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Youth identity styles – presentation of research results¹

According to EH Erikson (2004), identity formation is one of the most important tasks of adolescence. According to the latest research results, we know that identity is not a permanent, unchanging construct, but is shaped subject to various influences, especially cultural and socio-economic influences, and not only during adolescence, but also in subsequent stages of adulthood. The formation of identity is a process that produces a lot of challenges, limitations and conflicts, the experience of which can trigger different ways of dealing with them. These methods are called identity processing styles or identity processing orientations.

The article presents the results of my research into understanding the identity styles of young people attending public upper secondary schools in Bydgoszcz ($N=1.541$). These styles were studied based on the socio-cognitive concept of Michael Berzonsky, according to which identity styles are understood as individual preferences when shaping personal identity, as well as the conflicts that arise during its shaping. M. Berzonsky (2005; 2011) uses the term identity style and identity orientation interchangeably, emphasising that he has in mind the organisation of identity processing strategy. His Identity Styles Model assumes differences in how young people deal with the task of shaping, maintaining and changing their identity, or how they avoid doing so. Within the model, three identity styles are distinguished: informative, normative and diffuse-avoidant, as well as the important factor known as commitment, which provides the individual with a sense of purpose and direction. In my research, these styles were measured based on the Polish adaptation of the ISI-5 Identity

¹The research results presented in this article are a description of a fragment of extensive research that was carried out as part of the research project: The phenomenon of lifestreaming as a way to search for and build the identity of young people. Research on the identity statuses and styles of identity of young people and their excessive use of social networks was carried out in the period from 2 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 (Agreement with KBPN No. 163/HBK/2018 and 165/HBK/2018). The research was co-financed by the Fund for Solving Gambling Problems under the Minister of Health.

Style Inventory by A. Senejko and Z. Moose, the original version of which was developed by M. Berzonsky and his colleagues.

Keywords: identity, identity styles, identity processing styles, growing up process, youth

Style tożsamości młodzieży – prezentacja wyników badań własnych

Zdaniem E.H. Eriksona (2004) kształtowanie się tożsamości jest jednym z najważniejszych zadań okresu adolescencji. Zgodnie z najnowszymi wynikami badań wiemy, że tożsamość nie jest stałym, niezmiennym konstruktem, lecz formułuje się, podlegając różnorodnym wpływom, zwłaszcza kulturowym, społeczno-ekonomicznym i to nie tylko w okresie dojrzewania, ale również w kolejnych stadiach dorosłości. Kształtowanie się tożsamości jest procesem rodzącym u jednostki mnóstwo wyzwań, ograniczeń i konfliktów, których odczuwanie uruchamiać u niej może różne sposoby radzenia sobie z nimi. Sposoby te nazywane są stylami przetwarzania tożsamościowego (*identity processing style*) czy też orientacjami przetwarzania tożsamościowego (*identity processing orientation*).

W artykule zaprezentowano wyniki badań własnych przeprowadzonych nad poznaniem stylów tożsamości młodzieży uczęszczającej do bydgoskich publicznych szkół ponadgimnazjalnych ($N=1.541$). Style te badane były w oparciu o społeczno-poznawczą koncepcję Michaela Berzonsky'ego, zgodnie z którą poprzez style tożsamości rozumie się preferencje jednostki przy radzeniu sobie z zadaniem kształtowania tożsamości osobistej oraz konfliktami pojawiającymi się w trakcie jej formułowania. Berzonsky (2005; 2011) używa zamiennie terminu: styl tożsamości (*identity processing style*) i orientacja (*identity processing orientation*), podkreślając, że ma na uwadze organizację strategii przetwarzania tożsamościowego. Opracowany przez niego model stylów tożsamości zakłada różnice dotyczące tego, jak młodzi ludzie radzą sobie z zadaniem kształtowania, utrzymywania i zmiany tożsamości lub jak unikają podjęcia się tego zadania. W jego ramach wyróżnia się trzy style tożsamości: informacyjny, normatywny i dyfuzyjno-unikowy oraz ważny czynnik zwany zaangażowaniem (*commitment*), który dostarcza jednostce poczucia celu i kierunku. Style te w badaniach własnych poddane zostały pomiarowi w oparciu o polską adaptację Inwentarza stylów tożsamości (*ISI-5 Identity Style Inventory*) autorstwa A. Senejko i Z. Łoś, której oryginalna wersja została opracowana przez Berzonskyego i współpracowników.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość, style tożsamości, style przetwarzania tożsamościowego, proces dorastania, młodzież

