

## Predictive role of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers vs. perfectionism and self-esteem of women in early adulthood

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### Summary

The research carried out so far shows that the parental attitudes of fathers play a significant part in the course of psychosocial development of their children. However, hardly any research refers to the impact of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers on the functioning of adult women. Therefore, it is essential to verify the assumption that self-esteem and perfectionism of adult women are determined by the quality of parental attitudes of their fathers.

**Aim.** The aim of this research was to determine differentiation in respect of self-esteem and perfectionism in the groups of women selected based on the criterion of the quality of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers. I also searched for predictive value of retrospectively perceived parental attitudes of fathers for the perfectionism and self-esteem of women in early adulthood as well as correlations between self-esteem and types of perfectionism.

**Material and method.** The research included 87 women in early adulthood ( $M = 21.64$ ;  $SD = 4.84$ ), from the Łódź Province. The following research tools were used: *Questionnaire of Retrospective Assessment of Parental Attitudes*, *Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Questionnaire*, *Multidimensional Self-esteem Inventory*.

**Results.** The obtained research results indicate the occurrence of differentiation with regard to self-esteem and perfectionism of women in terms of the quality of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers. The women who assessed the parental attitudes of their fathers negatively obtained higher mean scores in maladaptive perfectionism and lower ones in general self-esteem and its dimensions (i.e., being loved, self-control, defensive strengthening of self-esteem, self-acceptance, popularity, identity integration) than the women who described the parental attitudes of their fathers as positive. It was found out that retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers, both in the positive and negative aspects, had predictive value in the direction consistent with the expectations for maladaptive perfectionism as well as general self-esteem and its dimensions. It was shown that there were significant correlations between types of perfectionism and general self-esteem.

**Conclusions.** The fact of indicating the role of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers in the context of building of self-esteem and perfectionism demonstrated by young women contributes to updating the psychological knowledge in this respect as well as plays a significant part in psychotherapy.

**Key words:** perfectionism, self-esteem, parental attitudes

### Introduction

The previous studies on the family system have largely described and explained parent–child relationships [1, 2]. However, it has been noticed that the majority of publications concerning this subject are related to mother–child bonds [3–5]. It has been stressed that although the issue of father–child relationships has already, though to a lesser extent, been present in the literature, it has been subject to systematic analysis only relatively recently. The results of the explorative studies taken up by the researchers are the three fundamental research categories covering the problem of the father’s interaction with the child. They include: correlational studies, research on absent or divorced fathers and studies concerning committed fathers. It has been stressed in them that the properly performed role of the father is subject to inevitable change during the whole life of the child and the way it is played is determined by many factors such as: heritage from the family of origin, the man’s personality traits, the quality of his marriage relationship as well as the child’s features, e.g., gender, age, health [1, 6, 7]. Some research results showing that girls with anorexia described their fathers’ attitudes as more rejecting in comparison with their healthy peers are the exemplification of the impact of the child’s health on the parental attitudes of fathers. On the other hand, fathers demonstrated a much more loving attitude toward their healthy daughters than the fathers of ill girls [8]. In some other studies, it is noticed that in the perception of patients with anorexia, their fathers demonstrated stronger rejecting attitudes than the mothers, whereas in the perception of healthy girls, the fathers demonstrated more demanding attitudes in comparison with the mothers [9].

The scarce research refers to determining positive and negative correlations between the parental attitudes of fathers and the psychological aspects of their children’s functioning. It has been proved that the parental attitudes of fathers have a positive influence on the development of cognitive competence in their children, empathy, on the increase of the inner control level as well as the decrease of stereotypes associated with gender [10]. It has been found out that the father–daughter relationship is exceptionally important for the proper psychosexual development of women and their self-perception [11, 12]. There have been ambiguous research results concerning the influence of negative parental attitudes of fathers on the functioning of their daughters. Some of them indicate that rejection by the father will determine some traits of introversion in their daughters, whereas making excessive demands will be associated with increased emotional excitability and a general negative attitude in children of both sexes [1]. Other studies have not revealed the discussed correlations at all or only for the

sons [13]. On the other hand, fathers who demonstrate lack of affection and emotional instability to their children make them reveal narcissistic tendencies [14]. It is worth adding that children raised in families where the parents behave in an authoritarian, neglecting or indulging way demonstrate a lower level of psychosocial development than children from families where the parents enjoy respect. Family specialists agree that parental attitudes can affect not only the development and functioning of a child in early childhood but also in adolescence and adulthood [15].

