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Preface

This volume of Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy is a collection of articles dealing with the problems of contemporary problems of special pedagogy, important from the point of view of both theoretician and practitioner. The study is opened by the article of prof. Bogusław Śliwerski describing the issues of using new technologies by children. The essence of the analysis presented by the author is the opposition to the myth that the use of new communication technologies is unfavorable to development. As emphasized by prof. B. Śliwerski, in the post-modern world, children have the opportunity to enter into partner and educational relationships with their parents thanks to their better ability to use new media. It is therefore important to change the education about upbringing as well as to manage the education.

The pursuit of success with the achievement of a high level of well-being is now a common phenomenon and has also been the subject of scientific debates and articles on education for a long time, as Jolanta Baran and Danuta Baraniewicz point out in the next article. The authors presented the results of the study on the students' perception of success in the context of the assessment of selected conditions and / or indicators. As the authors emphasize, teachers tend to recognize factors related to a student's well-being as an indicator of success, which means that they perceive him as a result of achievements. Meanwhile, the mere concern for the

well-being of a student before undertaking a parenting task as a condition of success seems to be less visible. Further considerations, taken up by Teresa Serafin, concern initiatives undertaken by social organizations and the city council of Warsaw, aimed at improving the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families. These initiatives, as the author writes, concern, among others, continuing the activities of the education system in the field of equal opportunities for students with disabilities. One of the directions of achieving this goal is to create an information and coordination point to support adults with disabilities in solving their problems.

The issue of inclusive education understood as a model of education significantly extending beyond the inclusion of students with disabilities into the area of public education, which is a vision of a school aimed at taking into account the needs of all students, those who do not reveal serious developmental disabilities, with special educational needs, including gifted students is the basis for research taken by Iwona Chrzanowska. The aim of the research undertaken by the author was to get to know teachers' opinions on inclusive education as a potentially dominant form of education. The presented article focuses on: type of institution in which the teacher works and seniority. Research includes teachers of integration kindergartens. As the author emphasizes, the experience of teachers of this type of institutions is particularly important in recognizing opportunities and threats of inclusive education in the context of Polish experiences of educational integration. The article by Wojciech Otrębski and Katarzyna Mariańczyk on the transition of students with intellectual disabilities from education to the labor market from the perspective of a parent is based on an interactive model of occupational rehabilitation including two key elements of individual rehabilitation and vocational rehabilitation, and interaction between these two elements should contribute to improving the professional skills of people disabled. The authors conducted surveys among the parents of graduates of special vocational schools using the ASZ-S-R survey of W. Otrębski and K. Mariańczyk, whose aim was to determine how parents of people with intel-

lectual disabilities participate, if they do, in the vocational education of their children. As the Authors point out, approximately 88% of respondents declared that they support their children's vocational training, about 40% of them provided help to disabled children in finding employment, but over a quarter do not engage in such activities at all.

Today's media have a significant impact on the social life of young people – changing many social and developmental aspects. Online activity of young adults not only increases the availability of positive and educational experiences, but also exposes to Internet threats, which is emphasized by the authors – Piotr Plichta, Jacek Pyżalski and Julia Barlińska. The main purpose of the considerations was to explore the importance of the appearance of young adult users in the process of cyberbullying of peers among Polish students. The dissemination of beliefs was also considered – the assessment of their own attractiveness, fears of the appearance of others and the scale of activities focused on editing and improving the appearance shown in the pictures posted on social networks. In the next article, Joanna Kozielska presents educational and professional choices of middle school students, including pupils with special educational needs in the context of the condition of career counseling. As the author writes, analyzing the situation of the local labor market and its perspectives, the group of respondents made junior high school students, due to the fact that in a few years they would enter the labor market and indirectly affect its shape. Awareness of their plans, on the other hand, allows us to anticipate and, therefore, be able to counteract situations that cause difficulties on the labor market. The text is an illustration of the empirical verification carried out in the first semester of 2016 regarding the planning of the educational and career future by junior high school students (including young people with special educational needs) of the Gniezno county.

The problems of the main binary relation in speech therapy (therapist-patient) and ternary relationship (logopedic-patient-family / career), which should be recognized in relation to dialogi-

cal personalism, respecting the autonomy of each participant in speech therapy, as well as the specificity of the primary (family) groups and secondary (organizational and contractual) is the consideration of the article by Monika Kazimierczak. The author emphasizes that the sequence of appropriate interactions, ie the interaction of the main actors of the diagnostic and therapeutic process, can transform into a permanent relationship, and thus affect the progress in speech therapy or the quality of everyday life of the patient, if personal contacts and language messages are characterized by mutual kindness, respect and willingness to cooperate in partnership. An interesting analysis was provided by the analysis of preverbal communication behaviors of children with the Cri du Chat team in the assessment of parents, presented by Agnieszka Kamyk-Wawryszuk. As the author writes, more and more often children with rare genetic syndromes are diagnosed with difficulties in using verbal speech, therefore there is a need to deepen knowledge about communication behavior at the preverbal level and support them - very often, alternative communication and lack of systematized scientific knowledge and individual reports on the subject of communication between children and the Cri du Chat team decided to start exploring this issue.

Interesting issues regarding the dating barriers of women with physical disabilities have been described in the next article by Agnieszka Zawislak. This phenomenon has been presented in relation to the available research and analysis results. Dating barriers have been described taking into account the division of external and internal barriers. External barriers considered social issues that included negative stereotypes, patterns, attitudes and architectural barriers. Internal barriers directly concerned women with physical disabilities, including their attitudes towards themselves, self-esteem and social skills. The analysis showed that women with physical disabilities may have greater difficulties finding partners and shaping personal relationships that lead to intimacy than women without disabilities. Telecare, community housing for seniors and intergenerational roommates, or alternative forms of care and support

for the elderly, was presented by Natalia Ulaniecka in the next article. The author presents the concept and use of telecare – an information and communication system that monitors the situation of older people and alerts in the event of a threat and presents solutions used in selected European countries.

Agnieszka Skowrońska-Pućka in the theoretical-empirical article – “A child with a child from an orphanage” – stigmatization and self-stigma and the life chances of minor mothers, former foster children’s educational institutions presents fragments of authoritative qualitative research devoted to the problems of teenage motherhood implemented by foster careers. The issues raised in it concern the stigmatization and auto-stigma activities of girls who, before the age of eighteen, became mothers, and additionally, along with their child, were in care and educational institutions. Stigmatization practices were shown in the context of the chances and fate of life of former pupils of care and educational institutions who became mothers in their teenage years. The next article discusses the issue of self-esteem of youth with visual disabilities in the field of “perspective I”. As Marta Niemiec points out, “I’m future / perspective” and the associated ideas and plans for her future are an important source of motivation for activity and development. The article presents the results of own research on self-esteem in the field of “perspective I” of young people with visual disabilities, studying special educational institutions from the area of the Silesian Voivodship. The problem of visual disability has also been addressed by Izabella Kucharczyk. The author presented the results of research on the reasoning by geometrical analogies of blind students at the age of 10 years, 12 years and 14 years. The research included a group of 63 blind students and 63 sighted students. Twelve B Series of Progressive Matrices by John C. Raven were used for the research. A detailed analysis of the relationships between variables allowed to determine the differences between groups of students in terms of reasoning through geometric analogies. The space in the statements of blind children in early school age is an issue discussed in the article by Kamila Miler-Zdanowska. As the author points out,

People with visual disability assimilate knowledge about the surrounding space using other strategies than sighted people. The final stage of collecting this information is independent moving in space as well as the ability to describe it. The aim of the article is to present ways of experiencing space by blind people and strategies to build mental maps in their minds and to present knowledge about space by creating a description of it. The article also presents the results of empirical research. In the next article, Kornelia Czerwińska presents the subjective perspective of a person with inborn myopia, who during the course of his life experienced gradual weakening of visual capabilities up to their total loss. In the research, the case study method was used, in which the main technique of obtaining data was a narrative biographical interview. In the analyzed narratives, turning points were distinguished in the process of dealing with the consequences of the deepening dysfunction. They were situations in which the subject could no longer effectively perform the task previously performed under the control of the eyesight, which fully informed her of the following disease progress and directly confronted with the fact of acquiring permanent, serious disability.

The problem of sensory disability has also been addressed in Magdalena Olempska-Wysocka's article. The author presented her own research on the situational level of the educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment at the time of the educational start. The study involved 74 children with hearing impairment in a profound and significant degree, beginning their studies in the first grade in primary school. The research was carried out in the first semester, in central Poland, in integration and special schools. The aim of the research was to determine the situational level of sensitivity of deaf pupils starting school education. The conducted research allows to determine which of the ranges are the best and the least developed, which enables orientation towards the rehabilitation and therapeutic interactions of this group of students. The last article – presents different models of the description of mutual relations between the school and parents. His author, Zohar

Biber, based on the research of Bauch and Golding, investigated the contribution of discourse in a new way of communication in order to increase parent involvement and school relationships.

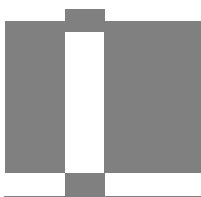
The whole report ends with reports from the conference (Report on the 3rd Conference “Education in the Modern World – Theoretical and Experiential Perspective” and from the Nationwide Conference on Producing Intimacy, On Daily Challenges).

I hope that reading this volume will be interesting for you and will encourage you to reach for more.

Magdalena Olempska-Wysocka
Editor of the Volume



ARTICLES



Will the Internet replace schools and parents in education and upbringing?

ABSTRACT: Bogusław Śliwerski, *Will the Internet replace schools and parents in education and upbringing?* Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 17–41. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

The core of the analysis is countering the myth that allegedly using new communications technologies by children and youths is toxic to their development. In the post-modern world, children enter into partner and educational relationships with their parents specifically thanks to their better abilities to use new media. Changes the science of upbringing and education management are also necessary.

KEY WORDS: new media, Internet, virtual network, upbringing, pseudo-upbringing, family, school, globalisation, nihilism

(...) media are much more than “the press, radio and television”. They are an intermediation institution that is almost fundamental for the human condition, changing in the course of history its technical equipment, operating in this regard with various carriers of meaning – but retaining the basic property of constructing the paradoxical relationship of man and their world based on substitution².

¹ Full professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Łódź, Poland.

² T. Szkuclarek, *Media. Szkic z filozofii i pedagogiki dystansu*, Kraków, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls” 1998 (2nd ed.), p. 139.

Introduction

In the title of my paper I have suggested a question, which – as with every polar question – in actuality an easily foreseeable affirmative answer. Despite this, it is not really that simple, as we are living in a time of “fluid reality”, full of changing meanings and system solutions in public education. Pedagogical sciences in Poland do not have a problem with responding to such a question. For at least twenty years of coming to terms and using new technologies in a world of global and open communication, we know sufficiently much about their positive and negative conditions and effects. The common response to a rhetorical question in this regard can thus at most have a character akin to the style of the former President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa (“I am FOR, and even AGAINST”), and be as simple-sounding as possible: YES and NO.

Education science in a world of crises and myths

The role of science is not to react to temporary crisis situations and the results from various kinds of diagnostic polls, as this is the role of professional educators, pedagogues, teachers, therapists and specialists in the field of the invoked, allegedly crisis situation, analysing and studying them on a daily basis – well-educated and learning all their lives, I trust. The role of education as a science is primarily the execution of diagnostic, descriptive, explanatory studies, but also basic research in terms of constructing theories and (meta-)theoretical or experimental models so as to enable, through publication of their results and contents:

- the conduction of rational educational policy in the state by its (hopefully) enlightened leaders,
- initiating or supporting social forces, including NGOs;
- co-operation of education specialists with the environment designing and manufacturing new technologies and tools of communication;

- education in this regard of biological and foster parents or caretakers of children;
- education and development of teachers' ranks in the country.

Children's biological parents can never be replaced by anyone or anything, irrespective of how special, wonderful or even cheap the new technologies and tools of communication will be. I stress - NEVER-ANYONE-ANYTHING. I mean here parents that are happy to have children, love them, care about them, and at the same time exercise full-fledged, normal, direct communication among themselves in the family. Even in a situation of temporary or long-term separation or parting, technology serves them only just to sustain, strengthen and deepen common bonds and openness, rather than to replace them. In healthy family environments, digital technologies facilitate the strengthening of social bonds thanks to better and faster possibility of communication of e. g. parents with their own children by the use of mobile phones.

Let us thus not exaggerate the myth of an alleged and possible substitute of things as if they could be personified, and the reverse - let us not reify our children, let us not reduce them to technology, because every time the parent shifts to intermediate communication with their own child in their own home (and this is starting to emerge), this means that in the psycho-social sense they are forgoing and retreating from being parents. Thus, branding media as the EVIL-BEING is the perfect escape route from one's own responsibility with respect to own children for who they are and who they become in the relevant constructed relations.

It's not the MEDIA that destroy bonds, as these are the results of actions of pseudo-parents. New media open up a direct, real, and an indirect, virtual, space for those under care of parents, as being NOT THEIRS any more - to new items, yet in reality items that are alien to them. In such a situation, the case always concerned, concerns and will concern EXTERNAL INTERESTS, of good, but also of bad will, with positive, but also negative intentions, with obvious, but also covert needs of initiation of influencing the personality of young generations. In the sense of so-called influence, the MEDIA

and the VIRTUAL WORLD become either a positive co-actor, a mentor, advisor, friend in the development of children and youths, or a destructive factor for them, an intermediate tormentor or subversive enemy. Situations may well emerge that they are all of these at once. In a situation of psycho-social abandonment of the child by the parents, everything is possible in their life, however, studies on monozygotic twins indicate that if they have the proper genetic make up, the case is not lost.

Education specialists know that approx. 30% of parents in fairly wealthy, economically-developed societies – and Poland is one of these – are those who for some reason did not want to have children, and hence they came to the world under conditions and in a socio-economic atmosphere that are not always favourable. There was no bond with them already at inception and the pre-natal period, even more so in the post-natal period, hence they require particular closeness and positive feelings even when they have to be reliant on foster parents, professional educators, teachers from the crèche, pre-school, all the way to compulsory schools³. They will channel their unsatisfied needs of bonds, acceptance, affiliation on-line, putting on masks so that, as users of e. g. games, they would be able to take on the roles of “discoverers”, “companionship seekers”, “competitors” or “killers”⁴. It’s foster parents, be it institutional or environmental, who have to strive for their acceptance, openness and readiness to cooperate if they want to be educators in the full meaning of the word, implement the assumed functions and goals of the institution/ unit they represent. So, they have to win over the CHILD first, ‘BIND THEM’ to themselves in the psycho-social manner so as to make, together with them, the joint effort of existence and development. They have to learn from one another, get to know each other mutually, to respond to mutual expectations and needs.

³ D. Kornas-Biela, *Pedagogika prenatalna*, [in:] *Pedagogika. Subdyscypliny i dziedziny wiedzy o edukacji*, ed. by Bogusław Śliwerski, vol. 4, Gdańsk, GWP 2010.

⁴ T. Boellstorff, *Dojrzewanie w second life. Antropologia człowieka wirtualnego*, translated by A. Sadza, Kraków, Wydawnictwo UJ 2012, p. 158.

The other side of this situation is winning over unwanted children of parents by those for whom they are just a business, a means to achieve various goals. The media can be negatively or supporting in this regard. They act negatively if they are a lure, a trap, bait for unworthy acts, to hurt children or treat them as customers to make money on their peripheral needs (e. g. banks, IT manufacturers, the pharmaceutical industry, the food industry, para-medical services, etc.), they can be supportive, however, if they become the means of crying for help (e. g. would-be suicides, sexually-abused children, etc.) or supporting their individual path of self-education and development.

Enmity against children

The author of the book “Zeit für Kinder” (*Time for children*)⁵ differentiates between two kinds of hostile attitudes of adults towards children, namely: objective and subjective enmity. The first is a derivative of structural solutions, e. g. the lack of protection of children against too easy access to demoralising content and imagery. The ambassador of EVIL becomes an objective enemy of the child, against their own will, limiting or degrading the psychological and physical development of one under their care. Available is literature on the subject, e. g. edited by Józef Bednarek and Anna Andrzejewska of the Maria Grzegorzewska University⁶, by Wojciech Skrzydlewski and Stanisław Dylak of the University of Poznań⁷, authored by Michał Klichowski and Hanna Krauze-Sikorska of the University

⁵ E. von Braunmühl, *Zeit für Kinder. Theorie und Praxis von Kinderfeindlichkeit, Kinderfreundlichkeit, Kinderschutz. Zur Beseitigung der Unsicherheit im Umgang mit Kindern. Ein Lehrbuch*, Frankfurt a. Main, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag 1978, p. 24.

⁶ *Człowiek w obliczu szans cyberprzestrzeni i świata wirtualnego*, red. Józef Bednarek, Warszawa, Difin S.A. 2014; *Dzieci i młodzież w sieci zagrożonych realnych i wirtualnych. Aspekty teoretyczne i empiryczne*, ed. by Anna Andrzejewska, Warszawa, Difin S.A. 2014.

⁷ *Media. Edukacja. Kultura. W stronę edukacji medialnej*, red. Wojciech Skrzydlewski, Stanisław Dylak, Poznań-Rzeszów, UAM 2012.

of Poznań⁸ or Stanisław Juszczak⁹. Subjective enmity, in turn, is an expression of personal hatred of someone weaker. It is a type of rational sadist who experience satisfaction from the physical and/or psychological maltreatment of children. Among others, Jacek Pyżalski¹⁰ writes about this using the example of cyber-bullying. Due to the entanglement of education and development in general social processes, the specifics of mutual relations between the caregiver and caretaker, the multitude of paragons and subjects of education, including contradictory or competitive ones, and the delayed effects of this process, there may emerge in its course unfavourable or even harmful (pseudo-educational) effects affecting the development of those under care.

I have noticed on a wall of one of the houses in Lublin, Poland, an enormous advertisement showing a young, elegant man, amended by the following sentence: "BEING YOURSELF IS A LUXURY". Well, in a normal family, being yourself is not a luxury, but the norm, the obvious fact, and in a dysfunctional family in which the child is alienated, feels as if they were an obstacle, a burden, etc. BEING ON-LINE using a mask of anonymity confirms observations by cultural anthropologists, ethnographers of the virtual world, and confirms the experience of such children that may be summarised by statements such as: "*Here I can convince myself that I can truly be myself, the real "I", Here we express our souls*" or "*Here it is easy for me to be many persons simultaneously*"¹¹.

On-line technologies thus aren't the source of social alienation for everyone. I believe that children who are already alienated in their own families can win back their identity, reconstruct their per-

⁸ H. Krauze-Sikorska, M. Klichowski, *Świat digital natives. Młodzież w poszukiwaniu siebie i innych*, Poznań, WN UAM 2013.

⁹ S. Juszczak, *Człowiek w świecie elektronicznych mediów – szanse i zagrożenia*, Katowice, Wydawnictwo UŚI 2000.

¹⁰ J. Pyżalski, *Agresja elektroniczna wśród dzieci i młodzieży*, Sopot, GWP 2011; idem, *Agresja elektroniczna i cyberbullying jako nowe ryzykowne zachowania młodzieży*, Kraków, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls” 2012.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 158.

sonality (...) *perceiving their lives through the prism of possible modes of life offered by all kinds of mass media*¹². Let us not be deluded, and let us not create such expectations, or – as the sociologist Jan Szcze- pański aptly described it years ago – let us not generate peripheral needs among those under our care in a situation, where they are not able to satisfy their basic, first-order needs. Never intermediate, because the virtual “touch”, movement, etc., will never be the same as the experience of natural, direct contact or the feeling or the experience of natural movement. Even more so, I do not need to refer this to the spiritual and psychological, the emotional and the sensory. Reality is where the Internet is not, just like the Internet is but indirect access to reality that is not available to us directly.

The fact that the virtual, on-line world frequently functions as a synonym of the real world, perhaps, to a certain extent, experienced as highly and as equally, and similarly importantly – due to the stimuli received from it and transmitted to it – however, it is not real, because that is not its ontological status. Perhaps it indeed has consequences for our real lives, but from the psycho-social point of view it is nothing new in this respect (e. g. there was a blind-date show on television, and a future partner can just as well be met through other media, e. g. printed press). I do not need to expand upon this in our respectable circle of experts.

One of the attributes of reality is spatiality, and hence, education science must be found at every spot in actual and virtual space, and itself it should have some kind of spatial structure. A debate focusing on issues of socialisation, education or upbringing in both these zones is not an argument of disembodied spirits existing outside of space of actual history, as it applies to specific characters, even if they are the subjects of animation, technological constructs. Any one of these spaces can be explored, and one can enter their lives, because each character creates or co-determines the actual reasons for life of each of us. Their ontological and ontic foundations cannot be separated from the axiological foundations, because – as the philos-

¹² Ibidem, p. 162.

opher Andrzej Nowicki accurately noted on space: *“Its constituent components can be: a) independent of one another, b) one can serve the other as a foundation; c) they may share a border due to the subdivision of a larger area into parts, d) they can partially overlap, e) one may fit in the other, and f) they may permeate each other”*¹³. Let us thus study, let us analyse, how both these spaces (the real and the virtual) and the levels and items existing in them meet. Let us not create a pedagogy of borders, because it is a way towards self-exclusion.

Contemporary social sciences decode the post-modern world as a world facilitating fragmentation of identity of persons, its distribution, even its staging or orchestration. Accordingly, the phenomena of the post-modern world cannot be approached as if we would still be dealing with a world from the past era, a modern world, because our actions – I am thinking of education science specialists here – will be ineffective, as not fitting in with the freedom and pluralism, the heterogeneity and continued staging of differences, not the uniformation of identities of those under our care. As Zbyszko Melosik writes on the subject: *In an era of modernity, the borders of identity were clearly defined, cohesive and stable. Its discipline was based on a precise response to the question: “who are you allowed to be, and who aren’t you”. Presently, disciplining one’s identity entails the duty of being fragmented – the message “you have to be such and such” was replaced with the message “you can be each one (simultaneously). So, I believe, we are dealing here with disciplining identity through the construction of a feeling of freedom in the area of making consumer choices (assuming that identity “plays out” mainly around consumption)*¹⁴.

