who experienced moderate parental stress as well as sporadically used aggression, pressure, and withdrawal. There were statistically significant differences between the variables in the clusters. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Results of the analysis of variance for variables between clusters

	between SS	df	within SS	df	F	p-value
discrepancy	316557.5	2	2218282	150	10.7028	< .005
difficulty	9423.4	2	11585	150	61.0037	< .005
representation	9925.4	2	9694	150	76.7885	< .005
withdrawal	4878.4	2	4048	150	90.3940	< .005
pressure	4175.3	2	1990	150	157.3387	< .005
aggression	10560.7	2	7551	150	104.8968	< .005

Prediction of parental behavior based on the variables described in the model. Results of the artificial neural network

Two hundred neural networks were built in order to determine to what extent can parental aggressive behaviors, exerting pressure, and withdrawal from the relationship with the child be predicted on the basis of the variables described in the model.

The prediction of the network for aggression was based on five input variables: discrepancy, parental stress, mental representation of the child, parental withdrawal, and pressure (Figure 4). The network had six neurons in the hidden layer and one output variable which was aggression. For the training set, the accuracy of the network was 78.1%, for the test set – 62%, and for the validation sets – 78.2%. The network prediction for aggression was therefore accurate. Table 5 presents details of the results.

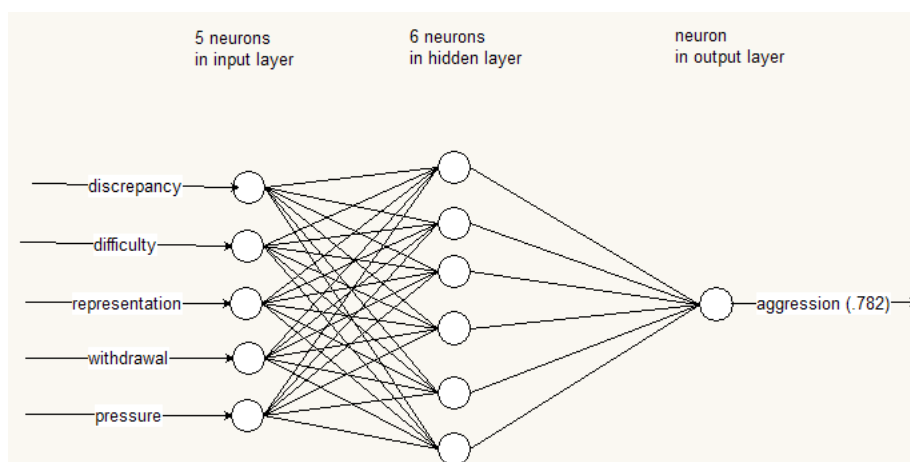


Figure 4. The network for the variable of aggression

Table 5.

Summary of the artificial neural network's prediction the variable of aggression

Id of net	Net's-name	Quality (learning set)	Quality (testing set)	Quality (validation set)	Error (learning set)	Error (testing set)	Error (validation set)
3	MLP 5-6-1	.781178	.623033	.781758	26.35319	44.35484	21.22140

The prediction of the network for the variable of pressure was made on the basis of five input variables: discrepancy, parental stress, mental representation of the child, parental withdrawal, and the use of aggression against the child (Figure 5). The network had three neurons in the hidden layer and one output variable, pressure. For the training set, the validity of the network was 68%, for the test set – 66.1%, and for the validation set – 77.6%. The network's prediction for pressure was also accurate, as Table 6 shows.

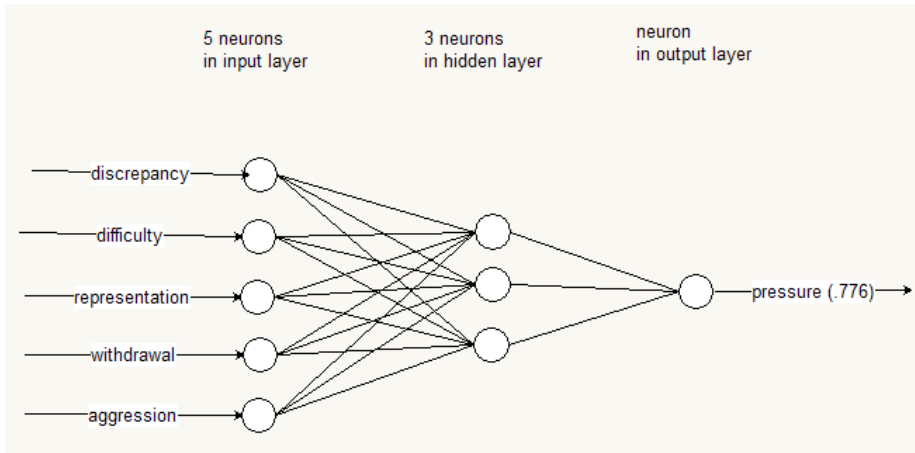


Figure 5. The network for the variable of pressure

Table 6.