Due to the complexity and topicality of the problem including the psychological aspects of the father–daughter relationship, from the scientific point of view, it is important to find answers to the questions about the influence of this relationship's quality on self-esteem and demonstrating perfectionism by adult women. The theoretical basis for the formulated research problems and discussion of the obtained results was the systemic concept since it is currently regarded as the most fully describing the complexity and diversification of the family system. According to this approach, the family is treated as an **open system** understood as a complex, integral whole characterized by structured interaction patterns having a rather circular than linear form<sup>1</sup>. It is stressed that the basic quality of family systems is the phenomenon of **emergence**. It means that the family system is something more than just a sum of its constituent entities. All the persons in the family create together a network of interactions. In the family system, each of the members is characterized by their own individuality and at the same time shows traces of the whole system [1].

In this study, the following psychological variables were considered: retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of the father, adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, and self-esteem. 'Parental attitude' shall be described as an entrenched, to a certain degree, inherited, general form of the parent's behavior towards the child, of a cognitive-activity-like-emotional nature [16]. 'Self-esteem' is a specific belief about oneself (general self-esteem). In the self-esteem structure, there are specific self-esteem components, which refer to the different aspects of a person's activity: competence, being loved, popularity, leadership abilities, self-control, moral self-acceptance, physical attractiveness and vitality [17]. 'Adaptive perfectionism' is characterized by accepting oneself regardless of the results of undertaken activities, flexibility in setting one's own goals and the way they are achieved, expecting rather successes than failures, a high sense of self-efficacy as well as the ability to determine priorities [18]. 'Maladaptive perfectionism' is characterized by a tendency to set oneself excessive and unrealistic goals in each activity area, focusing rather on mistakes and failures, which results from the fact that an individual is aware of a discrepancy between their internal standards and the outcome of the performed activities, as well as by experiencing distress [18].

<sup>1</sup> The fact that an influence is not of a linear nature means that it is not possible to distinguish clearly the cause and effect of interpersonal relationships. The circular nature of an influence means that it works on a feedback loop basis, which may be positive or negative. Circularity means that human relationships are never one-way and the behavior of one person affects the whole family system [1].

## Research aim

The aim of the research was to determine differentiation in respect of the level of self-esteem and the type of perfectionism of young women depending on retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of their fathers. Moreover, it was checked whether the retrospectively perceived negative and positive parental attitudes of fathers had predictive value for the perfectionism and self-esteem of adult women and whether there were any correlations between perfectionism and self-esteem.

## Material and method

The research was conducted in years 2016–2017 in the Łódź Voivodeship<sup>2</sup>. It was of an individual nature and applied the principles of anonymity and voluntary participation. The examined women were informed about the goal of the research and that its results will be used exclusively for scientific purposes. The survey was conducted by paper-pencil method, which ensured a direct contact of the respondents with the psychologist and a possibility of providing information in case of any doubts.

The research included a total number of 130 women in early adulthood (20–35 years old). The sample was selected by the snowball method. We excluded from the analysis the data collected from 43 persons due to their incompleteness ( $n = 13$ ) and failing to meet the established sample selection criteria ( $n = 30$ ). The inclusion criteria were as follows: the origin from a full family and age between 20 and 35 years. The finally analyzed empirical material was obtained from 87 women at the mean age of 21.6 years ( $SD = 4.84$ ). The examined group was divided into two subgroups due to the quality of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of the father. The first group included the women who perceived the parental attitudes of their fathers as positive<sup>3</sup> ( $n = 49$ ; 56%). Whereas the second group consisted of the women who described their fathers' attitudes<sup>4</sup> as negative<sup>5</sup> ( $n = 38$ ; 44%).

The following research tools were used in the study:

### 1. *The Questionnaire of Retrospective Assessment of Parental Attitudes*

The Questionnaire was used in order to determine retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of the father (KPR-Roc O). It measures the following parental atti-

<sup>2</sup> The research was carried out by Magdalena Badek, a participant of the M.A. seminar in the faculty of psychology conducted in years 2015–2017.

<sup>3</sup> The retrospective assessments of parental attitudes of fathers were categorized as positive based on the results obtained by the examined women in five attitudes: acceptance and autonomy (7–10 sten), inconsistency, protection, and demands (1–4 sten) [16].