The role of education in the post-modern world

The world of every child, and of every adult, together with “THEIR” world in all its forms assumes OTHERS as subjects that

¹³ A. Nowicki, *Spotkania w rzeczach*, Warszawa, PWN 1991, p. 255.

¹⁴ Z. Melosik, *Tożsamość, ciało i władza. Teksty kulturowe jako (kon)teksty pedagogiczne*, Poznań–Toruń, Edytor 1996, pp. 106–107.

co-constitute it. OTHERS are for the subject always an open possibility, regardless of whether they are actually, or just intermediately, virtually, present in it. None of us may negate or hinder access by or presence of ANOTHER to or in our own SELF, as they would necessarily have to assume the lack of ability of a person to recognise the possibility of co-existence of two worlds. For education specialists, key is the response to the question – how is the virtual world experienced by those under our care, and what do they “carry” in themselves of this world? Perhaps it would be worthwhile to use the category of intersubjectivity that is becoming one of the basic terms in social sciences. *The space of interpersonal relations, the sphere of the inter-objective, and that which is “public” – as these are the relevant dimensions when one would talk of intersubjectivity – is assumed in all important theories of broadly-understood human sciences or legislation*¹⁵. If one would consider upbringing as a phenomenon emerging “between” the virtual assignor of meanings and their recipient (the learner, the one cared for), then they may not just be reduced to anything that is party just to the sender (caretaker) or integrated solely with the person under care, and they furthermore cannot be subjected just to any general laws. *What plays out between us and does not belong to just one entity or to all together. In this sense it creates a no-man’s land, a borderland that both joins and divides. Anything present in just such a way that it escapes our own access, is called – alien*¹⁶.

Upbringing or education in light of such an approach is not just someone’s action or the subject or effect of it, but something that occurs in intersubjective space. Hence, one can perceive education at the same time from two sides engaged in the process – the (directly or indirectly) acting subject and the subject experiencing one’s actions (also directly or indirectly) as a single thing. *The difference here are aspects, but not education, which is one. This perception from two different sides should not be looking at two different things, but at “one*

¹⁵ P. Makowski, *Wymiary intersubiektywności. Słowo wstępne*, [in:] *Intersubiektywność*, ed. by Piotr Makowski, Kraków, Universitas 2012, p. 7.

¹⁶ B. Waldenfels, *Podstawowe motywy fenomenologii obcego*, przeł. J. Sidorek, Warszawa 2009, p. 108–109.

and the same thing". We look through two different windows, but are looking inside the same room. And just like a cone "projected" on one surface looks like a circle, and "projected" onto another one – seems as if a triangle, education "projected" on an experiencing subject is different than education "projected" on the acting subject. But just like neither the circle nor the triangle are a cone, education is not one or the other aspect of education¹⁷.

Hence, one cannot perceive these two worlds separately, as a set of two independent, stand-alone components – subjects – or build walls to separate one, as they are present. Indeed, any kind of (...) social union is living fusion. Our psyche is by its very nature two-fold and always functions in the categories of "I" and "us". This duality was also registered by psychology (...). So, it is not as was suspected historically that an isolated, ready, closed personality will freely take on an attitude with respect to other, equally independent personalities, but that from the earliest years of our lives, our psyche develops by us and the environment perceiving, seeing and parsing the alien "I" in itself, and its own – in others', experiences itself in the environment, and the environment in itself. (...) the individual and society are not terms of substances, but of functions and (...) that is why all attempts at cause-and-effect separation be it of the individual from the group or the group from individuals are utterly false. These functions can, alas, be characterised by various levels of tension, and this is how various forms of social relationships differ. (...)

The intensification of one's personal life becomes at the same time the inclusion in oneself of broader social areas, and an increase of intensity of psychological life around us acts to stimulate our psyche. To put this in the category of duality of our psyche, one could say that strengthening the "I" causes at the same time the strengthening of "we" and vice versa. In this way, personality and society seem to be immobile beings, and become intertwining processes¹⁸. Nowadays we more frequently resort to the cate-

¹⁷ J. Filek, *Pytanie o istotę wychowania*, „Studia Filozoficzne” 1984, No. 4, p. 125.

¹⁸ L. Witkowski, *Dwoistość jako kategoria i paradygmat w pedagogice polskiej (o pracach Bogdana Suchodolskiego metodologicznie inaczej)*, pre-print of conference lecture, „Problemy współczesnej metodologii” Komitetu Nauk Pedagogicznych PAN, Wydziału Pedagogiki i Psychologii Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, Wszechnicy Mazur-

gory of identity than personality, the I. This term is, however, just as abstract as the other, and social sciences really do not provide us with a clear message of response to fundamental questions: *How so we know who we are, and how do others identify us? How does our feeling of being unique individuals relate to the fact that always and everywhere we share certain aspects of our identity with many other people? How do we reconcile our feeling of continuity of ourselves with the awareness that for various people, in various situations, we are different? Is it possible for us to become someone or something else than we are now? Can one just "be oneself?"*¹⁹.

So, when we just pose the question of whether the internet will replace schools and parents in education and upbringing? – we are making a mistake. First of all, because there are no children in general or parents in general, that children are not equal to children just like parents are not equal to other parents, and second of all because both worlds intertwine, supplement each other whether one would want it or not. An individual cannot in the virtual world tend to ANOTHER, ALIEN that it experiences differently than when they would have to approach it face to face, but without being obligated to reverse the relation of the OTHER to the SELF, if its intermediation does not make it symmetrical. The parties are not the source of moral responsibility with respect to each other.

It is also good to know, which category of parents and children is the subject of our cognition or pedagogical. Enemies of children learn from the Internet faster and more about their possible utilisation than children could be able to gain knowledge on how to recognise subjective and objective enemies, and how to defend themselves against them. Adults always had, and always will have, this advantage over children, despite the fact that they are able to surf the web better and more efficiently. If one were to assume, following Zygmunt Bauman, that all inhabitants of the Earth are subject to

skiej w Olecku, September 11th-12th, 2000. Olecko-Kraków-Toruń-Warszawa 2000, pp. 21-22.

¹⁹ S. Rudnicki, *Ciało i tożsamość w internecie. Teoria. Dyskurs. Codziennosc*, Warszawa, WN SCHOLAR 2013, p. 27.

the already irreversible process of globalisation, this means that children are also “globalised”²⁰. Thus, following the footsteps of researchers of this phenomenon, it is worthwhile to consider what does this mean for people, and in particular, what this process means for children?

The end of geography in a global world of interpersonal relations

We are the witnesses of the end of geography, as distances cease to be meaningful. The world has become smaller for everyone, even if it is not at arm’s reach for everyone. Some are divided by globalisation, others united in something. Education scientists ask themselves the question, to what extent does this process initiate, with respect to children, additional factors of their marginalisation, and to what extent does it facilitate their development? To what extent does globalisation impact the situation of children in the world? Can one find negative as well as positive aspects of it?

Table 1. Two dimensions of two worlds

	The real	The virtual
Positive aspect	Educationability	There is no duality here, but clearly positive intentions, the readiness of support, aid, mentoring, coaching, etc.
Negative aspect	Pseudo-education	A hidden scheme, potential possibility of instrumental treatment of ANOTHER, using, manipulating them, etc.

Source: own work.

Some believe that globalisation should be supported, others – that it should be combatted or controlled or supervised. If one were

²⁰ Z. Bauman, *Globalizacja. I co z tego dla ludzi wynika*, translated by E. Klekot, Warszawa, PIW 2000.

to assume, however, that it means experiencing a new quality, then perhaps it would at least be worth it to look at how it impacts the shape of our children's childhood. *The key is for globalisation processes – imminent, perhaps even historically necessary – not to take place without us. Our culture must strive to elevate to the highest possible level that which is most valuable in our own culture*²¹. Man needs help to better find their way in existing and other cultures that they are up against. Education and upbringing should thus aid one to cope with the plurality of human cultures, understand them and break the feeling of uncertainty. *Through inner maturity we should elevate that which is particular and most own to what is universal. The perfect should be given to the world. And in this, not only passive, but primarily creative way, become participants in globalisation*²².

Social philosophy and sociology in post-modernity indicate ever stronger distancing of individuals from all that is social, common, only focusing on what is personal and dependent on the individual. We enter a state of neo-narcissistic self-adoration. Education specialists should thus not avoid the nihilistic context of inculturation of younger generations. As the Italian psychologist and philosopher Umberto Galimberti writes, cultural nihilism hit the weakest link of post-modern societies, meaning, children and youths, (...) *creeping into their souls, entering their thoughts and feelings. In this way, it demolishes their perspectives and desiccates their dreams*²³. The nihilism of youths is expressed by the following symptoms:

1. Lack of interest in schools, bullying the weak in schools; education turns into an economic battle of cool and quantifiable indicators of success, without emotion ties between them.
2. Emotive vacuum – the result of uptake from the media of emotionally extreme experiences without the ability to select and analyse these.

²¹ W. Stróżewski, *Kultura i rozwój*, Tygodnik Powszechny, 2001, No. 1, p. 12.

²² Ibidem.

²³ As quoted in: A. Rajský, *Nihilistický kontext kultivácie mladého človeka*, Filozoficko-etický pohľad, Trnava, Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis 2009, p. 139.

3. Lack of the notion of intimacy – shame, disgrace, shyness protect our intimacy, our freedom and the core of our personality when we decide on the type of relations that we would like to form with others. Reality shows confirm that in society, the division between the internal and the external, discretion, privacy and publication of one's secrets, is vanishing.
4. The allure of drugs and designer drugs.
5. Indifference to death – daily media bombardment with a cocktail of sex and violence. Death has become a product without a broader meaning or negative consequences in the homogeneous, virtual world.
6. Indifference, psychopathy, sociopathy – generation X and generation Q.
7. Ritual violence – during the Olympic games, stadium hooliganism, participation in violence orgies, extreme events, euphoria due to excess, harassment of others²⁴.

Michael Adler from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, indicates based on conducted research the following traits of a pathological narcissist:

- *Increased feeling of importance (e. g. exaggerating their achievements and talents, expecting recognition from superiors without according effects);*
- *Indulging in fantasies on his unlimited success, power, perfection, beauty or ideal love;*
- *Believing that they are unique and lonely, and seeming to understand that they should become closer to other persons (offices) of higher orders;*
- *Expecting constant admiration;*
- *Having the feeling of being in demand, e. g. having heightened expectations;*
- *Conformist when dealing with other people: using others to achieve their own goals;*

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 160-167.

- *Losing the ability to co-experience; rejecting experiencing emotions and the needs of others;*
- *Often envying others or believing that others envy them;*
- *Arrogant traits, pompous behaviour and attitudes*²⁵.

The meaning of school education

School is and will be necessary for youths also in the 21st century as it will help them find their reasons for living, the lack of which leads to all kinds of psychological trauma. Live in the void means an existence in a sterile culture, e. g. a culture without a vision of the past or future, without rules to organise it, without clear values and authorities. *The reason for school is found in exactly this, that individuals learn in an environment to subordinate their individual needs to group interests, as opposed to mass communication media that stimulate individual reactions and private experiences*²⁶.

In changing societies, there exists a sufficient volume of proof of the necessity of school education before children accept it as a value and internalise it. *The case is primarily of creating an appropriate environment for them to support their cooperation, sensitivity and responsibility for others. Exactly this is why school demands pupils to proceed at a specific place and time in line with specific rules, e. g. raising hands when one would want to speak their mind, and remaining silent when others speak, or not chewing gum, not getting up before the bell rings, not leaving the class room, and to have patience for persons learning more slowly. This process is referred to as acculturation, the formation of civilised people*²⁷.

In the view of Neil Postman, everyone dealing with issues of education of children and youths must solve two basic problems: the technical and the metaphysical. The first of these deals with

²⁵ K. Hvižďala, *Interviewer aneb restaurování kontekstů. Rozhovor s M. M. Marešovou*, Portál, Praha 2010, pp. 60–61.

²⁶ N. Postman, *Keine Götter mehr. Das Ende der Erziehung*, Berlin, Berlin Verlag 1995, p. 66.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 68–69.

methods and means thanks to which youths gain knowledge, hence pedagogues deal with the issue of where, when and how should teaching take place. *However, it is worth remembering at the same time that the technique of learning is very frequently overestimated, and hence, people assign to it much more than it really deserves. As the old saying goes: - All roads lead to Rome, and all are right. It is similar with learning. Nobody can say that that or another type of learning is the best*²⁸. In truth, one can become a different person thanks to what one learns, but for this purpose one needs not only a vision, concept or attitude towards the world, but primarily its substantiation, and this is already a metaphysical issue. This is not about any motivation towards learning, awakening interest in the content of education, passing exams or doing homework, but something much more abstract, something of which pupils are not aware and something that is not easy to describe, without which school cannot function. I am thinking here of the world of timeless, universal values that were described in Poland's constitution and the law on the education system as Christian values.

Educators - in light of analyses of culture sociologists of the United States - belong to a small professional group that is particularly full of admiration for the god of technology. There are even pedagogues who believe that technological progress in the transfer of information is so large that soon, schools will be needed by neither children nor adults. Outside of the classroom, one can obtain much more quickly much more information about issues of interest. Accordingly, e. g. Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education under the Secretary of Education of the United States, believed that (...) *in this new world of pedagogical plenty, children and adults will be able to dial up a programme on their home television to learn whatever they want to know, at their own convenience. If little Eva cannot sleep, she can learn algebra instead. At her home-learning station, she will tune in to a series of interesting problems that are presented in an interactive medium*²⁹.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 70.

²⁹ Ibidem.

Postman criticises this perspective, believing that this is not the case of a new technology, but a certain type of open determinism of a world of images and a surreal world. Man is not free in his choices, but adapts their needs to the ready offers of the consumer industry. It cannot be denied that the idea is interesting to turn on the home computer to reconstruct a simulation of biological life forms or conduct a teleconference with a scientist on a given subject who has specific research successes in a given field, instead of sitting in a boring class room. It is difficult to imagine, however, that scientists around the world would be ready to participate in thousands of phone conferences with pupils who have the fancy of doing homework with them. Postman thus poses the critical questions:

- Will a trip into the virtual world really eliminate boredom from the learning process? If so, will pupils want to return to the real world? Is it not so that just like all technologies were in the past, these are a kind of a pact with the devil, e. g. that they give something, at the same time taking something away? Does entering virtual reality cause computer technology to become the main motivation, authority and psychological advisor in the solution to human problems? Which content of learning will be neglected, and which impossible to provide?

Schools as state institutions are not able to change societies, being but a reflection of their attitudes. At the same time, there exist opposing views as to the goals of school education, as some citizens are in favour of adapting children and youths at schools to accept the world, with all its rules, compulsions, limitations and prejudices on the existing culture; others expect schools to shape critical minds, enable in pupils independence and self-sufficiency far away from conventional cliches of their time, and with enough power to effect social change.

Media pedagogy cannot limit itself to knowledge about media, the genesis of their emergence and evolution, to normative sighs, alternative (auto-)educational utopias, multitudes of surveys on views about media to give rise to fear of temporary and marginal or

possible threats to children and youths. This is quite unrelated to pedagogy! Science should facilitate, through its interdisciplinary approach, to exploring the virtual world, recognising, supervising, estimating and undertaking various kinds of application, experimental, reformatory or innovative initiatives with the participation of the most creative educators and scientists in cooperation with hardware and software companies, with creators of the virtual world. This space, in actuality, differs little from that in which we move about daily, meeting each other or our pupils, those under our care or those we are to educate.

Let us not scare societies, in particular the young generation, with media, the virtual world, because thus we exclude ourselves from their space and the intermediate public sphere as unbelievable, because politically correct commentators of ideologically marginal phenomena. Pathologies were always present and always will be, irrespective of how much we would like to introduce prevention, isolate ourselves from them or exaggerate, in a scientifically unsubstantiated manner, the alleged ubiquity of their presence across the entire population or its majority. Pedagogy never was and should not be a science of the lost, the frustrated, the pessimistic, mainstream or media-present quasi-experts and surveys because their value loses power on the day of publication. The basic role of the pedagogue is to lead upwards, positive and active accompanying of others in their lives and development, wary, sensitive and empathic coexistence with our children and youths, and in present times, perhaps in a particular manner also with adults and older people, because communication illiteracy in a time of new technologies is broadening, deepening the generational divide.

Evil is good for the media and sells well, but luckily it does not prevail in the world, including the virtual world. Pedagogy, in effect, is not about spreading the marginal instance of the evil of both worlds, because in this way it contributes to it multiplying, expanding and not to the creation of positive socialisation, education and self-education or self-achievement of everyone. I understand that one can achieve academic recognition on this basis easily

and quickly, prosper fruitfully thanks to one's lectures, foreign conference visits, courses and expertises, because it fashionable is what is temporarily worrying and in the public eye. However, this has little in common with the science of education. Because of EVIL, pathologies, hurt, the sphere of the virtual world cannot be ignored, and it even more cannot be used as a tool for spreading fear because this would equal excluding oneself as a pedagogue from possible and necessary actions, and foremost from our presence and engagement.

The fact that we have an archaic, former-century, centralised education system, meaning, one that is completely out of touch with the political order, with society, and mostly with the education reality of the post-modern world, does not mean that it will be better if we maintain the great moods of the ignorants in power so that they could continue to satisfy private and party needs at the cost of millions of children and youths under compulsory education. I understand that one can make a great profit on this, that there are people already sniffing for further seven-figure education grants to be subdivided in local governments. Is this not the reason for inner-party clique battles for local governance in the coming years? Remember, just like they were formerly, these resources will be spent on simple consumption, furthering power and strengthening one's colleagues, and not to change the quality of education in Poland!

Without decentralisation and local governance of schools, and without improvements to their management, we will not be able to let go of the deeply rooted remains of "homosovietism" and we will not be able to cope with the formation of a modern and effective system of education and the education of young generations in our country, we will not stand to the challenges of post-modernity. Polish education needs a structural, programmatic and methodic revolution so that with each passing year, public resources are not wasted on it. For the purpose of emotional, social and communication development of children, improved should be the care for such classes like: reading, speaking and telling stories, listening, playing (fun), performances and music. An end to uniform and homogene-

ous school education in favour of an introduction of diversity and multiculturalism. The school should become a kind of a house of learning, a laboratory – an educational workshop, and the teacher should shift to the position of educational and developmental advisor of children.

The key to solving the above problems of education could be, among others:

- using modern forms of integrated learning (topical blocks instead of learning by topic);
- multimedia learning (or tele-learning);
- workshop learning (training of various competences) instead of learning;
- the teacher as a trainer-advisor or coach, instead of a transmitter of knowledge;
- letting go of classes lasting 45 minutes;
- introducing open classes and the project method instead of teacher-focused classes³⁰.

The above changes should make the learning process more effective, motivating and caring for the comprehensive physical, psychological, social and political development of pupils. More time is thus gained for movement, playing, co-operation with persons of interest, working in pairs and groups, development of cognitive, action and conflict-solving competences, prevention, compensation and integration of learning content. Computer-based “tele-education” as home learning permits optimum usage of time for learning, as the participants can by themselves control the speed at which they cope with specific content, repeat them, expand upon them and integrate them with other knowledge. Attention is also drawn to the fact that tele-education reduces the syndrome of professional burn-out in teachers, minimising issues of discipline, reducing the effects of unjust judging (exaggerating or diminishing actual achievements).

³⁰P. Struck, *Erziehung von gestern, Schüler von heute, Schule von morgen*, München, Wien, Carl Hanser Verlag 1997.

By equipping schools with perfect education programmes, the direct, negative influence of certain teachers on pupils is also eliminated. Thanks to computer-based tele-education, knowledge conveyed over the course of a class can be mastered in a time that is shorter by at least three weeks, and the durability of the remembered content is at the same time improved by the period of learning speed reduction. The internet is, however, no boarding house, and the interaction of pupils with the multimedia world must be appropriately controlled. In them must also be instilled a critical approach to it so that the pupils are not enslaved by the media. Teachers gain time to shape in pupils the competence neglected by tele-education, meaning, creativity, social and moral sensitivity, introduction to a world of values, physical activity, making social relations, satisfying emotional needs, coping with conflict situations, etc.

Democracy demands not only social but also political maturity from school graduates, hence it is immensely important to prepare the young generation to appropriately choose values and make decisions in line with these. This industrial society needs a school that teaches, that has knowledge, and the information society should replace this type of institutional education with a school-laboratory (*Lernwerkstatt*), dominated by shaping key competences such as the ability to gather information and act, the ability to cooperate in a group, creativity and the ability to think globally.

Even if school was to be replaced by remote education, we will still refer to it as school, even if we perceive it differently. It will be stripped of learning programmes that dull pupil creativity. It will also not divide pupils into class units according to their age, as this diminishes the possibility of them learning from each other. The school of the future will be much more natural and organised like education of young children, meaning that learning, life and love will not be separated from one another in it. Working on computers creates for them enormous opportunities of development of their creative potential and achievements. They will be able to compose music, write, read, draw, count, communicate or just play. Even if

somebody thinks that they are right in their response to the question in the title of my paper, (...) *this does not means that this affirmation refers to everything, and if one is not right, this does not mean that one is wrong about everything*³¹.