Summary of the artificial neural network's prediction for the variable of pressure

Id of net	Net's-name	Quality (learning set)	Quality (testing set)	Quality (validation set)	Error (learning set)	Error (testing set)	Error (validation set)
1	MLP 5-3-1	.680023	.661423	.776256	11.40084	11.27151	6.492165

The network's prediction for withdrawal was made on the basis of five input variables: discrepancy, parental stress, mental representation of the child, use of aggression, and use of pressure towards the child (Figure 6). The network had nine neurons in the hidden layer and one output layer, which was the variable of withdrawal. For the learning set, the validity of the network was 71.1%, for the test set – 56% and 89.9% for the validation set. The network prediction for withdrawal was again accurate, see Table 7.

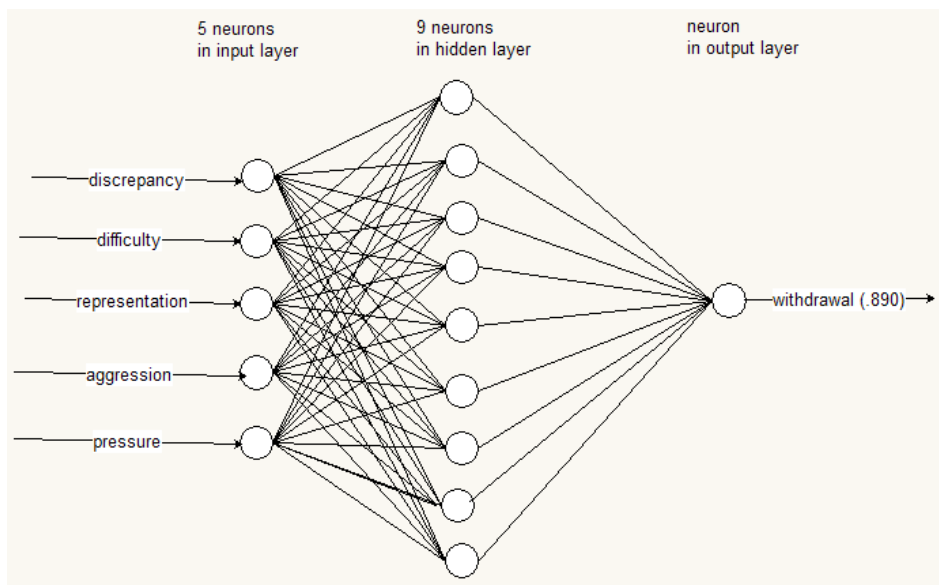


Figure 6. The network for the variable of withdrawal

Table 7.

Summary of the artificial neural network's prediction for the variable of withdrawal

Id of net	Net's-name	Quality (learning set)	Quality (testing set)	Quality (validation set)	Error (learning set)	Error (testing set)	Error (validation set)
1	MLP 5-9-1	.711323	.561560	.899966	15.30543	20.85168	4.423961

Table 8.

Means of clusters and the number of cases classified to clusters

Cluster	Aggression	Emotional competences	Social competences	School readiness	Number of cases	Percent (%)
1	19.46	10.12	6.66	7.57	54	67.50
2	14.92	15.73	8.92	10.38	26	32.50

Summary and discussion

The results obtained on the basis of structural equations revealed that the proposed model cannot be rejected as incorrect. The obtained results are concrete enough to allow for the decision to not reject the model as incorrect (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Hair et al., 2006; Heck & Thomas, 2009; Heck et al., 2010; Konarski, 2009; Szymańska, 2016). The model presented here, although it describes the formation of aggressive behavior quite well (it explains 68.9% of variability in aggression), is not the only model possible. It is just one of many models explaining the emergence of aggressive behavior in relation to the child. An important result obtained is that withdrawal, exerting of pressure, and aggression are strongly and positively correlated with the parent's mental representation of the child as threatening and unnecessary. The cluster analysis also revealed that these three parental reactions co-occur with each other. Parents who exert pressure on their children also apply aggression and withdraw from their relationship with their children. The more stress a parent experiences, the more the parent develops a mental representation of the child as threatening and unnecessary for the parent, and the more he/she applies aggressive behavior, exerts pressure, and withdraws. Positive relations between pressure, withdrawal and a stress reaction have already been confirmed by previous research (Szymańska, 2017). It is also not surprising that withdrawal and pressure, as well as aggression, are correlated.

The results obtained by means of cluster analysis showed that only few people experience strong parental stress – about 13% of the tested sample. By far the largest number of people (55% of the study sample) experienced low stress as well exhibited as low pressure, aggression, and withdrawal towards the child. 32% of the sample tested possessed these features at an average level. These results confirm the results obtained in other studies. High levels of parental stress were not common and the variable of parental stress had a right-skewed distribution (Szymańska, 2017).