<sup>4</sup> The retrospective assessments of parental attitudes of fathers were categorized as negative based on the results obtained by the examined women in five attitudes: acceptance and autonomy (1–4 sten), inconsistency, protection and demands (7–10 sten) [16].

<sup>5</sup> The retrospective assessments of parental attitudes of fathers were categorized as negative based on the results obtained by the examined women in five attitudes: acceptance and autonomy (1–4 sten), inconsistency, protection and demands (7–10 sten) [16].

tudes: acceptance and rejection, autonomy, inconsistency, protection, and demands. The respondents give their answer, using a 5-point Likert scale: from 'I strongly agree that he was like that and behaved in this way' to 'I strongly disagree that he was like that and behaved in this way'. The reliability of the questionnaire fell in the range from 0.84 to 0.90. The validity of the tool was examined by determining the criterion validity (the adopted criteria were, for instance, duration of marriage, growing up in a family with alcohol problems, somatic illness). Moreover, we noted correlations of the KPR-Roc O in the expected direction with the NEO-FFI [16].

### 2. *The Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Questionnaire*

The tool is designed for measuring adaptive perfectionism (AP) and maladaptive perfectionism (MP). The respondents give their answers on a 7-point Likert scale from 'I strongly disagree' to 'I strongly agree'. The reliability of the questionnaire for the MP scale is 0.95 and for the AP scale 0.85. The theoretical validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by obtaining correlations in the expected direction with other psychological tools, e.g., the NEO-FFI (scales: Consciousness, Neuroticism), Dymkowski Self-esteem Scale [18].

### 3. *The Multidimensional Self-esteem Inventory*

This questionnaire was applied to measure self-esteem. It consists of 11 scales. Nine of them directly concern a sense of self-esteem, its general level and its eight components referring to the specific aspects of the functioning of a human being, such as competence, being loved, popularity, leadership skills, self-control, moral self-acceptance, physical attractiveness and vitality. Additionally, the questionnaire includes a scale for assessing a self-image consistency, which reveals the effectiveness of the self-cognition process, as well as a scale for the assessment of the level of the need for social approval. The examined person responds to the items on a five-point scale. In the first part, the respondents answer to what extent a given statement describes them (from 'completely untrue' to 'completely true'). In the second part, the respondents say how often they think or feel in the described way (from 'hardly ever' to 'very often'). The reliability of the tool assessed by the Cornbach's *alpha* coefficient falls in the range between 0.70 and 0.90. The evidenced theoretical validity reveals correlations of the inventory with the psychological tools measuring the mood, temperament, anxiety, adaptation, parental attitudes and coping styles [17].

A respondent data questionnaire was developed to collect demographic and social data (age, gender, place of residence, education, marital status, family of origin).

The following research questions were formulated:

4. Are there any differences with regard to perfectionism and self-esteem in the groups of women differentiated in terms of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of their fathers?
5. Does retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers have predictive value for perfectionism and self-esteem of women in early adulthood?

6. Are there correlations between perfectionism and self-esteem in women in early adulthood?

Based on the literature of the subject, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

**H<sub>1</sub>**: There is differentiation with regard to a type of perfectionism of young women in terms of retrospectively perceived parental attitudes of their fathers. Women who describe their fathers' parental attitudes negatively will demonstrate maladaptive perfectionism [12].

**H<sub>2</sub>**: There is differentiation with regard to self-esteem of young women in terms of retrospectively perceived parental attitudes of their fathers. Women who describe their fathers' parental attitudes as negative will have lower mean scores in self-esteem than women who assess their fathers' parental attitudes as positive [11, 17].

**H<sub>3</sub>**: Retrospectively perceived parental attitudes of fathers have predictive value for self-esteem of women in early adulthood. Negative assessment of parental attitudes of fathers will determine maladaptive perfectionism in young women [20].

**H<sub>4</sub>**: Retrospectively perceived parental attitudes of fathers have predictive value for perfectionism of women in early adulthood. Negative assessment of parental attitudes of fathers will determine lower mean scores in self-esteem in young women [15].

**H<sub>5</sub>**: Low self-esteem of women in early adulthood will be significantly positively correlated with maladaptive perfectionism [21].

The professional software IBM SPSS version 24 licensed by University of Lodz was used to analyze data. In the statistical processing of the collected material, we took the size of the examined samples into account and used the Lindberg-Levy Central Limit Theorem [22]. To assess the differentiation between the compared groups of women in terms of perfectionism and self-confidence, we applied the Student's *t*-test. For the statistically significant differences between the compared groups, the effect size was determined by the Cohen's *d* coefficient [23]. While measuring predictive value of the examined variables, we used the stepwise regression analysis to create a model consisting only of the significant predictors. In order to determine correlations between self-esteem and perfectionism of young women, the Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient was applied. The hypotheses were verified for a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ .

## Results

Referring to the first research question, it was found out that there was incongruence in terms of perfectionism and self-esteem between the groups of women retrospectively assessing their fathers' parental attitudes as positive or negative (Table 1).

**Table 1. Differentiation in terms of perfectionism in the compared groups of women who retrospectively assessed their fathers' attitudes as positive (PA) or negative (NA)**

Variables	Groups				t	df	p	Cohen's d
	PA; n = 49		NA; n = 38					
	M	SD	M	SD				
Adaptive perfectionism	66.36	11.94	62.11	11.04	1.366	73	0.176	-
Maladaptive perfectionism	76.88	22.90	92.16	26.20	-2.423	73	0.018	-0.66

M – mean; SD – standard deviation; t – Student's t-test; df – number of degrees of freedom; p – bilateral asymptotic significance; Cohen's d – coefficient of strength of relationship between variables

The obtained results allow for the statement that there are significant intergroup differences in terms of maladaptive perfectionism. Women who retrospectively described their fathers' parental attitudes as negative obtained in this dimension significantly higher mean scores ( $t(73) = -2.423$ ;  $p < 0.018$ ) than women who assessed their fathers' attitudes as positive. The estimated effect size was medium ( $d = -0.66$ ). This confirmed the validity of  $H_1$ . No intergroup differences were evidenced for adaptive perfectionism ( $t(73) = 1.366$ ;  $p < 0.176$ ).

At the next stage of the analyses, we considered differentiation with regard to self-esteem for the groups of women who retrospectively assessed their fathers' parental attitudes as positive or negative (Table 2).

**Table 2. Differentiation with regard to self-esteem in the compared groups of women retrospectively assessing their fathers' attitudes as positive (PA) or negative (NA)**

Self-esteem	Groups				t	df	p	Cohen's d
	PA; n = 49		NA; n = 38					
	M	SD	M	SD				
General self-esteem	30.86	7.48	26.68	6.33	2.178	73	0.033	0.61
Competence	33.50	5.21	30.84	6.59	1.793	73	0.077	-
Being loved	37.54	7.28	29.84	9.59	3.661	73	0.000	1.40
Popularity	34.27	5.56	30.47	6.06	2.521	73	0.014	0.72
Leadership skills	33.52	5.07	32.00	6.39	1.054	73	0.295	-
Self-control	32.52	6.200	27.16	6.247	3.250	73	0.002	0.83
Moral self-acceptance	39.71	6.249	34.89	7.644	2.742	73	0.008	0.77
Physical attractiveness	31.71	7.632	28.26	6.943	1.741	73	0.086	-
Vitality	33.18	7.671	32.42	8.977	0.356	73	0.723	-
Identity integration	30.64	6.640	26.05	7.337	2.536	73	0.013	0.61
Defensive strengthening of self-esteem	50.84	8.591	44.53	7.129	2.881	73	0.005	0.80

The research results indicate that women who retrospectively describe their fathers' parental attitudes as positive obtain significantly higher mean scores in terms of general self-esteem ( $t(73) = -2.178; p < 0.033$ ) than the ones who assess their fathers' attitudes as negative. The strength of the relationship between the variables was medium ( $d = 0.61$ ). The obtained results prove the correctness of hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>. Moreover, it was noticed that women who perceived their fathers' parental attitudes as positive demonstrated higher mean scores in terms of individual self-esteem dimensions such as: being loved ( $d = 1.40$ ), self-control ( $d = 0.83$ ), defensive strengthening of self-esteem ( $d = 0.80$ ), self-acceptance ( $d = 0.77$ ), popularity ( $d = 0.72$ ), and identity integration ( $d = 0.61$ ). Considering the values of the obtained coefficients of the strength of the relationship between the variables, it is indicated that they fell in the range of the high ( $d > 0.80$ ) and the medium ones ( $d > 0.50$ ).