Incontrology as the vantage point to healthy interpersonal relations

The social philosopher, the creator of incontrology – Andrzej Nowicki – indicated the possibility of creating common meeting spaces for pedagogues, psychologists, teachers, therapists, priests, caretakers, parents, etc., thanks to which it would be possible to reconcile two worlds of the everyday life of children and adults, namely:

1. If one would want to find positive values, but also warn of negative experiences of persons they meet in both spaces (the real and the virtual), then it is noteworthy to identify mutual expectations, meaning, desires so that what is to take place and what is to be effective or what is to be designed, as a result of care for the course or fear of the emerging interference would facilitate required and good effects;
2. Assuming that “sources not queried remain silent”, one should strive to form key questions, which – akin to powerful magnets – will necessitate responses, dividing what is important from what is secondary³².
3. Fruitful and enriching for us are meetings primarily with what is different, new, alien, so meeting spaces should be filled with sensitivity to difference, strangeness, uniqueness, diversity³³.
4. Fruitful meetings are not meetings that strip us of our personality, but those that enrich it, so the space of the planned

³¹ J.-CV. Kaufmann, *Ego. Socjologia jednostki. Inna wizja człowieka i konstrukcji podmiotu*, translated by K. Wakar, Warszawa, Oficyna Naukowa 2004, p. 127.

³² A. Nowicki, *Spotkania w rzeczach*, Warszawa, PWN, 1991, p. 260.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

- meeting should be filled with critical attitudes, evaluating independently all content of the meetings³⁴.
5. The most important component of intellectual independence, conditioning progress, is encompassing every object (and in that, every subject), so accordingly, the meeting in its aspect of the possibility of being different than it is³⁵.
 6. Filling the space of planned meetings with thoughts and objects as a composition, the values of which can make the meeting space a work of art, meaning, something worth meeting
 7. The purpose of a meeting cannot just be enriching one's personality achieved through internalisation of the most valuable values borne by the objects (and subjects) met, but also, and primarily, enriching the existing world of human creations by formation of new values. So, the meeting space should also be filled with that which exceeds the meeting, a perspective of exteriorisation of our personality, which, enriched by the meeting, creates new works, which were not there until then³⁶.

The Internet has changing the world, and the world is changing the Internet. Education cannot be a lost vagrant on-line. *The world is not as much slipping, as rather careering towards a new transnational dystopia. (...) The Internet, our best tool of liberation, was transformed into the most dangerous assistant of totalitarianism with which we ever had to deal with. The Internet has become a threat to human civilisation. These transformations have taken place quietly, as persons aware of them operate in the global surveillance business and are not motivated to speak up. Global civilisation, abandoned on its current trajectory, will within a few years turn into a post-modern surveillance dystopia, from which nobody but the best-trained individuals will be able to escape*³⁷.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 262.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 262-263.

³⁷ J. Assange, J. Appelbaum, A. Müller-Maguhn, J. Zimmermann, *Cyberpunks. Wolność i przyszłość internetu*, przeł. Marcin Machnik, Gliwice, Wydawnictwo HELION 2013.

Pedagogy as a science cannot be a tool serving anyone, not governments, not markets, even more so information media, because pseudo-surveys mislead the government and public opinion not giving anything in return. Interested parties should be interested in using research papers, truly scientific ones, and not surveys, to responsibly create their own tasks (in politics, education, production, innovation, etc.). Let us stop complaining and whining. If challenges are in the title of the debate, then please notice that they are nothing new for education or other social sciences, humanities or medical science. Man is still the same person that develops and needs social, including professional, support, even if they are subject to external surveillance until the end, partially implanted with electronics. Teachers, caretakers, educators cannot be replaced by robots in their roles, which does not mean that robots are not necessary in school education.

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Well-being as a Category (Non)Present in the Teacher's Line of Thinking About Student's Success

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Striving for a success in parallel to the simultaneous attainment of high level of well-being is these days a common phenomenon. For quite a long time it has been also in the focus of the scientific debates and papers also dealing with education. This paper presents the findings of the study on the teachers' perception of the student success in the context of assessment of selected success determinants and/or indicators. While analysing the theoretical relationship between student's well-being and educational success, 4 selected factors taken from the Buchner (2004) study were considered key to the undertaken research. The results showed that teachers tend to recognize factors related to the student's well-being as indicators of success, which means they perceive it as a result of achievement. Meanwhile the care for the student's well-being before undertaking an educational task as a success determinant-related situation seems to be less visible.

KEY WORDS: Well-being, success, student's educational success, teacher

Introduction

The achievement of the above-average performance – the success in every sphere of life is now perceived as a duty, a desirable practice, and a social standard of action. We do not refer here to the stress carried by the success-related climate, but we want to emphasize that success questions such as life success, professional or educational successes has for some time been an important issue that has dominated the most important life values. This category also affects educational institutions and entities covered by the activities of teachers and students. On the other hand, whether we mean stress or satisfaction or other success-related experiences, we must refer to well-being as an important property, if we consider care for the condition of the 21st century man, the human being of the future – and the student today. The student, for many years of institutional education, subjected to the teachers' activities, may turn out to be sensitive to a various extent to the omnipresent focus on success, also inspired by the teachers.

Meanwhile, the teacher himself is supposed to be not only the provider of the student's knowledge and skills, but also he should also show concern for his / her condition perceived holistically and called well-being.

The well-being idea is present these days in many social sciences' concepts. One of the proposed approaches to the integration of various trends and attempts to describe the structures of the sense of well-being is the three-dimensional well-being concept of C. L. M. Keyes and M. B. Waterman, "which takes advantage of the achievements of quality of life psychology, clinical and developmental theories and deliberations on health model. The concept comprises three well-being models: emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being (Cieślińska, 2013, pp. 101-102). As Cieślińska writes, "three-dimensional well-being model is complex and multifaceted, it allows holistic treatment of the human being, which is one of the postulates of the so-called life-course psychology" (ibid., p. 102).

The criteria of psychological well-being were developed by C. D. Ryff in conjunction with C. L. M. Keyes (1995, Keyes 2006). Following the authors, their well-being model comprises six dimensions (Ryff, Keyes 1995, p. 727):

1. Self-acceptance, a key aspect of well-being, which is a positive attitude towards one's self
2. Life goal, the ability to find meaning and direction in life, as well as to define and carry out life tasks
3. Personal development, or the ability to constantly use own talent and potential, as well as to develop new abilities and capabilities
4. The control over the environment, another fundamental dimension of well-being, is coping with the world around us. This skill requires the ability to create and nurture an environment that suits our personal needs
5. Autonomy, ability to act under one's own bidding, following one's own beliefs, even if they are inconsistent with the current dogma or conventional wisdom
6. Positive relationships with others, the last dimension comprises strength, pleasure and joy, which ensure close contact, deep intimacy and true love.

The analysis of the referred to dimensions of well-being allows us to recognize that their implementation simply means achieving success – generally speaking – personal, life success.

“Success belongs (...) to the interdisciplinary and universal categories. (...) The multiplicity of planes on which it occurs, the difference of its experience and the diversity of definitions make it one of the categories not easily testified empirically” (Gajdzica, 2014, p. 24). The universal Polish language dictionary defines success as “goal achievement, a successful result of some efforts, actions” (Dubisz, 2006, p. 1447). Success is “a happy end of a venture. Every success is an incentive to face another challenge” (Sillamy 1994, p. 281). It appears not only at the end of the action, but also stimulus for take further actions. However, success is not only the end or the motivation to take consecutive actions – its synonym is also, often

unnoticed and underestimated, trying to achieve the goal. Jeffers (after Waters, 1999, p. 258) states: "You do not fail, if you refrain from action; you succeed if you try".

The contemporary "success in vogue" is reflected in the publication of the "Success Encyclopaedia" (Sztucki, 1998), as well as in numerous guides suggesting how to be successful, applying various strategies, such as coaching. In other words, more or less professional help in achieving the goal began to develop intensively. One can agree with the fact that:

"Success is the attainment a predetermined goal worth efforts and endeavours. It involves comparing yourself with your abilities. It means success, prosperity, fulfilment of task or venture undertaken. The measures of success – according to various value scales – comprise money, power, knowledge, fame and happiness" (Sztucki, 1998, p. 316).

Similarly to well-being, the success can also be both subjective and objective. The subjective nature of success results from a personal assessment of own actions, whereas the objective nature of success is a social view, external criteria of success (Michalak, 2007). It can therefore be said that "every person must decide what success means for him and set own criteria to measure whether he has succeeded or not. (...) if we do not set such criteria (or measures) of success, others will do it for us" (Waters, 1999, p. 258). In the subjective interpretation, therefore, the success "is about the attainment of something that we intended to do, to possess, or what we wanted to become" (ibid.).

Paradoxically enough the reading of the available literature of the subject shows that even if the term of the educational success appears in the title, the content considered most often concerns failure or educational failure (for example: Przybysz-Zaremba, 2010; Piwowarski, 2007). It is also difficult to find the very definition of educational success (see the lack of it in: Pedagogical Dictionary, Kupisiewicz and Kupisiewicz, 2009; 21st Century Educational Encyclopaedia, edited by Pilch, 2007, New Pedagogical Dictionary by Okoń, 2007). Nevertheless, in various sources there is evidence that

there is interest in gifted student, also in terms of analysis of the causes of possible failures (e. g. Dyrda, 2007). "The success of a gifted student is (...) understood as his personal conviction about the achievement of something important for himself and others, feeling of his own success (subjective aspect), but also visible and appreciated by others results of student activities in various educational areas, expressed in the form of non-standard results of specific activities and significant achievements (objective aspect). The success of a talented student is identified with his achievements" (Uszyńska-Jarmoc, Kunat, Tarasiuk, 2014, p. 50). The presented prospect of success was based on the concept of Sękowski (2001, see also Świda-Ziemba, 2005, Boryszewska, 2008).

It is worth posing a question how to measure the educational success, especially that "striving for the highest possible performance in tests and examinations began to play an increasingly important role in the activities of educational facilities" (Chrzanowska, 2015, p. 581), and "exam efficiency" is visible in the school and student rankings (ibidem).

Meanwhile, "on the handicap, mainly of a psychometric nature, measurement tools", as Chrzanowska writes (2015, p. 580), pointed out Konarzewski or Groenwald.

Another vision of the evidence of success achieved is presented by Buchner (2004), which can be critically related to the aforementioned ranking chase, which reflects the success conceived in a specific way, i.e. the overestimation of the importance of school notes. According to the author, the child is successful at school, if (ibid., pp. 13-14):

1. Feels that he makes progress in learning;
2. Draws joy from these advances;
3. Is ready to make an effort;
4. Is able to persistently work on the task assigned to him, until he realizes it;
5. Achieves results that are appropriate to his abilities;
6. Is able to organize learning to cope with his duties;
7. Perceives learning at school as meaningful;

8. Carries out his notebooks correctly;
9. Keeps his school supplies in order;
10. Knowledge acquired at school also uses outside school in some form of activity: book reading, reciting poems, solving tasks.

It is also worth completing the presented list of student's success measures by adding a statement, which according to Sękowski (2001) student's school achievements gives him recognition both among teachers and age peers. The need for social recognition and the recognition of achievements by others is undisputable.

"Success at school, which is expressed in the way presented, will have a longer positive impact and will bring the child greater benefits than several good grades. These often mean superficial success, which can be quickly destroyed by means of average or poor grades" (Buchner, 2004, p. 14).

Method

A teacher who helps the student to build knowledge through his inspired activities and educational interaction usually has some expectations and ideas about the progress or success of his charge. The phenomenon accompanying these situations is the definite, probably evolving, level of student's well-being, both at the threshold of action ("at the entrance") and at the end of implementation of a specific educational task ("at the exit"). The point of departure was considered to be related to the success determinants, whereas the final situation with success measures, and the role of the teacher in modifying the quality of both of them was recognised to be important.

As a part of a wider research project (currently the results are being processed for the monograph), the issues of student's well-being were considered as important and inseparable factor / quality attributed to its educational success. The following research question was posed:

Is there any concern about student's well-being in teacher thinking about the student's success?

Out of the 11 factors analysed, defined by Buchner (2004) and understood as determinants or indicators of student success, 4 were chosen arbitrarily and were considered to be related in a special manner (referring to more recent definitions) with his well-being.

An own survey was developed for teachers attending post-graduate studies in the field of special pedagogy. They were asked to assess which of the factors related to the student's success they consider as determinants and which as success measures. To the avoidance of doubt, it has been explained that factors under this assessment are understood as all the success determinants (it can be said that they occur "on the way to" - "at the entrance"). The success measures, in turn, are those that testify to its existence (they are only present "at the top" - "at the exit").

The applied division of factors, taken from the Buchner study (*ibidem*), was a deliberate simplification in this study. The idea was to encourage reflection, not necessarily consistent with the division used, and to grasp the opinions of teachers whether their judgments reveal thinking about the student's well-being not only when he is clearly successful - but also before he appears. It was assumed that in the first case, the observed student behaviour, revealing that he is experiencing and being aware of his achievements does not need to have any connection with the teacher's appearance or lack of action to support him on the way to success. The second one, however, shows whether the teacher notices what in the student's behaviour can be a success prediction and launch the teacher's action to create conditions conducive to success.

78 complete questionnaires consisting of Part I and II were analysed. The procedure involved two stages. The teachers completed the same questionnaire, with the difference that after the respondents answered questions in Part I - requiring generalization - for all students - regardless of their abilities (a group of students called the disabled students), in Part II, teachers were instructed to speak on

similar issues thinking about students with disabilities. It should be added that the second part, which the respondents initially did not know, was distributed after the end of the first stage.

In the group of teachers surveyed, those who worked or had previous experience in working with a disabled students and those who did not have such experience were selected. Others were numerically larger group (in the proportion of about 2/3 to 1/3, exactly: 65.4% to 34.6%). Comparisons were made crosswise, i.e. in line with selected groups and including statements about all students (AS) or students with disabilities (SD).

Results

The responses selected in this study included reviews that related to the following factors:

- 1) the student has the feeling that he is making progress in learning
- 2) pupil enjoys learning progress
- 3) the student perceives learning at school as something meaningful
- 4) for school achievements, the student enjoys recognition among both teachers and peers.

Teachers' perception of the first of the factors assessed (Figure 1) indicates the belief that the student's sense of progress is the result of success, i.e. it was considered an indicator in more than half of the statements (range between 59.3% and 66.7% of responses).

Not all respondents chose between the category: conditioning - indicator. Individual teachers with experience with the SD, both for all students and those with disabilities did not make an unambiguous assessment of the analysed factor. This fact shows that they take into account the interdependence of the student's behaviour with both the factors preceding the achievement and the same, i.e. as the effect of success itself. Interestingly, teachers with professional experience from the SD are less likely to believe that the student's

sense of progress can be a prerequisite for success. Thus, they perceive this behaviour primarily as a consequence of specific achievements. Statements relating to the SD reveal an even stronger tendency, i.e. even fewer surveyed teachers are willing to consider the assessed factor as a possible conditioning of the success of these students.

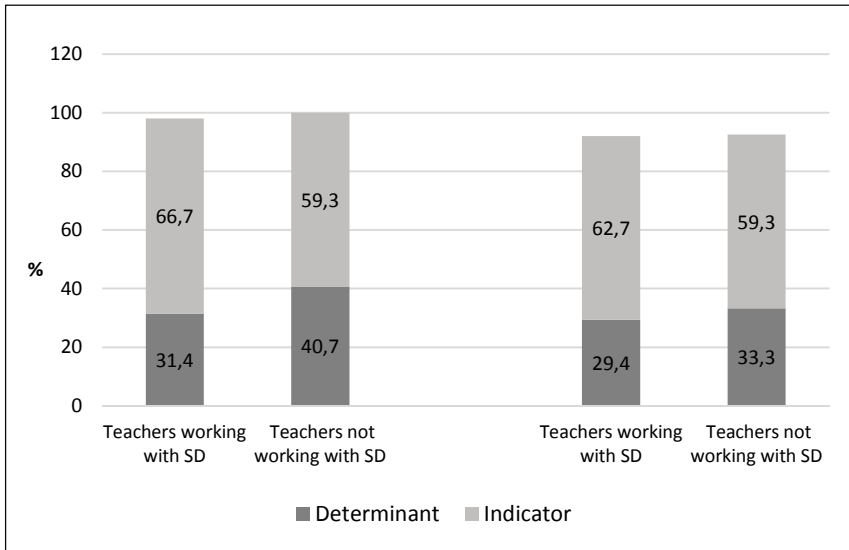


Figure 1. Factor: Student feels she/he makes progress. Teachers' opinions concerning: AS (column 1-2)/SD (column 3-4)

However, it should be noted that the student, regardless of their level of fitness, needs a prior conviction that he can and that he achieves good results. Deciding for only one category (determinant vs. measure) seems to be incorrect thinking. Recognition of this factor should not be only a succession, but also a prerequisite for success. Appropriate well-being ("feeling that progress is being made") is needed in the course, in the process, on the way to the "finish", which is every achievement, because the achievement as such

should already be considered „being on the road”, acting for success, striving at it, but also the condition before making a decision about acting or determining what you want to achieve.

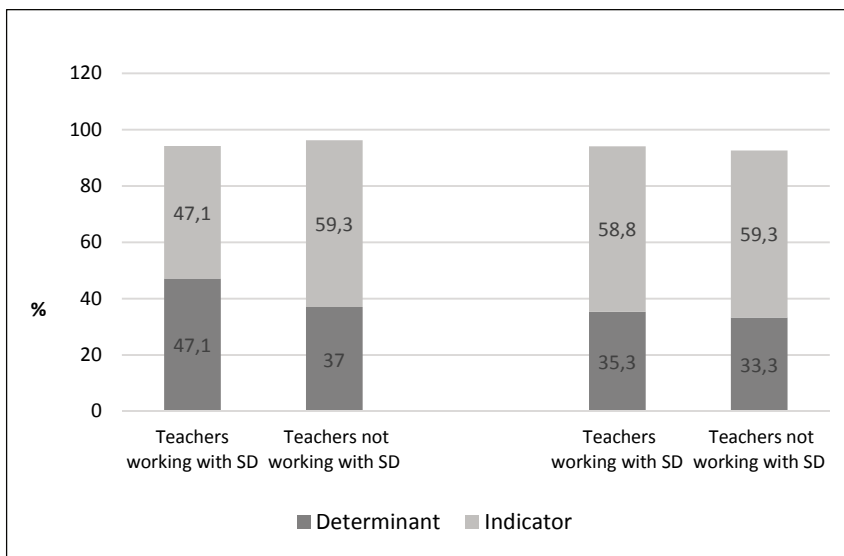


Figure 2. Factor: Student enjoys learning progress. Teachers' opinions concerning: AS (column 1-2)/SD (column 3-4)

Another factor concerns literally well-being and it clearly emphasizes the importance of its presence (Figure 2). In the content of the term "student enjoys the learning progress", his emotional dimension is clearly marked, and this seems to increase or at least pay attention to its desired level. In addition, it presumes prior positive experience in the acquisition of efficiency or knowledge.

This time, the surveyed teachers showed a greater propensity to recognize this factor as a pre-condition of success (i.e. conditioning). Slightly more frequent indications are the results between 33.3% and 47.1% of choices, from one third to almost one half. Unlike the first factor, the order of approvals was arranged. Teachers working

with the disabled student more often than those without such experience have admitted that progress enjoyment can be a determinant of success. Interestingly enough, the same percentage considered him as an measure, i.e. the succession of specific achievements, for all students. On the other hand, teachers without experience with the disabled students, to the same extent, i.e. 59.3%, indicated that regardless of the student's level of proficiency, progress enjoyment during learning process is a measure, or the result of his or her achievements.

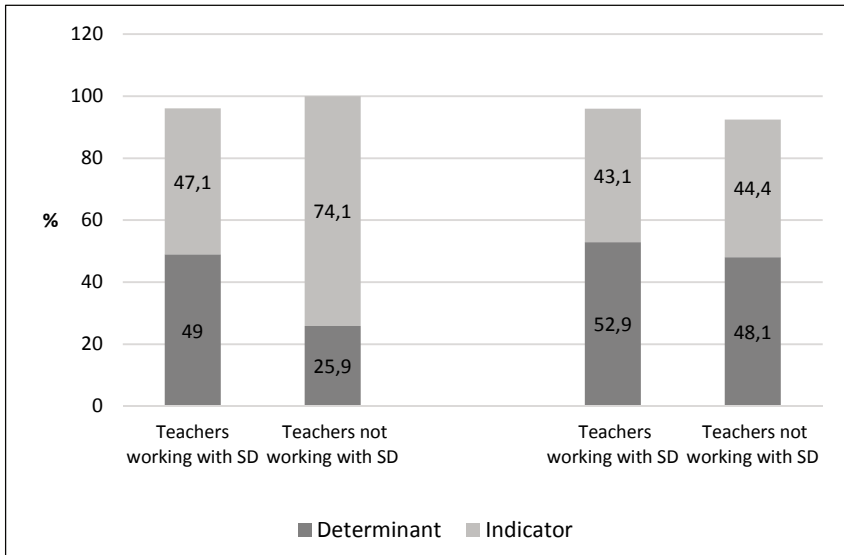


Figure 3. Factor: student perceives learning at school as something meaningful. Teachers' opinions concerning: AS (column 1-2)/SD (column 3-4)

Taking up school duties may be motivated, as we know, by various sources. Recognizing the sense of learning is an expression of its more mature form, and at the same time an attitude, and it is probably associated with a more or less conscious need to pursue personal goals in the education process. Among the well-being

components, a sense of the meaning of life is mentioned (concept of C. D. Ryff, B. Singer, 2004). Thus, the awareness of the sense of action is important. In this context, the surveyed teachers assessed as determinant vs. success rate is another factor-wording: "the student perceives learning at school as something meaningful" (Figure 3). The obtained results show very clear differences between the group of teachers with experience and without experience of working with disabled people in teacher's thinking about the student's success.