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Introduction

Research carried out on identity proves that it is not a permanent construct, but undergoes dynamic change, not only during adolescence, but also in subsequent stages of adulthood. The process of growing up, and therefore the process of identity formation, has changed significantly compared to earlier generations. These changes are conditioned by the socio-economic and demographic changes we observe in Europe and globally. They include changes in family structure and intergenerational relations, the development of new media, as well as the increase in mobility of generations and the appearance of previously unknown opportunities combining education with various forms of work (Brzezińska & Ciecuch, 2016). These changes create many alternatives for young people and offer them the “ability not only to choose, but also to create their own path of development, unlike the relatively stable path of previous generations, or paths chosen or created by peers. This direction of change makes it possible to implement the project of one’s own life as a kind of project of one’s own identity; it also enables better adaptation to rapidly changing reality” (ibid.; Ciecuch, 2016, p. 206).

As A. Senejko and Z. Łoś (2015) point out, there is a discrepancy between identity researchers regarding questions about the nature of identity and the mechanism of its formation. Two positions are most at odds with each other. The first assumes that the essence of identity is the true self, that which already exists in the subject, and therefore the mechanism of identity formation consists in discovering and updating this most fundamental aspect of personality. Meanwhile, the second position assumes that the essence of identity is self-theory, which means that the basic mechanism is shaping and building it, not discovering it.

According to EH Erikson (2004), the formation of identity is one of the most important tasks of adolescence, and according to the socio-cognitive concept developed by M. Berzonsky (2005; 2011), people try to cope with emerging identity challenges and conflicts in various ways in the process of its creation. These coping methods are called identity processing styles or identity processing orientations. In literature, they are commonly referred to as identity styles.

Identity styles in the socio-cognitive approach of M. Berzonsky

The socio-cognitive concept of Michael Berzonsky (1989; 2011) is a model that explains individual differences in the emergence of identity statuses/dimensions. It is also an example of a second approach to issues of identity, because it assumes that identity is constructed, not discovered. M. Berzonsky analyses identity in structural (self-theory) and processual aspects. The structural aspect is the self-theory, which it understands as a cognitive structure constituting the essence of identity built from a loosely organised system of personal constructs, hypotheses, beliefs, etc. related to the self in interaction with the world (Berzonsky, 2011, after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015). Therefore, it consists of everything that people think about themselves, especially

about who they think they are and what they think they want, regardless of the truthfulness of these beliefs. As the researcher explains: “My model does not posit that a self-theory is a valid representation of one’s “true” or essential self. People are not assumed to have direct introspective access to an accurate understanding of their true inner self. Instead, people construct a theory about who they think they are and what they think they want” (Berzonsky, 2011, p. 57). According to M. Berzonsky,

self-theories provide a conceptual framework for coding, organising and understanding experiences and information necessary to build identity, i.e. a conceptual framework for social-cognitive identity processing, known as identity information (...). Self-Theory (...) also performs an executive function in the sense that it contains procedural knowledge and operational structures regulating efforts to cope in everyday life (Berzonsky, 2011; after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 92).

M. Berzonsky points out that people differ in the strategies they use in the process of coping with the task of solving the identity crisis and related challenges, and therefore I adopt different styles, which he describes as identity processing styles. He understands these styles as the preferences of the individual when dealing with the task of shaping personal identity and the conflicts associated with this. M. Berzonsky uses the term identity style and identity orientation interchangeably, emphasising that he has in mind the organisation of identity processing strategies. His Identity Styles Model assumes differences in how young people deal with the task of shaping, maintaining and changing their identity, or how they avoid doing so. There are three identity styles in the model – informative, normative and diffuse-avoidant (Berzonsky, 2005; 2011). At the same time, he emphasises that: “Marcia’s four identity statuses reflected three different stylistic approaches to dealing with identity crises: an open, informed approach utilising formal-reasoning strategies; an avoiding or delaying orientation; and an inflexible, closed approach that relies on conformity. These three approaches are referred to, respectively, as the informational, diffuse-avoidant and normative identity-processing orientations” (Berzonsky, 2011, p. 58).