Research conducted on another sample revealed that the high parental stress affects about 12% of the tested sample (Szymańska & Dobrenko, 2017). The results obtained in this study, as well as in the previous one are therefore very convergent. Thus, it can be assumed that high parental stress and parents' frequent application of aggression, pressure, and withdrawal is characteristic for about 10 to 15% of parents in the Polish population.

Both in these and in previous studies on another sample of parents, quite specific results for parental withdrawal were observed. The withdrawal of a parent from a stressful situation was associated with a high level of stress and did not

increase in a linear way, as pressure did, but it occurred when a certain critical level of stress was exceeded.

Parents with a high level of discrepancy and stress begin to react by withdrawing. The pressure is applied linearly, that is, whenever the stress experienced by the parent is increasing. Exerting pressure increases but withdrawal appears in larger quantities only after exceeding a certain level of stress (see Figure 3).

Thirty-two percent of the subjects had average parental stress results. This group of parents had low results in both withdrawal and aggression, and increased scores in the use of pressure. It is significant that these parents had a fairly low level of negative representations of their children.

Lastly, the largest group of parents was classified to the cluster characterized by the lowest results in all variables. As many as 55% of the research sample belonged to this cluster. These results show that over half of the surveyed parents experience low stress in relation to their children and do not use behaviors characterized by pressure, aggression, and withdrawal. Thirty-two percent of people had increased stress ratings and mainly use pressure, but not withdrawal and aggression. Only about 13% of parents experienced high stress. This group reacted in an unfavorable way both by withdrawal and by using pressure and aggression.

Finally, using neural networks, it was shown that, based on the variables described in the model, parents' results in aggression, pressure, and withdrawal in relation to the child can be predicted quite accurately.

Limitation of the research

The basic limitation of the current research were the relatively small research samples. Although they were large enough to obtain statistically significant results, they are not numerous enough to guarantee generalizability of the obtained results. Parents of preschool children are reluctant to take part in psychological research, therefore, conducting the current research, especially on a topic as difficult as aggression, experienced stress, or difficulties in the relationship with the child, was itself a big undertaking. Future studies should focus on the possibility of increasing the research sample.

An undoubted advantage of the research described here, however, was the choice of research tools. The research used the original scales of the author of the theory of parental mistakes, as well as modern versions of those tools, which were validated with the original scales. This is undoubtedly very important in the context of verifying of the theory of parental mistakes.

Future research should focus on testing this model in other countries to determine whether it describes a regional phenomenon or, perhaps, it can be generalized to populations from other countries aside from Poland.

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Footnotes

¹The eight items in question were:

- tr1 I have many parenting problems with my child.
- tr2 I have the impression that bringing up my child is a constant struggle.
- tr3 I experience parenting problems associated with my child.
- tr4 I am constantly upset due to conflicts with my child.
- tr5 I often experience powerlessness in contact with my child.
- tr6 I am constantly angry due to my child's behavior.
- tr7 I cannot cope with my child.
- tr8 I experience a lot of anxiety in contact with my child.

²The eight items in question were:

- ra1 My child is running around a lot and making lots of noise, which disturbs me.
- ra2 My child's behaviors are bizarre sometimes and it makes me irritated.
- ra3 My child brings me shame.
- ra4 Because of my child, I get into arguments with people in my surroundings (my husband, family, etc.).
- ra5 I am afraid that because of its behavior my child will hurt me or others.
- ra6 My child is completely wild, I cannot keep up with it.
- ra7 My child is crazy (in a very negative sense).
- ra8 My child is irresponsible, it does not think about others.

³The six items in question were:

- S10 I'm tired of raising my child.
- S11 I retreat when it is difficult and I cannot get along with my child.
- S12 I avoid contact with my child when I lose strength to cope with my child.
- S13 I do not try (I give up) when difficulties arise in my relationship with my child.

S14 The difficulties I experience in my relationship with my child make contact with my child very difficult.

S15 I do not confront my child.

⁴ The three items in question were:

S7 I can deal with difficulties associated with my child by applying pressure.

S8 I use coercion when there are problems with my child.

S9 When I'm having a difficulty with my child I force my child to surrender.

⁵ The ten items in question were:

a1. How often do you use corporal punishment on your child?

a2. How often do you unload your negative emotions or moods on your child?

a3. How often do you punish your child by deliberately doing something that will annoy or anger it?

a4. How often do you use offensive words with your child?

a5. How often do you punish a child by ordering it to perform very exhaustive activities that will make it cry?

a6. How often do you give your child duties despite the fact that you know they exceed his or her abilities?

a7. How often do you go through with a punishment that you have previously announced to your child?

a8. How often do you use punishments that will embarrass your child?

a9. How often do you ridicule your child in front of others?

a10. How often do you show your child that you are angry with it by giving it the silent treatment?