It can be assumed that every second teacher in the first group with reference to both all students and the disabled students considers this category as a determinant of the student's success. She/he is less likely to see it as an indicator less often. Meanwhile, the teachers without experience with the disabled students strongly differentiate their assessment, depending on the student's performance. Only every fourth of them (i.e. approximately, the result obtained is 25.9% of responses) believes that in the case of all students, the perception of science as something sensible is the conditioning of their success. However, every second (result rounded up - exactly 48.1%) for the disabled group already gives the same rating. The conclusion based on this fact comes as a surprise. Is it possible, according to this fact, to recognize that the majority of teachers believe that the sense of science is noticed by students only after obtaining positive effects?

Watching of specific phenomena of pop culture and social life (or rather "social media") suggests that being noticed or received recognition from other people (e. g. "likes", regardless of the actual reasons for the student) is nowadays a necessary condition to mark his existence and its important purpose. School as a kind of social system creates many situations that allow "to exist" or to be noticed in various ways. The factor, formulated in the discussed survey as follows: "student's school achievements are recognized both by teachers and age peers" obtained the advantage of grades as an indicator (Figure 4).

Both groups of teachers in more than half of the choices expressed such a belief. And this time, however, it can be noticed that teachers without experience of working with the disabled students

more often expressed the opinion in relation to the disabled students. What's more, when asked about students with disabilities, they were more inclined than teachers with experience of working with these students to consider the discussed factor as a determinant of the success of these pupils. On this basis, it can be concluded that the disclosed trend speaks for the need to provide all teachers with important knowledge about this area – and not only about students with disabilities.

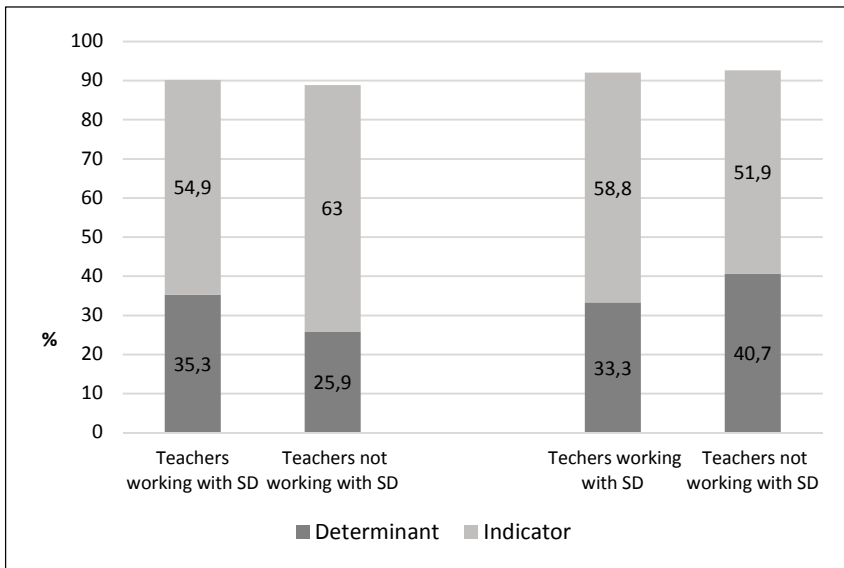


Figure 4. Factor: Student's school achievements are recognized both by teachers and peers. Teachers' opinions concerning: AS (column 1–2)/SD (column 3–4)

Conclusions

The presented teachers' opinions regarding their perception of selected factors related to the student's educational success and his well-being show a fairly clear trend. The teachers' assessment of the

measures and determinants of the student's success is dominated by the prevalence of the factors, referring directly to well-being, recognized as success measures, rather than success determinants. In other words it implies that the majority of teachers' treats as the effect of student's educational success the student's well-being in the area selected for the study of its 4 components/factors, and less frequently as a possible conditioning of this success or both. It can be assumed that such thinking (perhaps not fully conscious) allows them to waive a part of their responsibility for possible failures that may be related to the low level of student's welfare (at the entrance), i.e. before coming across or undertaking an educational task.

Some of the responses provided by the teachers who have experience working with a student with a disability should be noted. It is amazing that in the assessment of the factor "the student perceives learning at school as something meaningful" teachers assigned to it, to a similar extent, the role of the student's initial success and the indicator, i.e. the effect of success. Thus more often than the teachers who do not work with the disabled student they perceive this factor as a possible action driver and an important dimension of student's well-being. It is difficult to disagree with their opinion. This is an important conclusion for teaching staff education.

However, it should be noted that the results obtained should not come as a surprise if you admit that the school as an institution and teachers as its main "staff" are for various reasons performance- and achievement-oriented, i.e. they focus "outputs". Focused on far-fetching goals, they underestimate the importance of pre-conditions or success drivers. Meanwhile, they should exercise care for the student's well-being even before he takes an action / educational task. Proper preparation of teachers in this area, i.e. acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills, still at the level of professional qualifications acquired by them, can not be overestimated.

Differences in thinking about the well-being and success of a student with disabilities in the context of understanding the edu-

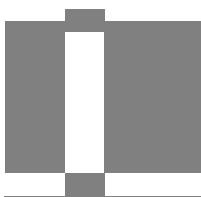
cational situation of any student (generally speaking) also lead to a postulate about a need of continuous update the teachers' knowledge about students with special educational needs, but also about the significance of individual differences in the process of knowledge acquisition and achieving educational successes – not according to one measure – by all students.

“The task of the educator is to adjust the difficulty of the tasks assigned to the charges for implementation, so that they proceed to their implementation without concern that they will not be able to do it. Everyone needs success; it is the determinant of the individual's value” (Sillamy, 1994, p. 281).

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The transition of pupils with intellectual disability from education onto the labour market – the parent’s perspective

ABSTRACT: Wojciech Otrębski, Katarzyna Mariańczyk, *The transition of pupils with intellectual disability from education onto the labour market – the parent’s perspective*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 59–89. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

INTRODUCTION: The interactive model of vocational rehabilitation includes two key components: the rehabilitated individual and the vocational rehabilitation environment. The interaction of these two elements should contribute to the improvement of vocational competencies of people with disabilities¹. Due to the fact that parents are considered to be the second main contributors (just after teaching staff) of vocational training as well as life and vocational orientation of children and teenagers², the family environment can be treated as a significant part of the vocational rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability. Therefore, the aim of this study was to discover how parents of individuals with intellectual disability participate, if they do, in the vocational training of their children.

¹ W. Otrębski, *The interactive model of rehabilitation of persons with mental retardation (Interakcyjny model rehabilitacji osób z upośledzeniem umysłowym)*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2007, p. 56.

² J. Stankaitytė, N. Janonytė, J. Muriniene, A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *The stages of the child’s development and choice of professional career (Etapy rozwoju dziecka i wyboru kariery zawodowej)*, [in:] *My child chooses professional career (Moje dziecko wybiera karierę zawodową)*, ed. A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, Społeczna Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości, Łódź 2008, pp. 19–33.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The study was conducted among parents of graduates of special vocational schools using the ASZ-S-R survey by W. Otrębski and K. Mariańczyk. The results are based on the answers of 71 parents/guardians of graduates of special vocational schools located in the south-eastern part of Poland.

RESULTS: Nearly 88% of respondents declared that they supported the vocational preparation of their children by conducting conversations about various vocational activities. Circa 40% of them also helped their children with disabilities to find employment (e. g. by searching for job advertisements); nevertheless, over a quarter of them do not engage in such an activity at all. The active participation of parents of graduates with intellectual disability is necessary to prepare their children to undertake vocational activities.

KEY WORDS: intellectual disability, employment, parents of students with intellectual disability

Introduction

Professional activity and its fulfilment is an important indicator of the level of development of adults. Professional work is not only the basis of livelihood of the human being; it also ensures his participation in social reality and gives the feeling of being usable and important³. Undertaking professional activity is also perceived as one of the indicators of health⁴. In the case of disabled persons, it is also necessary to point out the rehabilitation perspective, which gives even broader importance to professional activity: it is perceived as a set of actions restoring or generally enabling the functioning of disabled persons in the mainstream of social life⁵. To

³ A. Jachnis, *The psychology of an organisation (Psychologia organizacji)*, Difin, Warszawa 2008, p. 15.

⁴ K. Hildt-Ciupińska, J. Bugajska, *The role of pro-health behaviours in the promotion of employees' health (Rola zachowań prozdrowotnych w promocji zdrowia pracowników)*, „Bezpieczeństwo Pracy” 2011, No. 9, pp. 10–13.

⁵ D. Becker-Pestka, *The social and professional activation of disabled persons – problems and challenges (Aktywizacja społeczna i zawodowa osób niepełnosprawnych – problemy i wyzwania)*, „Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych i Społecznych” 2012, No. 4, pp. 29–50.

a certain extent, professional activity documents successes of disabled persons in their compensation for limitations caused by their disability. On the other hand, unemployed disabled persons experience many additional difficulties in this respect, which deepens their disability in the professional or social sense⁶.

Considering dynamic changes on the labour market, the emergence of new professions and the vanishing of old ones, and the transformations of the directions of development of the industry and services, we can presume that persons with intellectual disability will find it difficult to cope effectively enough in this area to compete with able-bodied peers. In the subject literature, there are no works that would present a comprehensive view of the psychosocial situation of persons with intellectual disability on the Polish labour market. Among sources available in international literature, a glimpse into the results of analyses conducted in Canada forms an interesting picture that gives us certain knowledge on the situation of intellectually disabled persons living there on the labour market. In the age group of 35–44, 84.4% of able-bodied persons, 64.7% of disabled persons (with any other than intellectual disability) and 32.6% of persons with intellectual disability find employment. The differentiation of the level of employment can be seen clearly in the younger age group (15–24 years), where 15.5% of persons with intellectual disability, almost 50% of persons with other disabilities and 58.1% of able-bodied persons manage to find a job⁷.

In Poland, data about the scale of professional activity of persons with mental disability are much less optimistic and have remained unchanged for years. Studies prepared, among others, by

⁶ R. Ossowski, *The quality of life – the effective fulfilment of family and professional roles (Jakość życia – efektywne pełnienie ról rodzinnych i zawodowych)*, [in:] *A disabled person. Family and employment (Człowiek niepełnosprawny. Rodzina i praca)*, ed. M. Kościelska, B. Aouil, Wydawnictwo Akademii Bydgoskiej im. Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2004, pp. 21–35.

⁷ C. Crawford, *The Employment of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Canada: A Statistical Profile*, Institute for Research on Inclusion and Society, Toronto 2011, p. 10.

the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (PFRON)⁸ suggest that intellectually disabled persons (particularly those with more profound disability) need special support to cope on the labour market^{9,10,11}. According to PFRON's report¹², persons with intellectual disability are the least professionally active group among all disabled persons and that the percentage of those who have never worked increases along with the degree of mental disability (for example, 82% of persons with a significant degree of intellectual disability have never worked and only 6% are professionally active).

The available amount of knowledge can create a somewhat paradoxical impression in the reader. On the one hand, statistical data inform us that access to employment is difficult for intellectually disabled persons; on the other hand, there are data indicating that professional work fulfils a special rehabilitation function for these persons. Professional activity is an expression of normality (living in

⁸ PFRON's report, *Research on the impact of the direction and level of education on the professional activity of disabled persons. The perspective of persons with mental retardations (Badania wpływu kierunku i poziomu wykształcenia na aktywność zawodową osób niepełnosprawnych. Perspektywa osób z upośledzeniami umysłowymi)*, <https://www.pfron.org.pl/download/1/7782/RaportCZESC6z6Numyslowafinal.pdf> [access: 5.07.2017].

⁹ E. Wapiennik, *Rights of persons with intellectual disability. Access to education and employment. Report. Poland (Prawa osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Dostęp do edukacji i zatrudnienia. Raport. Polska)*, Polskie Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Osób z Upośledzeniem Umysłowym, Warszawa 2005, p. 112.

¹⁰ E. Wapiennik, *The employment of persons with intellectual disability in Poland in the light of EU considerations (Zatrudnianie osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w Polsce w świetle rozważań unijnych)*, „Szkola Specjalna” 2006, No. 1, pp. 23–34.

¹¹ M. J. Gacek, J. Nycz, *The situation on the labour market of persons with a mild degree of mental disability after graduation from vocational school (Sytuacja na rynku pracy osób z lekkim stopniem niepełnosprawności umysłowej po ukończeniu nauki w szkole zawodowej)*, „Niepełnosprawność i Rehabilitacja” 2014, No. 2, pp. 95–106.

¹² PFRON's report, *Research on the impact of the direction and level of education on the professional activity of disabled persons. The perspective of persons with mental retardations (Badania wpływu kierunku i poziomu wykształcenia na aktywność zawodową osób niepełnosprawnych. Perspektywa osób z upośledzeniami umysłowymi)*, <https://www.pfron.org.pl/download/1/7782/RaportCZESC6z6Numyslowafinal.pdf> [access: 5.07.2017].

the same way that peers do), adulthood, independence and decision-making ability; all of these characteristics are commonly not associated with adults with intellectual disability. However, the results of research show that the possibility of self-determination and deciding on themselves by these persons, also in the context of professional work, is one of the key indicators of the quality of their life¹³. The undertaking of professional activity by persons with intellectual disability results in a change of their position from a social point of view. They are no longer only recipients (e. g., of support); they fulfil the highly validated role of a professionally active person. This leads to favourable changes in the perception of this person and his/her importance in the community^{14,15}.

Transition from education onto the labour market

Assuming the development perspective, the main tasks of early adulthood – i.e., the period during which graduates of special vocational schools confront the labour market – are actions aimed at starting a family and taking up a job¹⁶. Undertaking professional work after the completion of education is described today as *transition* from education onto the labour market¹⁷. Each transition is an

¹³ M. L. Wehmeyer, B. H. Abery, *Self-determination and choice*, 'Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities' 2013, No. 5, pp. 399–411.

¹⁴ S. Kowalik, *The psychology of rehabilitation (Psychologia rehabilitacji)*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne. Warszawa 2007.

¹⁵ D. Kobus-Ostrowska, *Instruments of professional activation of disabled persons in Poland – the condition and needs (Instrumenty aktywizacji zawodowej osób niepełnosprawnych w Polsce – stan i potrzeby)*, „Prace naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie”, 2013, No. 7, pp. 99–112.

¹⁶ J. Trempała, *The psychology of human development (Psychologia rozwoju człowieka)*, PWN, Warszawa 2011, p. 295.

¹⁷ B. Rożnowski, *The psychological situation of young people entering the labour market in the perspective of career counselling (Sytuacja psychologiczna młodzieży wchodzącej na rynek pracy w perspektywie doradztwa zawodowego)*, [in:] *Training for work, career consultancy and the entrepreneurship of young people (Nauka pracy, doradztwo zawodowe*

important moment in human life, including the life of persons with intellectual disability¹⁸. This event is regarded as a developmental transition by E. H. Erickson¹⁹ and defined in the subject literature as something that may potentially cause a crisis²⁰ and confusion in young people, particularly if this process is not supported²¹. Transition is perceived here as a process that encompasses not only the acquisition, but also maintenance of a job. Such an interpretation of this phenomenon clearly suggests that, depending on their individual characteristics and skills, young people entering the labour market need adequate support so that this period could be a favourable experience and proceed successfully.

Each kind of transition can be seen as the result of the process of preparation for it. In the case of transition from education onto the labour market, the preparation process encompasses the entire earlier education, including vocational education, of the person with intellectual disability. Education is certainly one of the pillars of vocational rehabilitation, and its appropriateness and effectiveness

i przedsiębiorczość młodzieży), ed. A. Biela, Kancelaria Senatu RP, Warszawa 2007, pp. 75–88.

¹⁸ W. Otrębski, G. Wiącek, E. Domagała-Zyśk, B. Sidor-Piekarska, *I am an adult – I want to work. The programme of support of young people with intellectual disability in the process of transition from education onto the labour market (Jestem dorosły – chcę pracować. Program wspierający młodzież z niepełnosprawnością umysłową w procesie przejścia z edukacji na rynek pracy)*, Europerspektywa, Lublin 2012, p. 127.

¹⁹ B. Rożnowski, *The transition of young people from the education system onto the labour market in Poland (Przechodzenie młodzieży z systemu edukacji na rynek pracy w Polsce)*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2009, p. 39.

²⁰ A. Bańka, *The knowledge of professions, career consultancy: psychological methods and strategies of helping the unemployed (Zawodoznawstwo, doradztwo zawodowe, pośrednictwo pracy: psychologiczne metody i strategie pomocy bezrobotnym)*, Wydawnictwo Stowarzyszenie Psychologia i Architektura, Poznań 2016, p. 104.

²¹ B. Rożnowski, *The psychological situation of young people entering the labour market in the perspective of career counselling (Sytuacja psychologiczna młodzieży wchodzącej na rynek pracy w perspektywie doradztwa zawodowego)*, [in:] *Training for work, career consultancy and the entrepreneurship of young people (Nauka pracy, doradztwo zawodowe i przedsiębiorczość młodzieży)*, ed. A. Biela, Kancelaria Senatu RP, Warszawa 2007, pp. 75–88.

will determine how a young person will cope on the labour market and whether he/she will obtain and maintain a job. As reported by Gajdzica²², for the entire period of participation in education, including primary education, learning should prepare a person for participation in social and cultural life and for work according to individual possibilities and socio-economic needs of the country. From the beginning, education is aimed at gaining knowledge about professional reality, obtaining information about work and recognising one's professional interests and abilities in order to make a smooth choice of the profession and the path of vocational education and then to take up a job.

The vocational development of the human being is defined in literature as a 'focused process of transformation of individual awareness that are created as a result of the interdependent relationship between the subject and the object in looking for one's own place in the division of work, the creative transformation of oneself and one's own material, social and cultural environment'²³. The vocational development process can be characterised through its successive stages. The first of them is the vocational pre-orientation period (till 11 years of age), which encompasses: observations and imitation of professional activities, the accumulation of knowledge about professions and professional activities, the use of sources of knowledge about professions and activities, and childhood dreams concerning professions. The second stage is called vocational orientation (12–15 years) and refers to making and fulfilling decisions concerning the choice of a profession and school. The third stage

²² Z. Gajdzica, *The influence of the contents of education on the choice of the profession by pupils with a mild degree of mental retardation (Wpływ treści kształcenia na wybór zawodu przez uczniów lekko upośledzonych umysłowo)*, [in:] *Young people vs. adults. Tensions between socialisation and upbringing (Młodość a dorośli. Napięcia między socjalizacją a wychowaniem)*, ed. R. Kwiecińska, M. J. Szymański, Instytut Nauk o Wychowaniu Akademii Pedagogicznej w Krakowie, Kraków 2001, pp. 390–401.

²³ K. M. Czarnecki (ed.), *Basic concepts of the knowledge of professions (Podstawowe pojęcia zawodowości)*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Humanitas”, Sosnowiec 2008, p. 198.

encompasses the learning of a profession (16–25 years). The next stage, which lasts approximately to 60–70 years of age, is the time of professional activity of adults. The last stage occurs after retirement and is called the period of professional reminiscence of pensioners, during which they recollect and summarise their social and professional life from the past²⁴.

When analysing the process of changes in vocational counselling and the approach to related issues, Bańka²⁵ suggests that it is necessary to notice that the current trend of overlapping of the theory of personality, the theory of individual development in the life cycle and the theory of career counselling is an encouragement to look at the vocational development of the human being and to give personalised support adapted to the needs, goals and specific contexts of the development and activity of the given person. These principles should apply both to able-bodied and disabled persons.

In addition, Gajdzica²⁶ stresses that, in the case of persons with intellectual disability, the whole education process should be directed towards vocational preparation. He indicates that vocational pre-orientation in initial grades of primary school, vocational orientation in older grades of primary school and vocational training in vocational schools should be conducted both for able-bodied pupils and for pupils with mental disability.

²⁴ K. M. Czarnecki, *The theoretical fundamentals of professional development of the human being (Teoretyczne podstawy zawodowego rozwoju człowieka)*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Humanitas” 2007, No. 2, pp. 37–50.

²⁵ A. Bańka, *New trends in career counselling, employment exchange, training courses (Nowe trendy w doradztwie kariery, pośrednictwie pracy, szkoleniach)*, [in:] *Modern career counselling, employment exchange, forms of training of young people (Nowoczesne doradztwo kariery, pośrednictwo pracy, formy szkolenia młodzieży)*, ed. Cz. Noworol, OHP Komenda Główna, Warszawa 2010, pp. 32–47.

²⁶ Z. Gajdzica, *The influence of the contents of education on the choice of the profession by pupils with a mild degree of mental retardation (Wpływ treści kształcenia na wybór zawodu przez uczniów lekko upośledzonych umysłowo)*, [in:] *Young people vs. adults. Tensions between socialisation and upbringing (Młodzież a dorośli. Napięcia między socjalizacją a wychowaniem)*, ed. R. Kwiecińska, M. J. Szymański, Instytut Nauk o Wychowaniu Akademii Pedagogicznej w Krakowie, Kraków 2001, pp. 390–401.

Particularly important suggestions for the process of transition of intellectually disabled young persons from school onto the labour market are contained in the interactive model of vocational rehabilitation of persons with mental disability based on ICF's premises²⁷. It indicates two key elements: the person being rehabilitated and the closer (situations) and broader (social surroundings) environment of vocational rehabilitation. In this case, the qualitative change of professional functioning occurs through an increase of the level of professional competence of persons with mental disability as a result of the interaction of these elements. Considering the fact that the subject literature specifies parents as the main source of vocational preparation, life orientation and vocational orientation of children and young people alongside the school environment^{28,29,30}, the family environment must be treated as a necessary and important part of the vocational rehabilitation practice for persons with mental disability³¹.

²⁷ W. Otrębski, *An interactive model of rehabilitation of persons with mental retardation (Interakcyjny model rehabilitacji osób z upośledzeniem umysłowym)*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2007, p. 56.