People who use the informational style are actively involved in the search for information related to the self, and in their assessment, they have wide interests, take a critical approach to incoming information and use task-focused problem-solving strategies. They are self-reflective people who want to know themselves, who have the ability to critically accept information about themselves, are open to new information and are willing to check and possibly modify aspects of their identity. They express the belief that knowledge is relative and that people can actively participate in creating themselves. M. Berzonsky uses the category ‘Scientific Self-Theorists’ to describe them (2004; 2005; 2011). The results of previous studies indicate a relationship between the

informational identity style and other psychological characteristics of these people. These are positive correlations with automatic and rational regulation, cognitive curiosity, a tendency to introspection, self autonomy, large tolerance of discrepancies, consideration of alternative strategies, openness to new information

and values (Crocetti, Rubini, Berzonsky & Meeus, 2009; Krettenauer, 2005; after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 92-93).

People who choose a normative style are characterised by a strong need for cognitive closure, as well as a tendency to adopt the values and beliefs of important people and to adapt to existing rules. They easily adopt the expectations, values and rules regarding effective and desirable forms of social behaviour of important people (parents, authorities). They show a strong commitment to implementing values adopted from other lifestyles and values without their prior exploration; they are often conformist. The author uses the following category to describe this group of people: "Dogmatic Self-Theorists" (Berzonsky, 2011). A review of the results of previous research indicates that

the normative style positively correlates with automatic thinking, a ruminative focus on behaviour resulting from the need for social acceptance (e.g. constantly worrying about whether they behaved properly or offended someone, etc.), low tolerance of differences, high need for cognitive closure, low need for self-reflection and low cognitive curiosity (Berzonsky, 2008; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Epstein, 1998; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 93; Berzonsky, 2011).

People who are dominated by the diffuse-avoidant style are characterised by the fact that they avoid confrontation and dealing directly with problems and postpone making decisions until later, especially those that involve unpleasant decision-making situations, personal problems and identity conflicts. The behaviour of these people depends on the current situation and perceived expectations of other people. The author calls these people "Ad Hoc Self-Theorists" (Berzonsky, 2011). He claims that they are characterised by

a fatalistic view of reality, hence the lack and weakening of a sense of control, chaotic, diverse, opposing options hindering rational judgments and choices, resulting in situational, hedonistic and egocentric choices, based on direct sensations and feelings, which according to M. Berzonsky produces a diffuse, situational self (Berzonsky, 2011; after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 93).

Reports from previous research indicate that divergent and unsystematic results have been obtained for the diffuse-avoidant style. Unstable correlations for this style occur "with automatic and rational regulation". Positive correlations were noted with the need for cognitive closure, rumination associated with the need for one's image to be accepted by the surrounding environment (here: constant worry and constant uncertainty as to whether they behaved or presented themselves properly, etc.), low need for self-reflection, anxiety and neuroticism (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005; Crocetti et al., 2009; Krettenauer, 2005; after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 93).

M. Berzonsky, when examining identity styles, takes into account one more important factor – commitment, which, in his opinion, provides the individual with a sense of purpose and direction. Stable personal commitment can play a significant role in helping people to function and in their well-being, i.e. in determining

the strength or clarity of personal norms, beliefs, goals they pursue, etc. (Oleszkowicz & Senejko, 2011; 2013; Senejko, 2007; 2010; Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 93).

Research in various countries has shown that identity styles are clearly linked to the dimensions and status of identity in both adolescents and emerging adulthood (e.g. Berzonsky et al., 1999; Berzonsky et al., 2011; Crocetti et al., 2012b; review in: Berzonsky, 2011; Bosch & Card, 2012). The normative and informative styles were most often associated (positively correlated) with the dimensions of identity obligations, while the normative style is more associated with the status of the acquired identity, in which it is assumed that the commitments made are rigid. Meanwhile, the information style more often coincides with achieved identity statuses (commitments are preceded by exploration and the making by individuals of conscious choices from among available options) and moratorium identity (strong, current commitment to exploration, often preceding development towards the status of achieved identity). The diffuse-avoidant style is most often used by people with a dispersed identity (little involvement in exploration and no clear identity obligations), but it also characterises people with a moratorium status (Schwartz et al., 2000, 2013; Crocetti et al., 2013; after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015).