At the next stage of the analyses, it was checked if the retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers (independent variable) had predictive value for the perfectionism (dependent variable) of young women. There was no evidence for an influence of positive assessment of parental attitudes of fathers on demonstrating adaptive perfectionism in young women. However, it was found out that the fact of assessing retrospectively the parental attitudes of fathers as excessively demanding explained demonstrating maladaptive perfectionism by the examined women in 23.8%. The remaining variance of results is explained by other variables (76.2%). The obtained results allow us to consider the assumptions of hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> as justified (Table 3).

Table 3. The results of the linear stepwise regression analysis for the variable 'perfectionism'

Parental attitude	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	β	p	Dependent variable
Excessive demand	0.488	0.238	1.197	0.488	0.000	Maladaptive perfectionism

R – multiple correlation coefficient; R<sup>2</sup> – percentage of explained variance; B – regression coefficient; β – standardized beta coefficient; p – significance level

In the next stage, the stepwise regression analysis was conducted, including dependent variables, such as general self-esteem and the other scales determining self-esteem, as well as independent ones, i.e., retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers. The obtained results were divided into two groups: women who retrospectively described their fathers' parental attitudes as positive (Table 4) and negative (Table 5).

Table 4. The results of the linear stepwise regression for the examined variables in the group of women who assessed their fathers' parental attitudes positively

Retrospective assessment of parental attitudes	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	β	p	Self-esteem
Autonomy	0.325	0.106	0.278	0.325	0.002	General self-esteem
	0.067	0.056	0.173	0.259	0.015	Competence
	0.314	0.099	0.255	0.314	0.002	Moral self-acceptance
Acceptance	0.338	0.114	0.171	0.338	0.001	Popularity
	0.351	0.123	0.211	0.351	0.001	Identity integration

The conducted regression analysis showed that positive retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers had positive predictive value for general self-esteem and its dimensions. It was noticed that the retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers defined as accepting was a predictor for two variables: identity integration (determining this variable in 12.3%) and popularity (explaining this variable in 11.4%). An attitude of autonomy had predictive value for three dimensions: general self-esteem (explaining this variable in 10.6%), competence (determining this variable in 5.6%) and moral self-acceptance (explaining this variable in 9.9%).

Table 5. The results of the linear regression analysis for the examined variables in the group of women who assessed their fathers' parental attitudes negatively

Parental attitudes	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	$\beta$	p	Dependent variable
Excessive demand	0.394	0.156	-0.493	-0.638	0.000	General self-esteem
	0.258	0.067	-0.146	-0.258	0.016	Competencies
	0.418	0.175	-0.300	-0.439	0.000	Moral self-acceptance
Rejection attitude	0.505	0.255	-0.704	-0.505	0.000	Being loved
	0.331	0.110	-0.313	-0.331	0.002	Popularity
	0.340	0.115	-0.363	-0.340	0.001	Self-control
	0.370	0.137	-0.417	-0.370	.000	Identity integration
	0.376	0.142	-0.529	-0.376	0.000	Defensive strengthening of self-esteem
Excessive protection	0.464	0.215	-0.246	-0.202	0.041	Moral self-acceptance

The results of the conducted linear stepwise regression analysis (Table 5) indicate that the retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of the fathers as excessively demanding had negative predictive value for three variables: general self-esteem, competence and moral self-acceptance. The fact of perceiving the fathers' attitudes by the examined women as excessively demanding explained: general self-esteem in 15.6%, competence in 6.7% and moral self-acceptance in 17.5%. The retrospective assessment of the fathers' attitudes as rejecting was a predictor for five variables: being loved (determining this variable in 25.5%), popularity (explaining this variable in 11%), self-control (determining this variable in 11.5%), identity integration (explaining this variable in 13.7%), and defensive strengthening of self-esteem (explaining this variable in 14.2%). The retrospective assessment of the fathers' attitudes as excessively protective was only a predictor for the variable 'moral self-acceptance', determining it in 21.5%. The obtained results (Table 4, Table 5) give grounds to confirm hypothesis H<sub>4</sub>, which assumed the influence of parental attitudes of fathers on the level of self-esteem of women in early adulthood.

In order to determine correlations between self-esteem and perfectionism of young women, the Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient was applied. The obtained scores allow us to confirm the correctness of H<sub>5</sub> (Table 6).