²⁸ J. Stankaitytė, N. Janonytė, J. Muriniene, A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Stages of a child's development and choice of professional career (Etapy rozwoju dziecka i wyboru kariery zawodowej)*, [in:] *My child chooses professional career (Moje dziecko wybiera karierę zawodową)*, ed. A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, Społeczna Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości, Łódź 2008, p. 9.

²⁹ M. Grigal, A. Deschamps, *Transition education for adolescents with intellectual disability*, [in:] *Handbook of adolescent transition education for youth with disabilities*, ed. M. L. Wehmeyer, K. Webb, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, New York 2012, pp. 398–416.

³⁰ A. Holwerda, S. Brouwer, M. R. de Boer, J. W. Groothoff, J. J. L. van der Klink, *Expectations from different perspectives on future work outcome of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*, 'Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation' 2015, No. 1, pp. 96–104.

³¹ W. Otrębski, G. Wiącek, E. Domagała-Zyśk, B. Sidor-Piekarska, *I am an adult – I want to work. The programme of support of young people with intellectual disability in the process of transition from education onto the labour market (Jestem dorosły – chcę pracować. Program wspierający młodzież z niepełnosprawnością umysłową w procesie przejścia z edukacji na rynek pracy)*, Europerspektywa, Lublin 2012, p. 235.

In the foreign literature of the subject it has also been stressed very strongly for many years that the success of transition from education onto the labour market depends on the characteristics of the disabled person, the characteristics and specific features of functioning of family, school experiences and support from the school environment after the completion of education^{32,33,34,35,36,37}.

Parents as a group supporting the transition process

Assuming that every parent wants the best things for his/her child and wants it to be happy and able to fulfil its potential, we must notice that the birth and upbringing of a child with intellectual disability is a huge challenge for the family system. Abnormal development, educational challenges, special and justified concern

³² J. Blackorby, A. Knokey, M. Wagner, P. Levine, E. Schiller, C. Sumi, *What makes a difference? Influences on outcomes for students with disabilities*, SRI International, Menlo Park, 2007, p. 159.

³³ S. Jekielek, B. Brown, *The transition to adulthood: Characteristics of young adults ages 18 to 24 in America (Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Population Reference Bureau, and Child Trends)*, <http://ilscertification.com/resources/transitiontoadulthood.pdf> [access: 1.10.2017].

³⁴ C. K. Papay, *Best Practices in Transition to Adult Life for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities: A National Perspective Using the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2*. Theses and Dissertations, Lehigh University, <http://preserve.lehigh.edu/etd/1128/> [access: 10.09.2017].

³⁵ C. K. Papay, L. M. Bambara, *Best Practices in Transition to Adult Life for Youth With Intellectual Disabilities*, 'Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals' 2014, No. 3, pp. 136–148.

³⁶ A. M. T Prince, J. Hodge, W. C. Bridges, *Predictors of Postschool Education/Training and Employment Outcomes for Youth With Disabilities*, 'Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals' 2017, No. 2, pp. 77–87.

³⁷ J. M. Keel, L. S. Cushing, J. M. Awsumb. *Post-School Visions and Expectations of Latino Students With Learning Disabilities, Their Parents, and Teachers*, 'Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals' 2017, No. 2, pp. 88–98.

about the child's future – these are only selected difficulties that parents must face³⁸.

In the situation of parents of children with intellectual disability, this concern has a special dimension and is filled with the awareness that the active participation of parents in the life of their child will be presumably more intense and long-lasting than in the case of able-bodied persons³⁹. This concern refers also to the situation of professional activity.

In order to fulfil its tasks in the process of support of the young person with disability in his/her vocational preparation and fulfilment of professional activity, his/her family environment must have a certain kind of 'strength' itself and realise that its role in this task is very important. The dynamics of daily upbringing of children with mental disability seems to be so huge that many parents may perceive such elements of the child's future as professional work, professional activity or earning money as too unreal and distant and, consequently, ignore and attach minor importance to them. Experiencing the need to accompany their child almost at every moment of its life often leads their parents to determine that their children are not able to undertake any kind of professional activity and live independently because of their disability. Those who present such an approach do not even to try to create a favourable atmosphere, climate or space helping the child and then the young person to recognise his/her professional preferences and to

³⁸ A. Żyta, *Problems of families bringing up a child with intellectual disability (Problemy rodzin wychowujących dziecko z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną)*, [in:] *Families of persons with intellectual disability in the face of the challenges of modern times (Rodzina osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną wobec wyzwań współczesności)*, ed. A. Żyta, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit, Toruń 2010, pp. 7–14.

³⁹ K. Ćwirynkało, *The present and future of persons with mild intellectual disability in opinions of their parents (Teraźniejszość i przyszłość osób z lekką niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w opiniach ich rodziców)*, [in:] *Families of persons with intellectual disability in the face of the challenges of modern times (Rodzina osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną wobec wyzwań współczesności)*, ed. A. Żyta, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit, Toruń 2010, pp. 55–70.

develop his skills for real, realising that his/her professional activity is possible^{40,41}.

Faced with social expectations that they should provide very versatile support to their child, including preparation for fulfilment in the professional sphere, parents of children with intellectual disability may also perceive this as a burden and another task that they must carry on their shoulders, in addition to being severely experienced by their child's disability as such. Undertaking this activity may be even more difficult due to the feeling that investing in the vocational development of a child with intellectual disability does not make much sense because there are few job offers for these persons and employers do not regard them as particularly attractive employees⁴². Thus, parents may feel that they expend energy in vain, without conviction that this may bring any favourable result. In this context, the manner of perceiving the intellectual disability of one's own child becomes a key issue. It turns out that parents who subjectively perceive their child's disability as less serious are more inclined to notice positive qualities of their children, for example self-control skills. Perceiving one's own child not only from the perspective of its limitations, but also from the perspective of its possibilities strongly supports seeing the child in roles similar to those fulfilled by its peers⁴³.

⁴⁰ B. Gumienny, *The functioning of adults with profound intellectual disability – opinions of parents (Funkcjonowanie dorosłych osób z głębszą niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – poglądy rodziców)*, „Niepełnosprawność – zagadnienia, problemy, rozwiązania” 2016, No. 3, pp. 92–112.

⁴¹ PFRON's report, *Research on the impact of the direction and level of education on the professional activity of disabled persons. The perspective of persons with mental retardations (Badania wpływu kierunku i poziomu wykształcenia na aktywność zawodową osób niepełnosprawnych. Perspektywa osób z upośledzeniami umysłowymi)*, <https://www.pfron.org.pl/download/1/7782/RaportCZESC6z6Numyslowlowafinal.pdf> [access: 5.07.2017].

⁴² M. D. Davies, W. Beamish, *Transitions from school for young adults with intellectual disability: Parental perspectives on “life as an adjustment”*, ‘Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability’ 2009, No. 3, pp. 248–257.

⁴³ E. W. Carter, K. L. Lane, M. Cooney, K. Weir, C. K. Moss, W. MacHalicek, *Self-Determination among Transition-Age Youth with Autism or Intellectual Disability:*

In addition, parents and guardians may feel that they have to take care of everything that concerns their child and they do not receive sufficient support from institutions, schools and organisations^{44,45,46}. This is another factor that builds a sense of high burden, often overburdening, with the care of the child, also during its adulthood, and may lead to an experience of strength burnout⁴⁷.

Understanding transition as an important part of vocational and social rehabilitation of a young person with intellectual disability, we can notice the absence of carefully considered systemic solutions to this issue; although certain steps are taken in this area, there is no coherent and uniform conception concerning the specific characteristics of recipients and their actual needs in this respect⁴⁸. This situation concerns not only Poland, which is shown by research being

Parent Perspectives, 'Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities' 2013, No. 3, pp. 129–138.

⁴⁴ Z. Kazanowski, S. Byra, *Opinions of parents of young people with mild intellectual disability on aid provided to families (Opinie rodziców młodzieży niepełnosprawnej intelektualnie w stopniu lekkim na temat pomocy udzielanej rodzinie)*, [in:] *Current problems of social support of disabled persons (Aktualne problemy wsparcia społecznego osób niepełnosprawnych)*, ed. G. Kwaśniewska, A. Wojnarska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2004, pp. 137–148.

⁴⁵ A. P. McDonnell, C. Nelson, *Parent and family involvement*, [in:] *Successful transition programs: Pathways for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities*, red. J. McDonnell, M. L. Hardman, Sage Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks, 2010, pp. 115–145.

⁴⁶ B. Szczupał, *The subsidiarity principle in the system of care of families with children with intellectual disability – assumptions vs. reality (Zasada pomocniczości w systemie opieki nad rodziną z dzieckiem z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – założenia a rzeczywistość)*, [in:] *Families of persons with intellectual disability in the face of the challenges of modern times (Rodzina osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną wobec wyzwań współczesności)*, ed. A. Żyta, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit, Toruń 2010, pp. 85–99.

⁴⁷ M. Dąbrowska, *The phenomenon of burnout among mothers of disabled children (Zjawisko wypalenia wśród matek dzieci niepełnosprawnych)*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2005, p. 38.

⁴⁸ D. Becker-Pestka, *The social and professional activation of disabled persons – problems and challenges (Aktywizacja społeczna i zawodowa osób niepełnosprawnych – problemy i wyzwania)*, „Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych i Społecznych” 2012, No. 4, pp. 29–50.

conducted in Australia⁴⁹ or China⁵⁰, where solutions are sought to similar issues concerning transition with the participation of teachers and parents of young people with intellectual disability.

'The family and the social environment plays a vital role in the formation and establishment of attitudes of disabled persons to their own work. A disabled child requires significant support, particularly at higher stages of education'⁵¹. For persons with intellectual disability, the family is often the only social group that supports them and is also decisive for their activity and participation^{52,53}.

In consideration of the above information, particularly the fact that parents are specified alongside school personnel and consultants as the main source of vocational preparation and life and vocational orientation of children and young people^{54,55}, the aim of the

⁴⁹ M. D. Davies, W. Beamish, *Transitions from school for young adults with intellectual disability: Parental perspectives on "life as an adjustment"*, 'Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability' 2009, No. 3, pp. 248–257.

⁵⁰ T. Xu, I. Dempsey, P. Foreman, *Views of Chinese parents and transition teachers on school-to-work transition services for adolescents with intellectual disability: A qualitative study*, 'Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability', 2014, No. 4, pp. 342–352.

⁵¹ J. Bartkowski, *Between stigmatisation and rejection. The school system vs. vocational preparation of disabled persons (Między stygmatyzacją a odrzuceniem. System szkolny a przygotowanie zawodowe młodych osób niepełnosprawnych)*, [in:] *The young disabled: professional activation and non-standard forms of employment (Młodzi niepełnosprawni – aktywizacja zawodowa i nietypowe formy zatrudnienia)*, ed. E. Giermanowska, Fundacja Instytutu Spraw Publicznych Warszawa 2007, p. 213.

⁵² A. Ostrowska, J. Sikorska, B. Gąciarz, *Disabled persons in Poland in the 1990s (Osoby niepełnosprawne w Polsce w latach dziewięćdziesiątych)*. Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2001, p. 92.

⁵³ Ż. Stelter, *The adolescence of persons with intellectual disability (Dorastanie osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR, Warszawa 2009, p. 61.

⁵⁴ J. Stankaitytė, N. Janonytė, J. Muriniene, A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Stages of a child's development and choice of professional career (Etapy rozwoju dziecka i wyboru kariery zawodowej)*, [in:] *My child chooses professional career (Moje dziecko wybiera karierę zawodową)*, ed. A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, Społeczna Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości, Łódź 2008, p. 9.

⁵⁵ W. Otrębski, G. Wiącek, E. Domagała-Zyśk, B. Sidor-Piekarska, *I am an adult – I want to work. The programme of support of young people with intellectual disability in the*

study was to characterise direct and indirect methods of involvement of parents of persons with intellectual disability in the vocational preparation of their children (graduates of special vocational schools). The differentiation of the aforementioned impacts in respect of the sex of graduates was not analysed.

Method and the sample group

The research was done with the use of the ASZ-S-R survey prepared by W. Otrębski and K. Mariańczyk. The structure of the survey covered the preliminary part (1), the essential part (2) and the part concerning sociodemographic data (3). The first of them contains a detailed instruction for filling in the survey for parents/guardians of graduates of special vocational schools. The second part contains a set of questions concerning direct and indirect methods of engagement of parents of graduates of special vocational schools in the vocational preparation of their children. On the basis of the subject literature^{56,57,58}, indicators of parents' behaviour reflecting their involvement in the process of vocational preparation of their children were clarified in more detail. Direct indicators included: *conducting conversations about professional activities; supply of information about professions; support of vocational preparation; support in finding a job*. Indirect involvement consisted in the evaluation of

process of transition from education onto the labour market (Jestem dorosły – chcę pracować. Program wspierający młodzież z niepełnosprawnością umysłową w procesie przejścia z edukacji na rynek pracy), Europerspektywa, Lublin 2012, p. 235.

⁵⁶ E. W. Carter, K. L. Lane, M. Cooney, K. Weir, C. K. Moss, W. MacHalicek, *Self-Determination among Transition-Age Youth with Autism or Intellectual Disability: Parent Perspectives*, 'Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities' 2013, No. 3, pp. 129–138.

⁵⁷ E. W. Carter, D. Austin, A. A. Trainor, *Predictors of Postschool Employment Outcomes for Young Adults With Severe Disabilities*, 'Journal of Disability Policy Studies' 2012, No. 1, pp. 50–63.

⁵⁸ J. L. Cmar, M. C. McDonnall, K. M. Markoski, *In-School Predictors of Postschool Employment for Youth Who Are Deaf-Blind*, 'Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals' 2017, DOI: 10.1177/2165143417736057.

vocational preparation obtained by children of persons from the sample group during their school education and the evaluation of their situation on the labour market. The survey contained closed questions, but participants were allowed to include their own opinions in the 'Other' box if the given cafeteria did not provide any relevant answer. In the third part of the survey, parents/guardians provide sociodemographic characteristics.

Questionnaires were sent by post to parents of graduates with intellectual disability living in the Lublin Province. Out of 250 questionnaires sent, 73 were returned. Eventually, answers from 71 parents/guardians of graduates of special vocational schools were taken into account.

Mothers of disabled graduates of special vocational schools formed the largest sub-group of participants (84.5%). Fathers (11.3%) and legal guardians (4.2%) of graduates participated in the survey

Table 1. Frequency distribution (f) and percentage (P) of parents/guardians from the sample group in categories of sociodemographic variables

Variable	f	P
Parent/Guardian		
Mother	60	84.5
Father	8	11.3
Legal guardian	3	4.2
Place of residence		
countryside	27	38.0
City with up to 20,000 inhabitants	6	8.5
City with 21,000 to 100,000 inhabitants	20	28.2
City with more than 100,000 inhabitants	18	25.3
Education		
Primary	9	12.7
Vocational	36	50.6
Secondary (general/vocational)	17	24.0
Higher (vocational/master's studies)	9	12.7

to a considerably smaller extent. Most of the parents who took part in the survey live in villages (38%) and in cities with 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (28.2%). Parents of graduates living in big cities (above 100,000 inhabitants) account for 25% of the group, whereas parents living in small towns (up to 20,000 inhabitants) are the smallest group (8.5%). Half of parents from the sample group have vocational education, and nearly 25% of them are secondary school graduates. The sample group included two equinumerous sub-groups of parents with primary and higher education (each accounting for 12.7%) (Table 1).

Parents from the sample group still took care of their mentally disabled children, most of whom are persons with vocational education; only 7.1% of them finished their education on the level of primary school (job training school). Almost all graduates (98.5%) remain under the care of their parents. Only one graduate covered by the survey lives independently (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency distribution (f) and percentage (P) for children of parents/guardians from the sample group (graduates of special vocational schools and job training schools) in selected categories of sociodemographic variables

Variable	f	P
The graduate's education		
Primary	5	7.1
Vocational	66	92.9
The graduate lives		
Independently	1	1.4
With parents	69	97.2
No data available	1	1.4

Results

The results of research concerning the involvement of parents in the vocational preparation of their intellectually disabled children are presented in two parts. The first part shows the direct involve-

Table 3. Frequency distribution (f) and percentage (P) of presence of indicators of parents' involvement in the vocational preparation of their children in parents/guardians from the sample group within the scope

Indicators	f	P
Conversations about professional activities		
Yes	62	87.3
No	9	12.7
These conversations began...		
I have never talked about this	6	8.5
At the kindergarten age	2	2.8
At the primary school age	10	14.1
At the middle school age	33	46.4
At the vocational school age	17	24.0
No data available	3	4.2
Providing information about professions by		
Engaging the child in housework	39	32.5
Referring to acquaintances performing certain work	24	20.0
Watching and reading books about various works	9	7.5
Watching films and presentations	7	5.8
Talking about various professions with the child	39	32.5
In any other form	2	1.7
Supporting vocational preparation by		
Enabling the child to practice skills acquired in school at home	26	23.7
Expressing interest in the progress of education and achievements of the child in the acquisition of professional skills	49	44.5
Highlighting the adequacy of acquired skills for working in the profession	19	17.3
Securing the opportunity to exercise practical professional skills during the vacation period	13	11.8
No support	3	2.7
Support in getting a job		
I help my child to find job advertisements	29	40.3
I am not interested in this	15	20.8
I co-operate with my child by developing his/her social and professional skills	24	33.3
I don't want my child to work	4	5.6

ment of parents from the sample group in the vocational preparation of their children (Table 3). The second part shows indirect involvement, which is reflected by the evaluation of vocational preparation acquired in school and their situation on the labour market (Table 4 and Table 5).

The vast majority of parents from the sample group (over 87%) state that they talked with their children about various professional activities. The results show that nearly half of them (46.4%) did this only during the child's education in middle school, whereas nearly one fourth of them held such conversations only when their child attended vocational school. Unfortunately, 8.5% of parents never brought up such topics at home. Few talked with their children about this during the kindergarten and primary education periods (Table 3).

In questions concerning the method of giving their child information about various professions, supporting its vocational preparation and supporting it in finding a job, parents could choose a number of options at the same time.

According to the results, most parents (32.5% in each case) declare that they provided their child with information about professions by *talking about professions* and by *involving their child in various household activities*. 1/5 of parents communicated such information by *referring to their acquaintances performing certain work*. The smallest number of persons used the option: *watching and reading books about various works* and *watching films and presentations*. When asked straight about how they supported the vocational preparation of their child, parents most often state that they do this by: *expressing interest in the progress of education and achievements of the child in the acquisition of professional skills* (44.5%) and *enabling the child to practice skills acquired in school at home* (23.7%). Less frequent answers concerned: *highlighting the adequacy of acquired skills for working in the profession* (17.3%) or *securing the opportunity to exercise practical professional skills during the vacation period* (11.8%). Only less than 3% replied that they did not support the vocational preparation of their child in any way (Table 3).

When asked about how they support their child in finding a job, parents most often reply that *they help it to find job advertisements* (40.3%) and that *they co-operate with their child by developing its social and professional skills* (33.3%). 20% of parents are not interested at all in helping their child to find a job, whereas over 5% admit that they do not want their child to work professionally (Table 3).

In the context of presented results concerning direct forms of involvement of parents in the vocational preparation of disabled children, there is a question about the professional future of graduates and the parental evaluation of their vocational preparation and situation on the labour market.

Table 4. Frequency distribution (f) and percentage (P) of categories in variables concerning the professional activity of graduates of special vocational schools

The graduate's current place of work	f	P
Occupational Therapy Workshop	30	42.3
Supported employment enterprise	1	1.4
Safeguard job in an ordinary workplace	1	1.4
Ordinary workplace	2	2.8
No occupation	37	52.1

In the group of children (graduates) of parents from the sample group, 52.1% have no occupation after two or three years from the completion of their education. 47.9% are professionally active. The vast majority of them participate in an Occupational Therapy Workshop (42.3%). 5.6% of graduates have found a job in an Occupational Therapy Workshop and on the open labour market (Table 4).

In the context of analysed involvement of parents, there is also a question of evaluation of the vocational preparation of children of parents from the sample group in consideration of the needs of the labour market and the demand of graduates for support in this field.

Table 5. Frequency distribution (f) and percentage (P) of categories for indicators of satisfaction with the vocational preparation of children in parents/guardians from the sample group

	f	P
Satisfaction with the graduate's vocational preparation		
I have never thought about this	7	9.8
I am very unsatisfied	2	2.8
I am rather unsatisfied	5	7.1
I am rather satisfied	35	49.3
I am very satisfied	22	31.0
Demand for the graduate's skills on the local labour market		
Don't know	12	16.9
Very low	27	38.0
Rather low	16	22.5
Rather high	11	15.5
Very high	5	7.1
How much did professional skills learned in school help the graduate to find a job?		
Don't know	20	28.2
To a very limited extent	26	36.6
To a rather limited extent	19	26.8
To a rather large extent	3	4.2
To a very large extent	3	4.2
Who engages in the acquisition or maintenance of the graduate's employment		
Nobody	17	24.0
Only parents	33	46.5
Other institutions	21	29.5
Degree of the parent's satisfaction with support received by the child in obtaining a job		
I have never thought about this	26	36.6
I am very unsatisfied	11	15.5
I am rather unsatisfied	11	15.5
I am rather satisfied	19	26.8
I am very satisfied	4	5.6

More than half of parents declare that they are rather satisfied with the vocational preparation of their children. 31% of them declare a very high level of satisfaction with this preparation. Nearly 10% of parents state that they have never considered this issue. The proportion of parents who are rather unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the vocational preparation of their children is 9.9% (Table 5).

In spite of quite good evaluation of vocational preparation, over 60% of parents estimate that the demand for skills acquired by their children in vocational school and on the local labour market is rather small or very small. An opposite opinion is expressed by over 22% of parents, who think that this demand is rather large or even very large (Table 5).