M. Berzonsky adds several aspects to his identity styles model. One of them is sources of identity formation, which, according to the author, are shaped both in a conscious and intentional manner, as well as indirectly and automatically. Identity (including the self-theory) is automatically formed by imitation and modelling, especially from parents, peers, important people, as well as through school education, training, cultural messages that are automatically assimilated and very early childhood experiences represented at the subconscious or unconscious level, which we are not aware of. The author enriches his identity styles model through an analysis of self-content attributes, i.e. attributes assigned to the self by the individual and used in the process of building answers to basic questions about the essence of identity, i.e. the question of who you are as a person in the world. M. Berzonsky argues that in research involving adolescents and young adults, it has been confirmed that identity styles differ in the relative participation of individual aspects of a collective, social and personal character. Personal attributes of the self (standards, goals, self-oriented values, e.g. the development of autonomy) prevail in the information style. In the normative style, on the other hand, the collective aspects of identity (family, religion, nationality) dominate, while in the diffuse-avoidant style, social attributes of self prevail (reputation, popularity, the impression made on others) (after: Senejko & Łoś, 2015, p. 94).

Organisation of the research and the method used

The organisation of the research was divided into two stages. The first stage was a pilot, the second the actual research. As part of both stages, anonymous paper-pencil survey studies were conducted using the diagnostic survey method. In the period from March to April 2017, pilot studies were carried out on a randomly selected sample of pupils of public upper secondary schools of all types (General High School, Technical Secondary School, Basic Vocational School – currently First-degree Vocational School) of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes

to assess the psychometric properties of the tool. A total of 207 pupils took part in the pilotage. From September to November 2017, research was carried out on a representative sample in the city of Bydgoszcz of a randomly selected sample of children from public upper secondary schools located in the city ($N=1.541$). The sample examined was made up of young people aged 16-20 who, in the 2017/2018 school year, attended the upper secondary schools mentioned above. The selection of people for the sample was random – multi-layered. The list of upper secondary schools in Bydgoszcz obtained from the Faculty of Education and Sport of the City of Bydgoszcz as of 28 September 2017 served as a sampling frame. First, public upper secondary schools were drawn, then classes from these schools were drawn. The basic unit of the draw was the school class. The research covered students of upper secondary schools/all types of upper secondary schools: high schools, technical and first-degree vocational schools and basic vocational schools – all classes: first, second, third and fourth classes (in the case of technical secondary schools). The sample included 13 high schools.

The research was preceded by consultations with school heads and teachers. Pupils from younger classes who were still minors were given written consent forms by their teachers requesting their parents'/legal guardians' permission for their child's participation in the research, which were then returned to the class teacher. The principle of voluntary participation in the research was respected. Everyone was asked about their willingness to participate in the research and asked to give their consent.

Research variable and its operationalisation

The research variable (Youth Identity Styles) has been defined as various strategies used in the process of dealing with the task of solving an identity crisis and related challenges. According to the style classification proposed by M. Berzonsky, several styles were distinguished:

Normative style – people with this style are characterised by a strong need for cognitive closure, a tendency to adopt the values and beliefs of important people and to adapt to existing rules.

Information style – appropriate for people who are actively involved in seeking information related to the self, and in their assessment, they have wide interests, take a critical approach to incoming information and use task-focused problem-coping strategies.

Diffuse-avoidant style – characteristic for people who try to avoid confronting problems and dealing directly with them; they make decisions with difficulty, and their behaviour depends on the current situation and perceived expectations of other people. Research in various countries has shown that identity styles are clearly linked to the dimensions and status of identity in both adolescents and in emerging adulthood (Berzonsky, 2011).

Research tool and its description

To measure the variable Youth Identity Styles, the Inventory of Identity Style Inventory ISI-5, developed by M. Berzonsky, B. Soenens, I. Smits, K. Luyckx and L. Goossens in the Polish adaptation of A. Senejko and