Table 6. Correlations between self-esteem and perfectionism in the groups of women defining their fathers' parental attitudes as positive (PA) and negative (NA)

Groups	PA; n = 49	NA; n = 38
Variables	General self-esteem	
Adaptive perfectionism	0.428*	in.
Maladaptive perfectionism	-0.664**	-0.909**

\* correlation statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.001$

\*\* statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.0005$

in.– statistically insignificant correlation

In both distinguished groups of women, there were medium ( $r = -0.664$ ;  $n = 49$ ;  $p < 0.0005$ ) and strong ( $r = -0.909$ ;  $n = 38$ ;  $p < 0.0005$ ) negative correlations between general self-esteem and maladaptive perfectionism. In the group of women who perceived their fathers' parental attitudes positively, a positive correlation of medium strength was observed between general self-esteem and adaptive perfectionism ( $r = 0.428$ ;  $n = 49$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

### Discussion of results

The obtained results were discussed and interpreted based on the assumptions of the systemic concept, which to a great extent allows us to describe and explain the key dimensions in the father–daughter subsystem together with the factors shaping them. It is emphasized that, like in case of other close interpersonal relationships, the processes that affect the dynamics of father–daughter interactions work on many different levels, from the inner mental processes such as attachment and social comparisons up to the relational dynamics including social learning processes and non-family factors (e.g., social and cultural influences).

The results of the current research presented in the study indicate the occurrence of incongruence in terms of perfectionism and self-esteem in the groups of young women selected based on the quality of the retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of their fathers. Women who described their fathers' attitudes negatively demonstrated a tendency to set themselves excessive and unrealistic goals. They often focused on their mistakes and failures, which could make it difficult for them to act effectively. Due to that, they experienced distress to a greater extent than women who assessed their fathers' parental attitudes positively. The maladaptive perfectionism demonstrated by the women who perceived their fathers' attitudes negatively was also related to self-criticism, which is not present in the adaptive perfectionism understood as achievement orientation. The observed correlations of parental attitudes with perfectionism are confirmed by the studies of Flett et al. [24]. It has been proved in them that an authoritarian parental attitude affects the shaping of social perfectionism in the child,

i.e., a belief that their surroundings expect them to be perfect. It is emphasized that in the mentioned studies, this type of correlation was only observed for the men whose parents used authoritarian styles to raise them [24]. The authoritarian attitude can be compared with the excessively demanding one from the KPR-Roc O questionnaire, where the relationship between the mentioned attitude and maladaptive perfectionism in women is quite strong ( $\beta = 0.488$ ).

Another conclusion from the conducted research shows that the women who assessed their fathers' parental attitudes negatively obtained lower mean scores in self-esteem (both general and specific ones) in comparison with the women who described their fathers' parental attitudes positively. They had lower results in the aspects of being loved, self-control as well as defensive strengthening of self-esteem, self-acceptance, popularity, and identity integration. The obtained results shall complement the findings of other researchers, which show that daughters experiencing improper relationships with their fathers think of themselves that they are not good enough. This kind of thinking is typical of persons with low self-esteem[25].

Considering the fact that a sense of competence is one of the components of self-esteem, it can be noticed that also these studies show that there is a relationship between parental attitudes and self-esteem. Discussing other research results, it is emphasized that the persons whose parents were caring demonstrate higher self-esteem than the ones who declared insufficient parental care. However, it is indicated that parents demonstrating an excessively protective attitude make their children develop low self-esteem [1, 11]. It is believed that this results from the improper functioning of adults as parents [26]. Being overprotective, they do not satisfy the child's need for autonomy, treating them as if they were constantly vulnerable and dependant. They do not believe that they are able to function properly without their help and direct closeness. Parents who act in this way often contribute to lowering the level of volitional competence in a child, including: self-esteem, motivation and ability to delay immediate gratification. Under the influence of overprotective attitudes of parents, a child loses their sense of self-efficacy, which encourages in them ineffective actions, failures and anxiety. Another consequence of excessive focusing of parents on a child is the occurrence of too strong family bonds. The literature of the subject shows that they make it difficult for young people, especially the ones in adolescence, to reach independence. They perceive the outside world as hostile and threatening. It is believed that the above-mentioned family conditions facilitate anorexia in girls. Some authors think that anorexia is a disorder giving a child in a dysfunctional family some sense of autonomy [8].

The conducted regression analysis showed a predictive value of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers for the perfectionism and self-esteem of young women. It was found out that the father's parental attitude characterized by excessive demands was an important predictor of maladaptive perfectionism in the group of young women. Jankowska [13] noticed that the excessively demanding attitude of the father was, for example, correlated with a low level of self-esteem and competence

in sons. Although no similar relationship was noticed for a group of daughters, it is possible that the maladaptive perfectionism demonstrated by women compensates for their low level of self-esteem and competence. In the studies of Flett et al. [24], it has been proved that there is a correlation between an authoritarian parenting style and maladaptive perfectionism in women, characterized by setting oneself excessive goals and lack of acceptance for failure.