The vast majority of parents (over 63%) state that professional skills acquired in school helped the graduate to find a job to a very small or rather small extent. An opposite opinion is presented by only 8.4% of parents. It is also worth noting that nearly 1/3 of respondents replied 'I don't know' (Table 5).

Almost half of parents perceive themselves as the only persons who help their children to find a job. On the other hand, 24% of parents state that their child does not receive help from any source, whereas 29.5% inform that their children were helped by various institutions to obtain a job (Table 5).

However, this help is evaluated differently by parents. More than 30% of persons are rather unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with support provided to their children, and a similar proportion of parents declare that they are rather satisfied or very satisfied with it. Over 36% of parents declare that they have never considered this issue (Table 5).

Final reflections

Professional work fulfils important functions in the life of persons with disabilities concerning income, rehabilitation or socialisation. Making it possible to satisfy various needs, it is an important part of the functioning of persons with intellectual disability.

According to Schalock, Gardner and Bradley, real social inclusion in the mainstream of life and genuine commitment to the quality of life of persons with mental disability must focus on activities that increase their possibilities of self-determination and self-control⁵⁹ and that take account of their physical, material, social and emotional well-being, personal development and activeness⁶⁰.

In the case of young adults, particularly graduates of special vocational schools, these words are of particular importance. As the results of research presented in this study show, the difficulties faced by them in their transition process are huge, mainly due to the shortage of job offers for persons with intellectual disability, the shortage of adequate preparation for the needs of the local labour market, a certain kind of fictitiousness and “wasting” of their potential in the form of already acquired skills. For many parents, the lack of possibility of undertaking professional activity by their adult son or daughter with intellectual disability may be regarded as a failure or produce a feeling of hopelessness.

The importance of the participation of parents in professional rehabilitation in its broad sense was highlighted as early as half a century ago in recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. We can read there, among others, that ‘The fundamental purposes of vocational rehabilitation services for disabled children and young persons should be to reduce as much as possible the occupational and psychological handicaps imposed by their disabilities and to offer them full opportunities of preparing for, and entering, the most suitable occupations. The utilisation of these opportunities should involve co-operation between medical, social

⁵⁹ R. L. Schalock, G. F. Gardner, V. J. Bradley, *Quality of Life for People with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities: Applications Across Individuals, Organizations, Communities, and Systems*, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Washington 2007, p. 37.

⁶⁰ D. Felce, J. Perry, *Quality of Life: Its Definition and Measurement*, ‘Research in Developmental Disabilities’ 1995, No. 1, pp. 51–74.

and educational services and the parents or guardians of the disabled children and young persons'⁶¹.

As a very important group of persons having an influence on the vocational preparation of their disabled children, parents are presented here as a group strongly committed to taking care of them, also during their adulthood. They provide care and maintenance. In part of the cases, parents are the only group that helps their disabled children to find a job. They do this mainly by searching for potential job advertisements. They sometimes seem to lack knowledge and certain orientation about other methods of looking for places of professional activity for children, e. g., through co-operation with employment agencies or non-governmental organisations. It is important that some parents engage in the vocational preparation of their children by talking to them or by encouraging them to become active. This potential of parents could certainly be utilised better if vocational preparation were the co-ordinated, planned and integrated result of joint activities of teachers and parents. Parents are very knowledgeable about things concerning their children, their lifestyle, daily activities, etc. At least some of them are certainly prepared for guiding and helping their children in the process of transition from education to employment.

Although most parents from the sample group are satisfied with the results of work of schools attended by their children, they are also disappointed to some extent because they regard the demand for occupations learned by them as minimal. It is a specific psychological situation: the effort put in learning that will probably bring no results and gratification in the form of employment. Such a frustrating situation may cause parents to lose hope and be unwilling to help the child in its successive attempts to find its place on the labour market. In the case of parents of disabled persons, this situation forms another potential difficulty that they must face in

⁶¹ Recommendation R99 adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation on 1 June 1955, Internet source, http://www.dialog.gov.pl/gfx/mpips/userfiles/_public/tom%20I.pdf [access: 25.06.2017].

bringing up their child, which has an impact on their functioning, well-being and quality of engagement in support addressed to their child^{62,63}.

The conducted research confirms the importance of the participation of parents in the process of professional development of their disabled children. Thus, the small number of attempts made by researchers to describe this subject is surprising. However, the PFRON's Report refers, among others, to the power of influence of parents on the educational and, consequently, professional future of their intellectually disabled children⁶⁴. It stresses that guardians of disabled persons play the main role in the process of their education; in order to confirm this assumption, it refers to quite frequent examples of negative attitudes of guardians to the education of the disabled child, particularly in the case of persons with a significant degree of mental disability. It is also pointed out that in the group of disabled persons experiencing the most severe limitations in their functioning, decisions about the course of the educational path were made by guardians in a vast majority of cases, without active participation of the disabled person.

Even though some initiatives and programmes consider the participation of parents, there is a relatively small number of them⁶⁵. The 'I am an adult - I want to work' programme supporting the

⁶² M. Dąbrowska, *The phenomenon of burnout among mothers of disabled children (Zjawisko wypalenia wśród matek dzieci niepełnosprawnych)*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2005, p. 38.

⁶³ M. Sekułowicz, *Mothers of disabled children faced with life problems (Matki dzieci niepełnosprawnych wobec problemów życiowych)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2000, p. 71.

⁶⁴ PFRON's report, *Research on the impact of the direction and level of education on the professional activity of disabled persons. The perspective of persons with mental retardations (Badania wpływu kierunku i poziomu wykształcenia na aktywność zawodową osób niepełnosprawnych. Perspektywa osób z upośledzeniami umysłowymi)*, <https://www.pfron.org.pl/download/1/7782/RaportCZESC6z6Numyslowafinal.pdf> [access: 5.07.2017].

⁶⁵ K. K. Yamamoto, R. A. Stodden, E. D. R. Folk, *Inclusive postsecondary education: Reimagining the transition trajectories of vocational rehabilitation clients with intellectual disabilities*, 'Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation' 2014, No. 40, pp. 59-71.

transition of young persons with intellectual disability from education onto the labour market⁶⁶ takes up the challenge of organising optimal support for young people through co-operation and mutual aid between the pupil, parents and teachers in the vocational preparation process. This programme is addressed mainly to pupils attending special and mainstream secondary schools who have a mild degree or deeper (moderate, significant) degrees of mental disability. In practices described by Yamamoto and his collaborators, the participation of parents was considered to a small extent, and emphasis was put mainly on support from external support teams, such as rehabilitation experts or job coaches⁶⁷.

McDonnell and Nelson argue that support should be provided also to families of intellectually disabled persons undergoing the transition process and recommend the services of temporary teams that provide help and support to the young person and his/her family during the period of transition between school and adult professional life. It may include helping parents to organise and coordinate services of various institutions and organisations; delivering practical solutions to problems; giving information; supporting the overcoming of barriers, the elaboration of plans and development in its broad sense⁶⁸.

Kowalik stresses that working with the family of a child with intellectual disability should focus on building the independence of the young person, which will also manifest itself in independent

⁶⁶ W. Otrębski, G. Wiącek, E. Domagała-Zyśk, B. Sidor-Piekarska, *I am an adult – I want to work. The programme of support of young people with intellectual disability in the process of transition from education onto the labour market (Jestem dorosły – chcę pracować. Program wspierający młodzież z niepełnosprawnością umysłową w procesie przejścia z edukacji na rynek pracy)*, Europerspektywa, Lublin 2012, p. 185.

⁶⁷ K. K. Yamamoto, R. A. Stodden, E. D. R. Folk, *Inclusive postsecondary education: Reimagining the transition trajectories of vocational rehabilitation clients with intellectual disabilities*, 'Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation' 2014, No. 40, pp. 59–71.

⁶⁸ A. P. McDonnell, C. Nelson, *Parent and family involvement*, [in:] *Successful transition programs: Pathways for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities*, red. J. McDonnell, M. L. Hardman, Sage Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks, 2010, pp. 115–145.

professional activity. As regards the concept of life settlement, vocational preparation and commitment to ensuring the favourable transition process should be aimed at allowing a disabled person to cope not only on the supported labour market, but also on the open labour market⁶⁹.

The participation of parents in the preparation of the professional future of their disabled children is indisputably important and very necessary, although they seem to be not fully aware of this and do not make full use of their potential⁷⁰.

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⁶⁹ S. Kowalik, *The life settlement of families with intellectually disabled children (Urządzenie się w życiu rodzin z dziećmi niepełnosprawnymi intelektualnie)*, [in:] *The influence of the association of families of persons with intellectual disability on the development of science and social life (Wpływ ruchu rodziców osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną na rozwój nauki i życie społeczne)*, ed. A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, Polskie Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Osób z Upośledzeniem Umysłowym, Warszawa 2014, pp. 137-149.

⁷⁰ Z. Kazanowski, S. Byra, *Opinions of parents of young people with mild intellectual disability on aid provided to families (Opinie rodziców młodzieży niepełnosprawnej intelektualnie w stopniu lekkim na temat pomocy udzielanej rodzinie)*, [in:] *Current problems of social support of disabled persons (Aktualne problemy wsparcia społecznego osób niepełnosprawnych)*, ed. G. Kwaśniewska, A. Wojnarska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2004, pp. 137-148.

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Opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success for inclusive action regarding particular groups of students, and the professional experience

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Currently, the idea of inclusive education is perceived as a model of education, far exceeding the idea of inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream education. It is a vision of a school aimed at considering the needs of all students, i.e. those who exhibit no severe developmental disabilities, with special educational needs, including gifted individuals. Additionally, the scholars of inclusive education agree, that the process is neither easy nor simple. One of the determining factors indicated, is the attitude of teachers towards the very idea. Therefore, a research idea arose, aiming at examining the opinion of teachers regarding the subject of inclusive education, as a potentially dominant form of education. Recognising at least some of its determinants seemed essential. The following article focuses on two of the aforementioned: types of institutions, where the teachers are employed, and the teachers' professional experience. The research encompasses integrated preschools. It seems that the experience of teachers of such institutions proves particularly significant for recognising the chances and dangers of inclusive education, within the context of Polish integration experience. The two professional groups

distinguished, with substantial and minor professional experience, allow to examine the perspective of inclusive action.

KEY WORDS: Inclusive education, integrated preschool teachers, educational chances

Introduction

The idea of inclusive education in most countries, is perceived similarly in reference to philosophical principles. These are as follows: supportive environment, participation, positive social relationships, and feelings of competence¹. According to the idea of inclusive education, it is essential to recognise the educational needs of all students, instead of certain groups, particularly those that, due to some endogenous and/or exogenous barriers, are threatened with any form of marginalisation or social exclusion. Elizabeth Walton states, that recognising the causes of the educational exclusion phenomenon may contribute to creating the opportunities of accomplishing the premises of inclusive education, with its principal claims of full participation in the highest quality education. However, according to the author, currently, many teachers and parents are unable to imagine a school free of social stratification, particularly, stratification related to students' abilities².

Mel Ainscow performed an analysis of the solutions employed in various countries, presenting an abundance of the variants of inclusive education, depending on the capabilities, social and cultural context, economic conditions, the system of beliefs, values, as well as, geographical and geopolitical determinants. Therefore, one may speak of inclusive education:

¹ T. L. Gallagher, S. Bennett, *A Canadian Perspective on the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in High Schools*, [in:] *Inclusive Education for Students With Intellectual Disabilities*, R. G. Craven, A. J. S. Morin, D. Tracey, P. D. Parker, H. F. Zhong (eds.), North Carolina IAP – Information Age Publishing 2015, p. 26.

² E. Walton, *Dismantling the Empire of Educational Exclusion*, [in:] E. Walton, S. Moonsamy (eds.), *Making Education Inclusive*, Cambridge, Scholars Publishing 2015, p. 13.

- concentrated on individuals with disabilities: children and youth with special educational needs,
- concentrated on students who leave school prematurely, due to disciplinary reasons,
- concentrated on students' various needs resulting from issues that appear within groups that are threatened with social exclusion,
- concentrated on the conditions of teaching and of preparing the school to accept students of various needs – “school for all”,
- concentrated on the needs of all students – “education for all”,
- Concentrated on the development of a systemic approach towards education and society³.

Examining the above, one may notice, that only the last listed proposals give reason to believe, that in result of applying solutions, the dangers related to “neglecting”, “omitting” the needs of any individual within education, may be minimised.

The attitude focused on a child/student with developmental disorders, is most often characteristic of countries, that are at the beginning of the process of inclusion. According to the analyses performed by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education⁴, some countries implement the idea of a school for all, while others are still focused on students with disabilities, students with special educational needs, as well as, students, whose behaviour may disturb the functioning of a class. However, the term “special educational needs” was introduced for the very fact of discarding thinking about deficits, and rather, focused on supporting teaching and providing education opportunities. Unfortunately, very often, an approach emphasising on deficits and negative labels is still dominant⁵. The very concept of special needs is still perceived as pejorative, within the categories of deficits.

³ M. Ainscow, T. Booth, A. Dyson et al., *Improving Schools: Developing Inclusion*, London, Routledge 2006.

⁴ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2011, p. 16.

⁵ B. Norwich, *A response to 'Special Educational Needs: A New Look'*, [in:] Terzi L. (ed.) *Special Educational Needs: A New Look*, London, Continuum 2010.

In the Polish legal system regarding education, the concept of special educational needs had not been defined. Regardless, everyone, including officials, applies this category, creating more or less comprehensive catalogues of students, that would fall within its scope. In the ordinances of the Ministry of National Education, focusing on the psychological-pedagogical education, over a dozen groups of individuals (students) were indicated, that should be taken under care and supported. Among them, there are individuals with disabilities, social maladjustment including ones that were threatened with maladjustment, as well as, students who return to the country, students from cultural minorities, and gifted students. Such diversity of needs, regarding developmental capabilities, is to be an acknowledgement of the necessity of taking care of each student who, temporarily or continually, to a greater or lesser extent, for a certain period of time, or for the entire lifetime, will require specialist assistance, adjustment of conditions, or organised education (care). Such broad understanding of special needs, not necessarily associated with developmental deficits, but, simultaneously, not negating the fact, that a student with e. g. a disability, exhibits particular, specific needs in regard to the conditions, organisation of education, allows to reason within the categories of education for all. However, one should realise, by paying attention to the critique of the complete, unconditional educational inclusion⁶, that education for all is not a synonym of inclusive education. It is rather an assortment of such systemic solutions (support and financing), that would provide each student with the most adequate education, considering his needs. However, the process must be accompanied by reasoning free of stereotypes, that does not generalise, with actual awareness and the belief, that each individual has the same rights, including those regarding choosing own path of education. Such choice must be guaranteed.

⁶ P. Cooper, B. Jacobs, *From inclusion to engagement: Helping Students Engage with Schooling through Policy and Practice*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2011, p. 9.

Methodology and research results

The research results presented below are a part of a broader project regarding the opinion of teachers of different education institutions, on varying levels of education, regarding inclusive education. Ultimately, the project focused on three types of institutions: mainstream, integrated and special institutions; as well as, on three levels of education: preschool, as well as, classes I-III and IV-VI within primary and secondary schools.

An assortment of variables regarding the examined teachers, was considered, including: professional experience, finally not included in the analyses published in the monograph dedicated to the subject, i.a. due to the amount of research material and analyses. In the presented research results, I shall refer solely to teachers from integrated preschools.

Diagnostic poll, was the applied research method. Despite its critique, alleged low credibility, particularly, due to its instrumental exploitation (e. g. election polls), it seems to be the best method of acquiring original data, in order to describe a population too big to be examined directly. Obviously, in order to be able to consider the research results as credible, a number of conditions must be fulfilled, regarding **e. g. sampling (size, selection, representativeness), and the applied research instruments (correctness, objectivity, unambiguity, verifiability).**

The following article refers to the research results acquired using two research instruments: the first focused on examining the opinions of teachers regarding whether the idea of integrated education, in reference to generalised groups of the participants of education, students: without disabilities, however exhibiting special educational needs (**mild developmental disorders**), gifted, with disabilities⁷, is a good, beneficial solution. The instrument contains 6

⁷ The groups of gifted students and students with disabilities were purposefully isolated. The aim was to not lose track of gifted students, in the broad understanding of special needs. The purpose of isolating the group of students with disabilities, was to, indirectly, to encourage teachers to think of a group of students with SEN,

statements with the option to choose: *yes, I have no opinion, no* and a single open question, where the respondents had the possibility to indicate groups of students, other than the presented⁸.

The second instrument was focused on the chances for the success of **inclusive education** in regard to the particular developmental disorders and **mild disorders**. The participants were given the choice of five different answers: *5 – very good chance of success, 4 – good chance of success, 3 – medium chance of success, 2 – poor chance of success, 1 – no chance of success*. An assortment of twelve groups of children/students with developmental disorders and mild disorders was established: with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disability, with partial and severe hearing impairment, partial or severe visual impairment, children with autism, children with the Asperger syndrome, children with movement disorders, multiple disabilities, communication disorders, and chronic conditions, to which teachers were to respond in regard to inclusive education.

Firstly, it was assumed, that a preschool/integrated school teacher possesses generalised knowledge regarding the functioning of i.a. a school child exhibiting each of the aforementioned groups of developmental disorders and **mild developmental disorders**, acquired through higher education, professional training, or acquired via professional experience.

Secondly, the limited assortment of groups of children/students, in regard to the recognition of chances and dangers within the framework of inclusive education, was related to aiming at isolating groups of students of explicitly varied educational needs, due to the specifics of their functioning. Including all groups of students, as presented in the ordinances by the Ministry of National Education regarding the psychological-pedagogical assistance⁹ would

however, not associating it with developmental dysfunction – consultation of instruments with a body of expert judges.

⁸ The respondents decided against this option.

⁹ Ordinance of the Ministry of National Education for 10 March 2017 regarding the principles of psychological-pedagogical assistance in public preschools, schools and institutions, Journal of Laws 25 August 2017, pos. 1519.

result in a **much more elaborate, and, including e. g. the levels of disability, and an even more complex classification**¹⁰. An arbitrary choice was made, however, supported by the functional characteristics of individuals with particular levels of disability, to isolate e. g. two, instead of four groups of children/students with hearing disorders. Additionally, it was assumed that some of the groups of students, as indicated by the Ministry, e. g. **threatened with** maladjustment or educational failure, were never actually threatened with educational exclusion as a separation education, within the Polish solutions. Therefore, they were not included in the poll regarding the chances and dangers of inclusive education. Instead, the **research**, was based on literature analyses regarding the issues of inclusive education, that, in most cases, indicate the issue of inclusive education of children/students with disabilities, severe disorders and mild developmental disorders¹¹.

The unusual distinction between the professional groups into: up to 10 years, and 24 and more years of professional experience, also demands an explanation. Primarily, the aim was to include three commonly included groups, within this variable, that is, teachers with up to 10 years of experience, teachers between 11 and 20 years of experience and teachers with more than 20 years of

¹⁰ The necessity of limiting the number of discussed groups, in regard to the chances and dangers of inclusive education was related to common sense judgement of assessing the chances of acquiring respondents, with assuming voluntary participation in the study, as well as, assuming the measurement of a number of additional variables with the use of the remaining study instruments.

¹¹ In order to eliminate at least a portion of possible errors in constructing polls, such as: assuming prior knowledge or understanding (the respondents exhibit competences allowing them to respond to questions, and make statements regarding the raised issues); formulation of mutually contradictory, suggestive, ambiguous, culturally unadjusted questions, or creating a flawed scale of answers in regard to multiple choice questions, avoided due to the construction of poll instruments with the assistance of expert judges, specialists in regard to the subject matter. The assistance led to the omission of the "Autism spectrum disorder" term, and to the isolation of two groups of students - with autism and with the Asperger syndrome.

experience. However, despite the randomised choice of recipients, from among 215 integrated preschool education teachers who participated in the study, teachers with less than 10 years of experience made 51.16% of the group, while teachers between 11 and 20 years of experience – 6.51%, and teachers with more than 21 years of experience – 42.33%.

According to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, the age profile of teachers seems to be an increasing issue in numerous countries¹². It was shown that, e. g. in a part of the 25 countries examined, the majority of teachers would be of pre-retirement or close to retirement age. Other countries already exhibit a deficit of teachers, while elsewhere, the recruitment of candidates for studies leading to the teaching profession, becomes an increasing issue. Only in a small number of countries (the wealthiest), teachers are recruited from the best graduates, as they were offered exceptional employment conditions.

Unfortunately, the low status and the lack of social respect for the teaching profession, especially regarding teachers of early education, remains to be the primary issue. Young people, even if they start to work in their profession, quickly resign, and the possibility increases proportionately to the shortage of their professional experience. The balance of requirements, effort, difficulties related to the profession, is at loss in comparison to the profits. The main issue is the lack of understanding of those who regulate education, an understanding that would be long-term and with perspectives e. g. in a situation of the population decline, systemic reforms of education financing (including teacher salaries).

Therefore, the research results will be presented in a layout unusual for analyses related to professional experience, in two groups of teachers, with 10 or less years of experience, and with 24 or more years of experience. Therefore, two groups were created, with less experience, and with rich (even 36 years) experience. The middle

¹² European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Teacher Education for inclusion in Europe*, Odense, Dania, EAREU ze SPE 2011, p. 76.

group of teachers between 11 and 23 years of experience was excluded, as it constituted 11.6% of the respondents.

These two diverse groups, vary the most in regard to the examined aspect. Particularly the second group consists of teachers who have remained within the system since the time, when the idea of classrooms, integrated classes and the changes related to the re-definition of the very concept of disability related regarding the paradigmatic change, were introduced. They worked when segregated teaching of children/students with disabilities was common, they were the teachers who formed the reality of integrated education, and experienced its successes and failures. Teachers with less experience were employed during the time of the popularisation of inclusive education; one should mention that the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* had been signed in 2006¹³, and from that moment on, preparations and implementations of changes introduced by the aforementioned, were performed in signing countries. Therefore, one should verify, whether and to what degree, these experiences affect the teachers' opinions and their perception of inclusive education as a chance/danger regarding the education of students, including individuals with disabilities.