Z. Łoś (2015), was used. The inventory consists of 48 items, including 36 diagnostic items, forming three scales: information, normative, diffusion-avoidant styles (nine items on each scale) and the commitment scale (nine items). The answers are given on a five-point scale: from “definitely applies to me” to “not applicable to me at all”. The tool allows for three socio-cognitive orientations associated with various processing of identity problems to be measured: (1) information style – characterises people who are self-reflective, explore their surroundings, want to get to know themselves better and actively seek information related to the self (e.g. when I am facing an important life decision, before I make a choice, I take into account different points of view), (2) normative style – characterises people who take over the expectations, values, role or behaviour from people who matter to them, and their main goal is to protect these views of life (e.g. I strive to achieve the goals that my family and friends set for me), (3) diffuse-avoidant style – characterises people who delay solving problems, are reluctant to confront, accept and deal with unpleasant situations, personal problems and identity conflicts (e.g. When I have to make an important life decision, I try to delay it as long as possible to see what happens). The reliability ratios of each of the scales are in the range .68-80, which indicates that the ISI-5 questionnaire is suitable for scientific research and has satisfactory reliability. The factor structure of the tool is acceptable: results of confirmatory factor analysis: $\chi^2(62) = 234.13$; CFI = .91. The calculated Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .062 (.059-.065, 90% confidence interval) was acceptable, because it was lower than that considered to be a threshold <.08. Of the absolute match indicators, the standardised Root Mean square Residual (sRMR) = .069 and is acceptable, because it is less than the threshold of .08. The goodness-of-fit index of GFI Joreskoga was .900, which is exactly equal to the value considered as the threshold. The results of analyses conducted on the properties of the ISI-5 scale used in my research also confirmed its satisfactory psychometric properties. For each of its four subscales, satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were obtained, which are in the range of .67-79, which indicates that the ISI-5 scale has satisfactory reliability.

Table 1.

Alpha Cronbach reliability coefficients obtained for the ISI-5 scale subscales

Name Subscale	Alpha Cronbach	Average of the correlation between items	Average for the whole scale (min. –max.)	Standard deviation SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
Information style	.77	.28	34.25 (11-45)	5.76	-.52	-.18
Normative style	.067	.19	24.05 10-42	5.50	.04	-.32
Diffuse-avoidant style	.71	.22	22.05 9-43	6.12	.36	-.12
Commitment	.79	.29	30.80	6.99	-.20	-.30

During the confirmatory analysis (*CFI*), the maximum likelihood method (*ML*) was used. A model indicating a three-factor solution with mutual correlation of factors and the possibility of correlating residuals within the same factor was tested. The confirmatory factor analysis results were: $\chi^2(310) = 1399.759$; *CFI* = .84. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA*) = .050 (.047-.053) was at an acceptable level, because it was lower than that considered to be a threshold <.08. Of the absolute match indicators, the standardised Root Mean square Residual (*sRMR*) = .063 and was acceptable, because it was less than the threshold of .08. The tool has a confirmed factor structure. In the sample tested by A. Senejko and Z. Łoś (2015), the results of the confirmatory factor analysis were as follows: $\chi^2(62) = 234.13$; *CFI* = .91]; *RMSEA* = .062 (.059-.065); *sRMR* = .069.

Presentation of research results

This part of the article presents the results of my research obtained through surveys. Their description is preceded by the characteristics of the socio-demographic profile of the studied group of young people. Basic statistical analyses were performed in STATISTICA version 12, post-hoc analysis was prepared in SPSS version 25, and confirmatory analysis was prepared in AMOS version 25.

Descriptive statistics related to the tested sample

1541 high school students took part in the study. 1503 questionnaires were qualified for the demographic analyses, 38 questionnaires were excluded due to deficiencies (a certain number of questionnaires was used for detailed analyses – people with missing data or an obvious biased method of answering were excluded). The surveyed young people were pupils born in the years 1997–2002, attending all types of Bydgoszcz upper secondary schools, i.e. high school, technical secondary school, first-degree vocational school – the former basic vocational school. In terms of date of birth, the largest group of pupils was students born in 2000 (31.80%), slightly fewer in 2001 (30.30%), then those in 1999 (26.50%) and in 1998 (10.80%). The proportion of girls (57.10%) was slightly larger than boys (42.60%). Five people, when asked about their sex, selected the gender option, which constituted 0.30% of respondents. The least numerous groups of respondents were those born in 1997 (0.50%) and in 2002 (0.10%). In terms of the type of school the respondents attended, the most numerous group was high school pupils (58.5%), followed by technical secondary school students (34.10%) and current first-degree vocational school students (7.40%). Among pupils of first-degree vocational schools, there was a much higher percentage of boys (72%) than girls (28%). In the case of technical secondary school students, a slightly higher percentage was recorded in the group of girls (52.40%) compared to boys (47.60%). Among high school students, the vast majority were girls (63.50%) rather than boys (35.50%). Analysing the size of the sample in terms of the classes to which the surveyed pupils attend, it turned out that the most numerous sample was made up of second class pupils of all types of schools (33%), followed by a slightly smaller group of first class pupils (31.70%), followed by third class

pupils (24.90%). The least numerous group of pupils was in the fourth class (10.40%), which is due to the fact that this class only occurs in technical secondary schools.