In the case of estimating predictive value of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers for self-esteem in young women, we observed correlations in the expected direction. It was noted that a sufficient level of autonomy and acceptance well-adjusted to the age and abilities of daughters provided to them by the fathers determined a higher level of general self-esteem, competence, moral self-acceptance, popularity, and identity integration. On the other hand, fathers who rejected their daughters, were excessively demanding or overprotective, contributed to developing in them a low level of: self-esteem, a sense of competence, moral self-acceptance, a sense of being loved, self-control, and popularity. Moreover, their attitude affected the identity integration of their daughters as well as decreased their abilities to use defensive strengthening of self-esteem. The obtained research results update and complement the findings of other authors who, in their studies, proved the existence of relationships between parental attitudes and self-esteem [1, 8, 11, 21, 25, 26]. It is worth stressing that the fact of perceiving attitudes of both mothers and fathers as accepting and loving is linked with the inner sense of control in healthy girls [9]. The inner sense of control, i.e., a belief of an individual that they have influence on what important events happen in their life, is positively correlated with cognitive and socio-emotional development as well as mental health. The last issue discussed in this study was determining a correlation between perfectionism and self-esteem. The research results have shown that there is a strong negative correlation between self-esteem and maladaptive perfectionism in the group of women who assessed their fathers' parental attitudes as negative. That means that with the increase of frequency of behaviors in women which are the markers of maladaptive perfectionism (e.g., setting unreasonable, unrealistic goals in every field of activity, focusing on mistakes and failures, experiencing distress), the level of their self-esteem will decrease. On the other hand, in the group of women who perceived their fathers' parental attitudes positively, together with the increase of the level of self-esteem, the level of adaptive perfectionism will grow, which shows a positive correlation between the variables. With this, the current research justified the occurrence of correlations between self-esteem and perfectionism. The discussed relationship is also to be found in studies on mental disorders. Vohs et al. [25] discovered that women describing themselves as obese and characterized by a high level of perfectionism had a tendency to demonstrate symptoms of bulimia but only if their self-esteem was low. In other research, it was evidenced that overweight women thought that they were not able to change their bodies because of their defective personality, which was accompanied by a low level of sexual self-esteem and a high level of perfectionism [27].

Summing up, the presented results of the research broaden the psychological knowledge on the impact of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers on the selected aspects of psychological functioning of young women. They prove that parental attitudes have long-lasting consequences for the functioning of children, not only in early ontogenesis but also in adulthood.

Taking into account the limitations of the discussed study, it is worth noticing that it was partly of a retrospective nature. It is noted that while referring to the past events, we may encounter some hurdles associated with the limitation of availability of the content analyzed in the research or its distortion caused by the personality's defense mechanisms or by the influence of current events. However, it is stressed that such research might be useful since, even if it is worth focusing our attention on the present determinants of self-esteem and perfectionism in adulthood, we should not completely ignore the retrospective assessment of the factors determining them. It is also recommended to include in the future studies other psychological variables coming from the family system and having predictive value for perfectionism and self-esteem, such as: interpersonal relationships in the parent and siblings' subsystems, parental attitudes of the mother or the features indicating the quality of the whole family system functioning. Moreover, it is advisable to include larger groups of respondents in further analyses.

### **Conclusions**

The literature of the subject indicates that perfectionism and self-esteem are among the important factors determining the quality of the psychosocial functioning of a human being. Researchers believe that these variables determine professional development, life in a close relationship as well as attitudes demonstrated towards own children [24]. The results of the presented own research indicate differentiation with regard to perfectionism and self-esteem in the groups of women selected based on the criterion of the quality of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers. They also emphasize the predictive role of retrospective assessment of parental attitudes of fathers for perfectionism and self-esteem of women in early adulthood. Furthermore, a correlation was observed between the level of self-esteem and demonstrating different types of perfectionism by young women. The presented research results update and complement the psychological knowledge on the influence of the early father–daughter relationship on the functioning of women in adulthood. Moreover, this knowledge can be applied both in psychoeducation and psychotherapy, especially focusing on groups of women demonstrating such problems as low self-esteem, social phobia, eating disorders or obsessive-compulsive personality disorders.

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