While describing, in the context of methodology, the aim of the performed analyses, one may state, that it is the determination whether and to what degree, the opinions of integrated preschool education teachers, regarding the mutual teaching of children within the scope of mainstream institutions, are determined by their professional experience.

The questions that may be posed regarding the aforementioned aim may refer to two primary issues.

The first issue focuses on the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding whether inclusive education is a solution beneficial to particular, generalised groups of children/students: **without disabilities**, however, exhibiting special educational needs

¹³ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, United Nations, 2006 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disabilities-convention.htm>.

(**mild developmental disorders**), gifted students, and finally, for children/students with disabilities. Regarding the aforementioned, the following specific questions were formed:

- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children functioning within developmental norms, the so-called able children?
- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children with special educational needs, that exhibit mild developmental disorders?
- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children with special educational needs, that exhibit talent, the so-called gifted children?
- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children with disabilities?

The second issue is dedicated to the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success in inclusive education of children/students with developmental disorders and mild developmental disorders placed among twelve homogeneous groups (based on the type and the severity of the disorder), including: mild intellectual disability, moderate and severe intellectual disability, with partial and severe hearing impairment, with severe visual impairment, children/students with autism, with the Asperger syndrome, with movement disorders including aphasia, with multiple disabilities, communication disorders and finally, with chronic conditions.

The specific issues regard to the following:

- Whether, and if so, then how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience,

differ, regarding the opportunities of each group in inclusive education?

In reality, the above question contains twelve questions, that differ only by the fact, that they relate to homogeneous groups of children with a developmental, mild developmental disorder.

- Regarding which groups of students with developmental, mild developmental disorders, according to the opinion of teachers with 10 or less years of experience, is there a higher chance of **success regarding inclusive activities**?
- Regarding which groups of students with developmental, mild developmental disorders, according to the opinion of teachers with 24 and more years of experience, is there a higher chance of success regarding inclusive activities?

One should indicate, that the analysis results are based on a study conducted on a group of 190 teachers from integrated preschools¹⁴, from Dolnośląskie, Mazowieckie, Łódzkie and Wielkopolskie Voivodeships. The regions were selected, so that they would be comparable in reference to i.a. economic variables (e. g. the employment rates in each region are similar – Dolnośląskie and Łódzkie: 53.2% and 55.1%; Mazowieckie and Wielkopolskie: 57.1% and 55.2%)¹⁵.

The analysis of research results regarding the first primary issue allows to conclude that teachers of integrated preschool education with less experience, in regard to each group of children: able; with special educational needs, exhibiting mild developmental disorders; with special educational needs, exhibiting talent, as well as, children with disabilities, are more often convinced, find inclusive education beneficial.

¹⁴ The group of 190 consists exclusively of individuals with 10 or less years of experience and with 24 and more years of experience, the group between 11 and 23 years of experience constituting the 11.6% of the entirety of recruited respondents from integrated preschools, were not included in the analyses.

¹⁵ *The economic activity of the Polish population, 1st quarter 2016*, Warszawa, GUS 2017.

Both teacher groups assume, that inclusive education is the most beneficial solution for students with special educational needs (SEN) (exhibiting mild developmental disorders), followed by able students. The differences determined by professional experience appear in regard to two remaining groups.

Table 1. The opinions of integrated preschool education teachers regarding the educational opportunities of particular groups of students in inclusive education, and professional experience (percentage values)

Professional experience	Child in inclusive education											
	Able child			SEN child (with mild developmental disorders)			SEN child exhibiting talent (so-called gifted child)			Child with disability		
	Y	N	NO	Y	N	NO	Y	N	NO	Y	N	NO
10 years and less (N = 110)	75,5	11,3	13,2	83,0	17,0	5,7	73,6	17,0	9,4	64,2	17,0	18,9
24 years and more (N = 80)	66,6	15,2	18,2	75,7	18,2	6,1	45,4	12,2	42,4	60,6	15,2	24,2

Description: Y - yes (inclusive education is a beneficial solution for the child); N - no (inclusive education is not a beneficial solution for the child); NO - No opinion, I have no opinion (whether inclusive education is a beneficial solution for the child).

According to the teachers with significant experience, inclusive education is the least beneficial solution for gifted students. In search for an explanation for such critical opinions on the opportunities for gifted students in inclusive education, one may indicate a number of possible reasons. First one, is the current lack, within the scope of Polish solutions, of arrangements on the form of the inclusive education model. Whether, and what systems of facilitation for students and teachers will be designed? What amount of financing will be dedicated to education, and, in reality, whether it will be increased, which would allow to expect the inclusive education, requiring definitely more financing, to be secured? Teachers

may worry that with the possible lack of changes in this matter, the main attention of both the legislator and the teachers would focus on students with developmental disabilities, as they constitute the group identified, and that seems to be the case indeed, as requiring the highest degree of support, possibly exhibiting difficulties with meeting the requirements regarding the curriculum, as well as, peer relations, and functioning in a class environment of an ordinary mainstream school. It seems that teachers with more professional experience, are worried, that a gifted student would be omitted in the situation, and that his needs would be even less noticed by the school. It is probable, that the teachers base their opinions on experience with varied groups (classes, **integrated units**). They know how difficult it is to cope with students' varying needs and capabilities. Such fears are additionally supported by studies, i.a. a study by Edyta Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, indicating that the potential of gifted students in school is quickly squandered. It is due to i.a. the lack of competence of teachers, regarding working with gifted students, in a reality where the number of students with severe disorders was lower, than expected regarding the promotion of inclusive education¹⁶.

Some consolation is offered by the fact, that the number of teachers with significant experience, presenting the belief that there is no certainty regarding the opportunities within the inclusive education of gifted students, is much higher than the number of teachers who exhibit opinions, that it would not be a beneficial solution. Therefore, it seems that teachers do not entirely disregard the opportunities of gifted students in inclusive education, but rather, they say "call". They express their concern, but do not exclude the success of such activities, if placed among favourable solutions and an actual accomplishment of the idea of education for all, which should be reduced to a premise, that one cannot exclude some, to include others.

¹⁶ E. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska (ed.), *O dzieciach uzdolnionych matematycznie. Książka dla rodziców i nauczycieli*, Warszawa, Nowa Era 2012.

Research results show, that teachers with less experience are much more optimistic in their opinions on educational opportunities within **integrated education** of gifted students, there are less undecided teachers, however, there are slightly more teachers with a critical attitude. In their opinion, students with disabilities are the group that has the least opportunities in inclusive education. **However, in this case as well, a number of teachers with less experience, who think that inclusive education is beneficial to the aforementioned group, is bigger than the number of more experienced teachers who exhibited similar views.**

The general overview of the research results tells that teachers with less experience tend to be more in favour of inclusive education in regard to all groups of students, than the more experienced teachers. Such results may be explained in various ways.

Teachers with 10 or less years of experienced, were trained in a time, when the necessity of redefining the concept of disability, and of opposing marginalisation and social exclusion, including education, due to any type of functioning abnormalities. The call for the humanisation of life, social support, the individualisation of services, which included full rights, respect, the ability to choose and to control over own life (the humanisation of life); acquiring and maintaining of various skills necessary to lead a self-reliant, independent life, supporting the access to knowledge and culture (social support); opposing adjusting individuals to an established offer (individualisation of services)¹⁷, are arguments for social justice, moral-philosophical premises which result in particular models of reasoning, e. g. inclusive categories.

As according to the analyses and investigations of other authors, the current experience of inclusive action in form of e. g. integrated classes/units, in regard to the accomplishment of inclusive ideas,

¹⁷ J. Renshaw, *Normalisation and Passing*, Canterbury, University of Kent, Personal Social Services Research Unit 1988, J. Renshaw, *Case Management for the Mentally III: Locking at the Evidence Holloway*, "International Journal of Social Psychiatry" 1991, No. 37.

are far from optimistic. There are numerous opinions, that inclusion¹⁸ in the currently applied form, failed. It is often a type of formal integration, a community of a place, rather than of tightened social contacts and emotional bonds¹⁹. Amadeusz Krause claims that administrative proclamation of integration caused the child to be “thrown” into an unprepared area, with all the negative results of such actions²⁰. The same can be said of the teacher’s situation. When the integrated form of education had been sanctioned (1993), none of the institutions of higher education in Poland would educate support teachers. A significant number of teachers from mainstream institutions which opened integrated units, was unqualified and lacked the competence to work with students with disabilities²¹.

¹⁸ Education integration is a form of teaching within the framework of a broadly understood inclusive education.

¹⁹ A. Krause, *Wielość poziomów integracji – konsekwencje dla teorii i praktyki*, w: *Wielowymiarowość integracji w teorii i praktyce edukacyjnej*, eds. M. Chodkowska, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2003, pp. 59–64.

²⁰ A. Krause, *Współczesne paradygmaty pedagogiki specjalnej*, Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls 2010, p. 73.

²¹ i.a.: U. Bartnikowska, M. Wójcik, *Zaniedbania w aspekcie triady: szkoła – rodzice – dziecko w kształceniu integracyjnym i masowym dzieci z wadą słuchu*, [in:] Z. Gajdzica, D. Osik-Chudowolska (eds.), *Wątki zaniedbane, zaniechane, nieobecne w procesie edukacji i wsparcia społecznych osób niepełnosprawnych*, Warszawa, Żak 2004; Z. Gajdzica, *Nauczyciel edukacji wczesnoszkolnej w zreformowanej szkole powszechnej jako organizator procesu kształcenia dziecka upośledzonego umysłowo w stopniu lekkim*, [in:] Z. Palak (ed.), *Pedagogika specjalna w reformowanym ustroju edukacyjnym*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2001; K. Bleszyńska, *Determinanty przystosowania ucznia niepełnosprawnego do środowiska szkoły masowej*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992; E. Garlej-Drzewiecka, *Pedeutologiczny kontekst myślenia o nauczycielu wiodącym i wspierającym*, [in:] C. Kosakowski, A. Krause, *Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej. Rehabilitacja, opieka i edukacja specjalna w perspektywie zmian*, vol. 3, Olsztyn, Wydawnictwo UWM 2004; T. Oleńska-Pawlak, *Warunki realizacji funkcji opiekuńczej i wychowawczej w szkołach masowych wobec dzieci z zaburzeniami w stanie zdrowia i rozwoju*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992; A. Wachowiak, *Błędy nauczycieli szkół masowych w postępowaniu z dziećmi niepełnosprawnymi*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992; H. Łaś, *Wiedza nauczycieli szkół publicz-*

Little has changed since then. Teachers from mainstream institutions, remain to be a group that is less often able to certify the possession of competences required for working with students exhibiting special educational needs, than teachers within the remaining forms of education²². Therefore, one shouldn't wonder at the scepticism of teachers, who experienced, regarding themselves and their students, the negative consequences of implemented changes, and that they are less trusting while approaching subsequent changes, particularly, as there are no details provided.

The second area of analyses is related to the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success of the inclusive actions in regard to the twelve listed groups of students with developmental disorders. The respondents would rate them on a scale from 1 – no chances to 5 – very good chances of success²³.

We should first note, that teachers with less experience would rate only one group as having low chances in inclusive education – children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. The chances of six groups, i.e. children: with severe hearing impairment, severe visual impairment, autism, the Asperger syndrome, multiple disabilities and communication disabilities were rated high, and the chances of five groups were rated as very high. These are: children with mild intellectual disabilities, partial hearing impairment, partial visual impairment, movement disorders, including aphasia, and children with chronic conditions. Teachers with more (24 or more

nych o kształceniu dzieci niepełnosprawnych, [in:] D. Osik, A. Wojnarska (eds.), *Wspomaganie rozwoju uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2001.

²² G. Szumski, A. Firkowska-Mankiewicz, *Wokół edukacji włączającej. Efekty kształcenia uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu lekkim w klasach specjalnych, integracyjnych i ogólnodostępnych*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo APS 2010, p. 150.

²³ 1 – no chances of success for inclusive actions, 2 – poor chances of success for inclusive actions, 3 – medium chances of success for inclusive actions, 4 – good chances of success for inclusive actions, 5 – very good chance of success for inclusive actions.

years) experience exhibited less optimism. They rated the chances of four groups as poor. These include: children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, severe visual impairment, autism, and with multiple disabilities. The chances of six subsequent groups were rated as high. These include: children with mild intellectual disabilities, partial hearing impairment, severe hearing impairment, partial visual impairment, with the Asperger syndrome, as well as, children with communication disorders. According to this group of teachers, only two groups have a very high chance of success in inclusive education including: children with movement disorders including aphasia, and with a chronic condition.

The hierarchy of groups with the highest and the least chances of success in inclusive education, varies according to the teachers in regard to their professional experience. The table below presents this hierarchy.

Table 2. The experience of teachers from integrated preschools and the chances within inclusive education, of students with developmental disorders - from highest to lowest

10 and less years of experience	24 and more years of experience
Mild intellectual disability	movement disorders
Movement disorders	chronic condition
Chronic condition	partial hearing impairment
Partial hearing impairment	mild intellectual disability
Partial visual impairment	partial visual impairment
Aspergera syndrome	communication disorders
Communication disorders	severe hearing impairment
Autism	Asperger syndrome
Multiple disabilities	autism
Severe hearing impairment	severe hearing impairment
Severe visual impairment	moderate and severe intellectual disability
Moderate and severe intellectual disability	multiple disabilities

Comparing the study results in the context of statistically significant difference, one should note, that these occur in six cases. Each time, it is the teachers with less experience, who perceive the chances of students as higher.

Table 3. The opinions of integrated preschool education teachers regarding the chances of success for the inclusive action regarding various groups of children/students with disabilities and developmental disorders, and professional experience

	10 and less years of experience (N=110)		24 and more years of experience (N=80)		Student's t-distribution value	The statistic significance of differences
	AM	SD	AM	SD		
Mild intellectual disability	4,51	0,57	3,66	1,14	7,083	0,001
Moderate and severe intellectual disability	2,88	0,99	2,69	0,90	1,357	negligible
Partial hearing impairment	4,07	0,78	3,78	1,0	2,417	0,02
Severe hearing impairment	3,15	1,15	3,24	1,28	-0,529	negligible
Partial visual impairment	4,06	0,74	3,57	0,95	4,083	0,001
Severe visual impairment	3,02	1,15	2,84	0,86	1,200	negligible
Autism	3,33	1,07	2,87	0,95	3,286	0,001
Asperger syndrome	3,8	0,96	3,21	0,98	4,214	0,001
Movement disorders	4,12	0,87	4,12	0,69	0,000	negligible
Multiple disabilities	3,19	1,19	2,67	0,80	3,467	0,001
Communication disorders	3,42	1,23	3,27	1,19	0,882	negligible
Chronic condition	4,08	0,89	4,0	1,02	0,615	negligible

Description: explanations regarding the interpretation of research results: 1-1,99 results - no chances of success in inclusive education regarding a given group of students, 2-2,99 - poor chances, 3-3,99 - good chances, 4-5 - very good chances; AM - Arithmetic Mean; SD - Standard Deviation.

Therefore, the statistically significant differences regarding the opinions of teachers with less or more experience, on the chances of success in inclusive education, are related to cases of children:

- with mild intellectual disabilities – teachers from the first group consider their chances as very good, while teachers from the second group as good,
- with partial hearing impairment – accordingly: very good and good,
- with partial visual impairment – accordingly: very good and good,
- with autism – accordingly – good and poor,
- with the Asperger syndrome – both group consider the chances of this group within inclusive education to be good,
- with multiple disabilities – accordingly: good and poor.

In the remaining cases, the opinions of respondents varied to degrees that cannot be considered statistically significant.

In the context of an attempt to generalise the results, one should examine the internal differentiation of the opinions of studies' respondents. Only on the basis of this data, one will be able to conclude, how the statistically generalised research results compare to the actual feelings of the group, with which they are associated.

The most significant variation of opinion in the group of teachers with 10 and less years of experience, regarding the chances of success of inclusive actions, pertains to children/students: with communication disorders, multiple disabilities, as well as, children with severe visual impairment, and severe hearing impairment. Therefore, it is in regard to these groups of students, that the opinions of teachers, regarding the chances of success of inclusive activities, vary the most.

The range of average results for 110 teachers with 10 or less years of experience, taking part in the study, indicates that, the variation of opinions is very significant in regard to 4 groups of children, including children:

- with *communication disorders* – the range of average results is: 4,65; 2,19;
- with *multiple disabilities* – the range of average results is: 4,38; 2,0;

- with *severe visual impairment* – the range of average results is: 4,17; 1,87;
- with *severe hearing impairment*: 4,3; 2,0.

The above means that within the studied group, a number of teachers think that these children have very good chances of success in inclusive education, however, there are also teachers who think that these chances are poor.

Simultaneously, teachers with 10 and less years of experience are more consensual regarding their opinions on students with:

- *mild intellectual disabilities* – the range of average results: 5; 3,94;
- *partial visual impairment*: 4,8; 3,32;
- *partial hearing impairment*: 4,85; 3,29.

Therefore, one may assume, that the respondents rate the chances of success of educational activities within the framework of inclusive education of the aforementioned groups of students, as very good and good.

Analogous analyses regarding the second group of teachers, with 24 and more years of experience, allow to state, that the most significant variation of opinions regarding the chances of success of inclusive actions, occurs in reference to children/students:

- with *severe hearing impairment* – the range of average results is: 4,52; 1,96;
- with *communication disorders* – 4,46; 2,08;
- with *mild intellectual disabilities* – 4,8; 2,52.

That means, the opinions of teachers resonate between the category of very good and poor chances of success of inclusive action in regard to these groups of students.

The integrated preschool education teachers with 24 and more years of experience agree the most in regard to the chances within inclusive education of children/students:

- with *movement disorders* – the range of average results (4,81; 3,43),
- with *multiple disabilities* – the range of average results (3,47; 1,87) and
- with *severe visual impairment* – the range of average results (3,7; 1,98).

The above means, that the chances of children with movement disorders to achieve success in inclusive education are rated as very good and good, and in the cases of multiple disabilities and severe visual impairment, as good and less than poor (the lower values of the ranges of average results, are located in the interpretative category of results indicating no or very slight chances, considering, that these results are close to the higher values of the range of results in this category).

Summary

The varied opinions, as presented by the research results, of integrated preschool education teachers, considering their professional experience, and regarding the chances within the inclusive education of students, the participants of the process of education, encourage certain conclusions, or even postulates.

The positive attitude of teachers with less experience, towards inclusive education, is a welcome factor. I wish to believe, that it is an effect of promoting the tendency, the change in understanding education, and of the belief that common, good quality education beneficial for all students is possible, as well as, social integration as its result.

The fact, that there is still a significant number of teachers unconvinced regarding the results of introducing this potential, new model of education of students with special educational needs (depending on the group of students, the numbers vary between few and over a dozen percent). Opponents of inclusive education constitute a group that is more significant in numbers than the undecided (between 10% or more to approximately 20%). The above gives an indication, that professional experience may only partially provide grounds for the varying study results.

The necessary condition for the success of inclusive education is learning via experience. Voices of critique, a significantly increased scepticism in opinions of teachers that have more experience, can-

not be disregarded. Contrary, only their detailed analysis, particularly in reference to the dangerous areas, barriers, which became the basis for being undecided, as well as, for the unequivocally critical evaluation of inclusive education as a solution for teaching all student groups, may help design actions, so that previous mistakes would be avoided.

Education of future, and training of current teachers, that would prepare them to work with students within the framework of inclusive education, and equip them with competences regarding working with diverse groups. It should particularly apply to teachers of not only early (preschool and early school) education, but also teachers of particular subjects, as the process initiated at preschool or elementary school level, must be continued.

Additionally, it seems that both groups of teachers need support in accomplishing their professional tasks, which must be synchronised with a systemic support of every student, depending on the needs, as then, possibly, the gaps of indicators of presumed chances of success of inclusive education of particular groups of students, as well as, the variation of opinions of teachers in regard to their professional experience, would decrease.

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Cyberbullying Versus Self-Image Creation on the Internet: Are the Underlying Mechanisms Different in Young Adults with Disabilities?

ABSTRACT: Piotr Plichta, Jacek Pyżalski, Julia Barlińska, *Cyberbullying Versus Self-Image Creation on the Internet: Are the Underlying Mechanisms Different in Young Adults with Disabilities?* Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 115–134. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

Today's media exert significant impact on young peoples' social life by transforming many social and development aspects. On-line activity of young adults not only increases the availability of positive and educational experiences, but also maximises exposure to on-line threats. The main scope of this article is to explore the role of appearance and social practices concerning its' creation in the process of peer cyberbullying among young Polish adults (N=329). On-line body auto-presentation has been found an important factor moderating the process of on-line aggression. The dissemination of beliefs was also examined – assessment of own attractiveness, apprehension of the appearance assessment by others and the scale of activities focused on editing and improving the appearance depicted in the pictures posted on social websites. The differences in these areas were examined between people with disabilities or those who suffer from injuries or specific health conditions that affect their appearance and other young people. The results have revealed that

particular research and intervention focus should be put on young people suffering from a condition or injury affecting appearance and/or having a disability or serious health problems, as this group has been found to be more prone to victimisation (as far as traditional bullying and cyberbullying is concerned).