Variables analysed in the study

The results of the analysis regarding compliance with normal distribution indicate that the studied variable does not adhere to normal distribution, hence further analyses were performed using nonparametric tests.

Table 2.

ISI-5 scale – normality tests for the whole group

ISI-5 scale	Without division into groups – Normality tests					
	<i>N</i>	max. <i>D</i>	<i>K-S</i> <i>p</i>	<i>Lillief.p</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>P</i>
Information style	1413	0.072363	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	0.978716	0.000000
Normative style	1413	0.055404	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	0.993569	0.000008
Diffuse-avoidant style	1413	0.064355	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	0.986910	0.000000
Commitment	1413	0.042399	$p < .05$	$p < .01$	0.990891	0.000000

Table 3.

ISI-5 scale – normality tests – girls

ISI-5 scale	Normality tests					
	<i>N</i>	max. <i>D</i>	<i>K-S</i> <i>p</i>	<i>Lillief.p</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>P</i>
Information style	817	0.089918	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	0.973901	0.000000
Normative style	817	0.052840	$p < .05$	$p < .01$	0.992647	0.000457
Diffuse-avoidant style	817	0.077550	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	0.981228	0.000000
Commitment	817	0.049183	$p < .05$	$p < .01$	0.989769	0.000018

Table 4.

ISI-5 scale – normality tests – boys

ISI-5 scale	Boys – Normality tests					
	<i>N</i>	max. <i>D</i>	<i>K-S</i> <i>p</i>	<i>Lillief.p</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>P</i>
Information style	591	0.068835	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	0.980297	0.000000
Normative style	591	0.065982	$p < .05$	$p < .01$	0.991351	0.001578
Diffuse-avoidant style	591	0.057324	$p < .05$	$p < .01$	0.991763	0.002300
Commitment	591	0.047374	$p < .15$	$p < .01$	0.989608	0.000341

Identity styles presented by respondents – presentation of research results

Analysing the average values for individual identity styles among the respondents, the following distribution of results was obtained. The highest average was recorded for the information style, i.e. 34.25. Next in line was the average for commitment, i.e. 30.72, followed by the normative style, i.e. 23.86. The lowest average value was obtained for the diffuse-avoidance style. i.e. 21.82.

Table 5.

ISI-5 scale – results of variance analysis for the whole group

ISI-5 scale	Friedman ANOVA and Kendall Chi ² compliance factor ANOVA ($N = 1353$, $df = 3$) = 1779.413 $p = 0.00000$ Compliance factor = .43839; r average rank = .43797			
	Average Rank	Total of Ranks	Average	Standard deviation
Information style	3.497413	4732.000	34.24612	5.992170
Normative style	1.922764	2601.500	23.86401	5.598168
Diffuse-avoidant style	1.687731	2283.500	21.82040	6.176602
Commitment	2.892092	3913.000	30.72358	7.079254

In the group of girls and boys, the identity styles adopted a similar distribution of average point values.

Table 6.

ISI-5 scale – results of variance analysis for girls

ISI-5 scale	Girls Friedman ANOVA and Kendall Chi ² compliance factor ANOVA ($N = 789$, $df = 3$) = 1163.402 $p = 0.00000$ Compliance factor = .49151; r average rank = .49086			
	Average Rank	Total of Ranks	Average	Standard deviation
Information style	3.591888	2834.000	34.65399	5.768431
Normative style	1.873257	1478.000	23.24842	5.114093
Diffuse-avoidant style	1.669202	1317.000	21.20025	6.023891
Commitment	2.865653	2261.000	30.29658	7.257991

Table 7.

ISI-5 scale – results of variance analysis for boys

ISI-5 scale	Boys Friedman ANOVA and Kendall Chi ² ANOVA compliance factor ($N = 559$, $df = 3$) = 623.8018 $p = 0.00000$ Compliance factor = .37197; r average rank = .37085			
	Average Rank	Total of Ranks	Average	Standard deviation
Information style	3.359571	1878.000	33.63327	6.247268
Normative style	1.995528	1115.500	24.73703	6.107511
Diffuse-avoidant style	1.709302	955.500	22.66905	6.294131
Commitment	2.935599	1641.000	31.35599	6.788689

Among the respondents, the difference between all identity styles is statistically significant. The information style has the highest value in the studied sample, and the diffuse-avoidance style has the lowest. Similar trends occur in the group of girls and boys.

Table 8.

ISI-5 scale – Comparison in the ISI-5 scale for all respondents

Pair 1	Pair 2	Test statistics	Error Std	Significance	Significance Adjusted
Normative style	Commitment	-0.969	0.050	0.000	0.000
Normative style	Information style	1.575	0.050	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Normative style	0.235	0.050	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Commitment	-1.204	0.050	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Information style	1.810	0.050	0.000	0.000
Commitment	Information style	0.605	0.050	0.000	0.000

Table 9.

ISI-5 scale – Comparison in the ISI-5 scale for the group of girls

Pair 1	Pair 2	Test statistics	Error Std	Significance	Significance Adjusted
Normative style	Commitment	-0.992	0.065	0.000	0.000
Normative style	Information style	1.719	0.065	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Normative style	0.204	0.065	0.002	0.010
Diffuse-avoidant style	Commitment	-1.196	0.065	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Information style	1.923	0.065	0.000	0.000
Commitment	Information style	0.726	0.065	0.000	0.000

Table 10.

ISI-5 scale – Comparison in the ISI-5 scale for the group of boys

Pair 1	Pair 2	Test statistics	Error Std	Significance	Significance Adjusted
Normative style	Commitment	-0.940	0.077	0.000	0.000
Normative style	Information style	1.364	0.077	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Normative style	0.286	0.077	0.000	0.001
Diffuse-avoidant style	Commitment	-1.226	0.077	0.000	0.000
Diffuse-avoidant style	Information style	1.650	0.077	0.000	0.000
Commitment	Information style	0.424	0.077	0.000	0.000

The data summarised in the tables above indicates that girls achieve higher results than boys for the information style. Boys, in turn, achieve higher scores on the commitment scale and for the normative and diffuse-avoidant style. These differences are statistically significant.

Research results

Using M. Berzonsky's Identity Style Model, it was possible to measure three socio-cognitive orientations associated with the processing of identity problems, i.e. the identity styles: normative, informative, diffuse-avoidant, as well as commitment, which M. Berzonsky considered as an important factor in the study of identity styles.

The results indicate that the group of young people is quite homogeneous in terms of socio-cognitive orientations associated with the processing of identity problems. The largest percentage of respondents choose constructive strategies, styles of coping with the task of shaping, maintaining and changing identity, in the process of coping with an identity crisis. This is mainly the informative and then normative style. It is worth emphasising here that people who exhibit the information style of identity formation are open to new experiences, knowledge about themselves and the world around them. They are more self-critical and show a high level of diligence and self-reflection. Identity decisions are preceded by an active search, analysis and interpretation of information that is important to the people who make the decisions. Thanks to their reflectiveness and openness, they are ready to change their views in response to feedback. In turn, people for whom the normative style is typical in identity formation, they adopt the views, value systems and advice on life of other people significant to them automatically, rigidly, without making an in-depth assessment or doing their own analysis. They also exhibit cognitive rigidity, they are not reflective, and they have a great need for order. They try to maintain their belief system and defend themselves against information that may threaten to violate it.

It is also important that a significant percentage of respondents show commitment when dealing with the shaping of personal identity and challenges and the problems arising as a result of a crisis. This commitment provides them with a sense of purpose and direction, promotes better functioning and increases their well-being. It is also helpful in determining the strength or clarity of personal norms, beliefs and the goals they pursue. The vast majority of respondents prefer the diffuse-avoidant style, the choice of which indicates that they avoid dealing with an identity crisis, preferring mainly escape and avoidance strategies. The diffuse-avoidance style of identity formation is typical for people who show no self-reflection and have strong external behaviour control. They are characterised by a tendency to avoid or postpone problems and delay making decisions. This is the most unfavourable style of identity formation, as the individual delays undertaking tasks and resolving identity dilemmas. M. Berzonsky (2011), describing the diffuse-avoidant style, claims that if procrastination lasts too long, actions and decisions can be influenced by situational factors, which can generate various problems in the further development of the individual.