KEY WORDS: bullying, cyberbullying, body image, social media, body image

Introduction

Internet use is common among young adults. In-depth analyses show that one of the dominant modes of using the Internet in this age group is to have an account and be active on social media websites. Even though, as noted in several countries, it is the teenagers who are most often engaged in this activity, yet young adults are very similar to them in this respect. American studies show that the percentage of users of social media websites, primarily Facebook, in this age group reaches 90%¹. Similar results are also recorded in Poland. Pupils and students are one of the groups in the Polish society which is very active on-line, at the same time being the leading group that uses mobile Internet². Most recent studies show that persons who use Internet in the age group between 18 and 24 constitute 99% of the population in this age group, whereas the percentage of Internet users registered on social media websites amounts to 94% in this age group and is the highest in comparison to other age groups of adult Internet users in Poland³. It is worth noting that even though changes are observed in a long-term perspective in the dynamics of use of individual websites (e. g. “aban-

¹ A. Lenhart, K. Purcell, A. Smith, K. Zickuhr, Social Media and Young Adults, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2010/02/03/social-media-and-young-adults/> [access: 17.02.2017].

² D. Batorski, *Technologie i media w domach i w życiu Polaków. Diagnoza Społeczna 2015, Warunki i Jakość Życia Polaków – Raport*, “Contemporary Economics” 2015, No. 9/4, p. 373–395. DOI: 10.5709/ce.1897-9254.1.

³ CBOS, Wykorzystanie internetu. Report from the survey. No. 49/2017, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_049_17.PDF [access: 15.02.2018].

donment” of Facebook for the sake of Snapchat), yet the percentage of users using social media websites globally still remains on a very high level.

The Internet, and in particular social media websites, are a platform to present photos, including photos that show the Internet users (so-called selfies). Moreover, the possibilities of digital edition and photo modification result in the fact that not only improvement of their quality is possible, but also acquiring a more attractive image. Additionally, interactivity and possibility of multi-directional communication results in the fact that such photos may be sent through social networks, where they are assessed and commented on, which provides such processes with social nature and plays an important role in the process of shaping the identity of young adult Internet users.

In the contemporary society, dominated by the image culture, one of the most important criteria of position in a social environment is the physical attractiveness, thus positive self-presentation in the social media is primarily oriented at visual aspects of self-image⁴. On account of its’ open and interactive nature, social media are an ideal arena for self-presentation, defined as purposeful activities aimed at making an impression that is desired by the individual with respect to his/ her image in the social environment⁵. In the modern world, photographs have become images aimed at exciting applause from an often invisible audience⁶. The purpose of both the content and the mode of display of photographs is presentation, or, more precisely, construction of an ideal “I”, testifying to attractiveness and success. This is done by means of control of information

⁴ A. Ostaszewska, *Popkulturowe ramy tożsamości. Media, kultura popularna, Internet jako nowe środowiska kształtowania tożsamości*, ORE, Warsaw 2012.

⁵ A. Szmajke, *Autoprezentacja – niewinny spektakl dla innych i siebie*, [in:] *Złudzenia, które pozwalają żyć*, ed. M. Kofta, T. Szutrowa, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warsaw 2001, pp. 147–156.

⁶ A. Brosch, *Autoprezentacja nastolatków w mediach społecznych*, [in:] *Oblicza Internetu. Sieciowe Dyskursy. (Roz)poznawanie cyfrowego świata*, ed. M. Sokołowski, Elbląg 2014.

about oneself and other people, disclosed by the subject to the audience⁵. From the perspective of interpersonal relations, this is also a specific form or technique of exerting social impact, functioning next to such skills and social competence as assertiveness, efficient verbal and non-verbal communication or efficient recognition or solving of problems⁷. The main motive for undertaking self-presentation activities is aiming for maximisation of the balance of profits and costs in social relations, increase and protection of self-esteem and formation and maintenance of a specific identity⁸. It is also necessary to point out to the huge significance of gender stereotypes which shape the image of own sex and the opposite sex, of what is attractive, desired and socially enticing⁹.

Digital self-presentation may be incorporated into the self-image of an individual, influencing such self-image in a positive manner and resulting in improved self-esteem. However, if self-presentation is negative or is modified for the purpose of ridiculing the presented person, it forms an important risk factor for behaviour in the area of cyberbullying and sexting¹⁰. This is of particular relevance in the context of significance of appearance, self-assessment of appearance and correlation of these variables with the mental health indices. It turns out that the perception of own appearance, self-esteem and negative self-esteem in this respect is very common and refers, in a substantial degree, to young persons (more frequently women

⁷ M. Aryle, *Umiejętności społeczne*, [in:] *Zdolności a proces uczenia się*, ed. N. J. Mackintosh, A. M. Colman, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2002, pp. 113–121.

⁸ M. R. Leary, R. M. Kowalski, *Impression Management: A Literature Review and Two Component Model Psychological Bulletin*, 1990.

⁹ E. Mandal, *Podmiotowe i interpersonalne konsekwencje stereotypów związanych z płcią*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 1990.

¹⁰ S. Berne, A. Frisén, J. Kling, *Appearance-related cyberbullying: a qualitative investigation of characteristics, content, reasons, and effects*, "BodyImage" 2014, No. 11(4), pp. 527–533. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.08.006. Sexting is a phenomenon consisting in recording and sending personal sexual-type materials via mobile or Internet network: quoted after Wojtasik Ł. (2014), *Seksting wśród dzieci i młodzieży*. „Dziecko krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka”, 13(2), p. 80.

than men)¹¹. It has to be indicated that the ideal appearance promoted by the media is a very important reference point and exerts pressure on individuals, who sometimes, in order to improve their appearance, undertake even health-threatening activities, i.e. dangerous operations or detrimental diet, motivated by lack of satisfaction with body mass)¹².

The Internet, and social media websites in particular, exert significant impact on the life of young people in multiple aspects pertaining to their functioning. Use of the new media not only offers positive experiences, but also tends to be an area for threats. A particularly negative phenomenon, which may be related to on-line social interactions, is cyberbullying. Nowadays, it is most often qualified as a series of acts of aggression intentionally and repeatedly targeted at another person who cannot defend himself/herself and who experiences helplessness in this respect¹³. This definition makes a clear reference to traditional bullying, the definition of which contains similar characteristics¹⁴. Cyberbullying is inflicted with the use of various instruments of mediated communication. These instruments are diverse not only on account of the applied

¹¹ L. Neighbors, J. Sobal, *Prevalence and Magnitude of Body Weight and Shape Dissatisfaction among University Students*, *Eating Behaviors* 2007, No. 4, 2007, pp. 429–439. DOI: 10.1016/j.eatbeh.2007.03.003.

¹² I. Wronka, E. Suliga, R. Pawlińska-Chmara, *Perceived and desired body weight among female university students in relation to BMI-based weight status and socio-economic factors*. *Annals of Agricultural and Environmental Medicine* 2013; No. 20(3), pp. 533–538.

¹³ S. Bauman, *Cyberbullying: What Does Research Tell Us?*, *“Theory Into Practice”* 2013, No. 52(4), pp. 249–256, DOI: 10.1080/00405841.2013.829727; R. S. Tokunaga, *Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization*, *Computers in Human Behavior* 2010, No. 26, pp. 277–287; J. Pyżalski, *Agresja elektroniczna i cyberbullying jako nowe ryzykowne zachowania młodzieży*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2012.

¹⁴ J. Pyżalski, *Agresja elektroniczna i cyberbullying jako nowe ryzykowne zachowania młodzieży*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków, 2012; J. Pyżalski, *Beyond Peer Cyberbullying – Involvement of Polish Adolescents in Different Kinds of Electronic Aggression*, *„Studia edukacyjne”* 2013, No. 28, pp. 147–167.

technical solutions, but also the social models of their use and significance for the users.

Quality diversification of the acts of electronic violence is directly related to the potential damages that such acts may cause. However, the victimogenic potential of such acts of aggression is varied. It includes qualitatively diverse phenomena, e. g. unpleasant comments during one-to-one on-line communication (e. g. chat), unpleasant public comments (e. g. social media website), disclosure of secrets of a given person via on-line communication, popularisation of embarrassing visual materials, or theft of a person's identity (impersonating somebody else on-line). Furthermore, it is worth noting that electronic aggression often co-exists with its' traditional variety¹⁵. Thus, some victims, irrespective of the fact whether such acts have high or low victimogenic potential, are attacked both on-line and off-line¹⁶, which may intensify the suffered consequences of aggression or violence, especially in the context of the same peer group.

Results of multiple studies show increasing significance of on-line image also in the context of cyberbullying. On the one hand, it is the on-line image that is one of the targets of attacks of cyberbullies, who in particular focus on the aspects of physical appearance. On the other hand, the role of controlled and conscious on-line self-presentation is indicated as one of the significant potential moderators limiting the escalation of the phenomenon¹⁷. In particular, sharing photos or video content presenting the victim in unfavourable light has significant victimogenic potential¹⁸.

¹⁵ e.g.: J. Pyżalski, *Agresja elektroniczna i cyberbullying jako nowe ryzykowne zachowania młodzieży*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2012.

¹⁶ e.g.: T. E. Waasdorp, C. P. Bradshaw, *The Overlap Between Cyberbullying and Traditional Bullying*, “Journal of Adolescent Health” 2015, No. 56(5), pp. 483–488. DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.12.002.

¹⁷ S. Berne, A. Frisén, J. Kling, *Appearance-related cyberbullying: a qualitative investigation of characteristics, content, reasons, and effects*, “BodyImage” 2014, No. 11(4), pp. 527–533. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.08.006.

¹⁸ J. Barlińska, A. Szuster, M. Winiewski, *Cyberbullying among adolescent bystanders: role of the communication medium, form of violence, and empathy*, “Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology” 2013, 23, pp. 37–51. DOI: 10.1002/casp.2137 14.

Materials published on-line have specific properties, e. g. durability, copiability, and possibility of access to it on the part of the so-called invisible (but also unlimited) audience, as well as searchability¹⁹. This means that usually after a while, control over such material is lost and irrespective of the will of the involved persons (including original perpetrators), it starts to be commonly accessible. Awareness of this fact aggravates the situation of the victim, often making him/ her helpless. The fact of publication of materials and their extensive availability may be, on the one hand, treated as different understanding of repetitiveness than it was in the case of traditional bullying. On the one hand, it happens that even a one-time action of a perpetrator who published the materials results in repeated victimisation. On the other hand, the situation overwhelms the victim, who often has no idea about the modes of defence – thus, it is a specific situation of power imbalance, also present in the traditional bullying, however manifested with the use of other mechanisms (at least in some cases).

The main purpose of the article is to explore the significance of physical appearance of young adults in the process of peer cyberbullying (in particular being a victim), which often co-exists with its' traditional form in the light of the studies. On-line self-presentation, strongly related to the user's appearance, is nowadays considered an important factor intermediating in engagement in electronic aggression²⁰. It is worth emphasising that there is a common consent that certain sub-populations of young people are more exposed to becoming victims of violence, both with respect to the experience of traditional aggression and violence, as well as inflicted with the use of the new media. They include persons with disa-

¹⁹ D. Boyd, *Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Public in Teenage Social Life*, [in:] *McArthur Foundation on Digital Learning – Youth, Identity, and Digital Media Volume*, ed. D. Buckingham, MA, MIT Press, Cambridge.

²⁰ S. Berne, A. Frisé, J. Kling, *Appearance-related cyberbullying: a qualitative investigation of characteristics, content, reasons, and effects*, "BodyImage" 2014, No. 11(4), pp. 527–533. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.08.006.

bilities and the so-called special education needs (e. g. chronically ill persons). Some disabilities or illnesses are accompanied by altered appearance and, what is obvious, greater “self-evident nature” of the situation of such persons and their visibility. In the presented paper, special attention will be paid to such cases²¹.

Cyberbullying related to publication of visual materials related to appearance is a special phenomenon forming a part of a broader context of on-line violence. On the other hand, it requires inclusion of certain specific aspects – it should be analysed in the context of lack of satisfaction with own appearance, objectively evaluated aspects related to the body (e. g. the Body Mass Index), and communication practices related to self-presentation concerning own appearance on the Internet.

Methodology

The main purpose of the presented study was to search for an answer to the following research questions:

1. What is the scale of cyberbullying and traditional bullying among young adults?

²¹ P. Plichta, *Socjalizacja i wychowanie dzieci i młodzieży z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w erze cyfrowej*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2017, p. 308; E. J. Cross, B. Richardson, T. Douglas, J. Vonkaenel-Flatt, *Virtual Violence: Protecting Children from Cyberbullying*, London, 2009, <http://www.beatbullying.org/static/cm/pdfs/virtual-violence-protecting-children-from-cyberbullying.pdf?335317101213> [access: 16.02.2017]; Sentenac M., Gavin A., Nic Gabhainn, et al., *Peer victimization and subjective health among students reporting disability or chronic illness in 11 Western countries*, “European Journal of Public Health” 2012, No. 23(3), pp. 421–426; A. Małkowska-Szkutnik, *Przemoc w szkole (bullying)*, [in:] *Zdrowie i zachowania zdrowotne młodzieży szkolnej w Polsce na tle wybranych uwarunkowań socjodemograficznych. Wyniki badań HBSC 2014*, ed. J. Mazur, Instytut Matki i Dziecka, Warsaw 2015, pp. 205–211), http://www.imid.med.pl/images/do-pobrania/Zdrowie_i_zachowania_zdrowotne_www.pdf [access: 16.02.2017].

- 1a. What are the differences in this respect between persons with disabilities or persons who suffer from altered appearance and other young people?
2. What is the dependence between on-line bullying and its' traditional variety?
3. What is the scale of convictions pertaining to fear of appearance assessment made by others and what are the differences in this respect between persons with disabilities and or persons with visible body damages and other young people?
4. What is the scale of editing activities aimed at improving the appearance of photos presenting the respondents that they post on social media websites?
- 4a. What are the differences in this respect between persons with disabilities or persons who suffer from altered appearance and other young people?

The utilised tools include a questionnaire designed for comparative international studies pertaining to the scale of aggression related to the Internet image on social media websites entitled "Appearance Matters On-line Questionnaire". It was prepared by the members of a working group called Social Media as part of an action organised by COST IS1210 "Appearance Matters: Tackling the Physical & Psychosocial Consequences of Dissatisfaction with Appearance" representing seven countries (Australia, Cyprus, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Great Britain). The studies were conducted at the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017 among social study major students at Polish universities²².

Apart from the study on engagement in traditional bullying and cyberbullying (experienced in the course of the year preceding the study), the questionnaire was used to examine whether bullying referred to the physical appearance (body size, weight, figure, individual body parts, e. g. ears, nose, hair, skin, clothes and style of clothing). Furthermore, it contained measurement scales pertaining to:

²² In Poland, the results were collected by the Polish representatives of COST 1210: Piotr Plichta, Jacek Pyżalski and Julia Barlińska.

- intensity of using social media sites;
- convictions and fears related to own appearance;
- opinions about visual materials (e. g. photos, films) which other people post on their social media websites;
- undertaken editing activities with respect to photos with own image posted on-line;
- feelings and behaviour in relation to photos and/ or films posted on social media websites;
- disability or presence of visible body damages.

The examined group consisted of Polish students (N = 329) (entire international sample N = 1916) aged between 19 and 25. Women made up 70% of the sample and men 30%. Six percent of the respondents had visible body damages (e. g. skin damages, loss of hair) and every tenth person (11%) indicated that they suffered from a disability or a serious health problem.

Results

The respondents, referring to the questions pertaining to engagement (both in the role of a victim and the perpetrator) in peer violence, implemented traditionally and via social media websites, determined the frequency of experiencing such situations in the course of 12 months preceding the study (Table 1).

Perpetration of cyberbullying referred to 4% of respondents and was significantly related to the traditional bullying (Table 2). A similar regularity also refers to victimisation. Co-existence of both types of violence is also confirmed by other studies, which indicates a necessity of joint examination of both types of violence – on-line and off-line in studies and preventive activities.

Experiencing injustice via social media websites was not common and referred only to 2% of the respondents. In the discussed study, a rigorous degree of engagement in cyberbullying was employed, with a very narrow range indicating a significant victimisation potential of the experienced violence with high intensity, opera-

Table 1. Percentage distribution of engagement in traditional violence and cyberbullying and significance of differences on account of visible body damages and disabilities

	Never % ²³	Several times a year %	Several times a month %	Several times a week %	Body damages	Disabilities
Bullying - perpetration	86	11	2	2	Ni	Ni
Bullying - victimisation	82	12	0	6	p = ,006	p = ,004
Cyberbullying - perpetration	88	6	3	3	Ni	Ni
Cyberbullying - victimisation	89	8	1	1	p = ,01	p = ,004

p - significance level

ni - statistically insignificant

Table 2. The values of the chi-squared test with respect to the relation of roles in traditional bullying and cyberbullying

	cyberbullying - victimisation	cyberbullying - perpetration
traditional bullying - victimisation	p < ,0001 $\chi^2 = 322,6$; df = 9	p < ,0001 $\chi^2 = 193,5$; df = 9
traditional bullying - perpetration	p < ,0001 $\chi^2 = 372,7$; df = 9	p < ,0001 $\chi^2 = 95,2$; df = 9

p - level of significance, χ^2 - chi-square value, ni - statistically insignificant

df - number of degrees of freedom.

tionalsed as the selection of answers "Several times a month" or "Several times a week". It is worth nothing that there were many more persons involved in bullying and cyberbullying on lower levels of frequency - "several times a year" (approx. 11% in the case of

²³ In all tables in the article, the results are rounded to full percent, thus they do not always add up to 100%.

traditional bullying and victimisation and 6% and 8% respectively for cyberbullying and cyber-victimisation). Each of such situations may have serious effects that negatively impact various dimensions of functioning and experienced well-being.

Statistically significant values of chi-squared test were recorded for the relation between cyber-victimisation and problems with visible body damage or disability or a serious health problem (Table 1). Thus, such persons constitute a group that is most exposed both to traditional and Internet-mediated forms of violence. On the other hand, men were significantly more exposed to being victims – both in traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

As emphasised earlier, on-line self-presentation and appearance of users are currently considered important mediating factors that expose to victimisation via acts of electronic aggression. Image tends to be one of the dimensions related to the most frequent and most polarised social assessment. Fears related to this may constitute an important factor that influences initiation of specific activities aimed at improvement of on-line image (e. g. edition of photos to make one look better). With respect to some beliefs – fears related to the assessment of appearance by other people (Table 3), significant differences were observed between persons without disabilities and visible problems with appearance and the group of people with disabilities and/ or body damages, suffering from illnesses adversely impacting appearance.

In cases where differences were identified (with respect to fears: “I am stressed when I am aware that somebody is assessing my physical condition”, “I worry when people find faults in my appearance”, “When I meet new people I wonder what they think about my appearance”), their statistically greater intensity referred to the group of persons with disabilities. In the case of the group suffering from visible body damages, as compared to the group without such problems, also such fears were statistically significantly more intense (excluding the questionnaire item “I am stressed when I am aware that somebody is assessing my physical condition”).

Table 3. Scale of convictions pertaining to fears related to image assessment by other people and significance of differences on account of disability and diseases/damages affecting appearance

	Not at all %	A little bit %	Moderately %	A lot %	Greatly %	Appear- pear- ance ²⁴	Disa- bility ²⁵
I care what other people think about my appearance	14	29	39	16	2	Ni	Ni
I am stressed when I am aware that somebody is assessing my physical condition	17	27	29	20	7	,0001	,0004
I worry when people find faults in my appearance	26	28	24	18	4	Ni	,02
When I meet new people I wonder what they think about my appearance	24	26	27	16	6	,03	,03
I fear that others may notice my physical faults	31	27	25	11	7	,002	Ni
I think that opinions of others about my appearance are too important for me	44	18	18	12	8	Ni	Ni

p - significance level

ni - statistically insignificant

Analysis of the scale of editing activities (image improvement) with respect to photos posted on the Internet shows that the most frequent techniques used were filters changing the overall appearance of photos, regulation of photo brightness and removal of the red-eye effect. Seventeen percent of respondents frequently or always make changes to hide skin imperfections. Other editing procedures (Table 4) are used much less frequently and their frequent

²⁴ Significance of differences measured by chi-squared test among groups of persons indicating an illness or damages affecting physical appearance and other respondents (columns in Table 4 are marked in a similar manner).

²⁵ Significance of differences measured by chi-squared test among groups of persons indicating a disability or health conditions significantly affecting their life and other respondents (columns in Table 4 are marked in a similar manner).

use referred to 3 – 10% of respondents. However, if persons who sometimes or rarely improve their on-line image are to be included here, such results turn out to be much higher (e. g. in total 17% of respondents edit photos posted on social media websites in order to look thinner). Thus, the scale of activities improving overall appearance of the photo (e. g. colour, brightness, background) is greater than with respect to the activities directly targeted at the respondents' image (e. g. slimming).

Table 4. Popularity of photo editing techniques, improving the appearance of respondents and significance of differences on account of disability or illness/ body damages

Photo editing techniques	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %	Appearance	Disabilities
Use of filters to change the overall appearance of photos, e. g. changing colour to black and white, blurring or smoothing the image	25	17	23	26	8	Ni	Ni
Regulating the brightness of the photo (intensity of light and shadow)	27	19	23	24	7	Ni	,004
Removal of the red-eye effect	52	15	14	9	9	Ni	Ni
Making changes to hide imperfections (e. g. such as spots)	53	17	13	9	8	Ni	p = ,02
Editing or use of skin-smoothing apps	75	11	6	5	3	Ni	Ni
Highlighting facial features, e. g. cheekbones or colour or brightness of eyes	72	12	9	5	1	Ni	Ni
Making specific body parts look bigger or smaller	82	10	3	2	3	Ni	Ni
Making oneself look thinner	84	9	2	3	2	Ni	Ni
Teeth whitening	86	7	3	4	1	Ni	Ni
Making oneself look taller	90	4	3	2	1	Ni	,0001

p - significance level

ni - statistically insignificant

In a definite majority, no significant differences were observed between these groups and in cases where they occurred, greater scale of on-line image correcting activities (making changes to look bigger in the photo, to hide skin imperfections or to regulate the brightness of the photo) pertained to the group indicating a disability or a serious health problem affecting the appearance. However, on account of the small sample of respondents, such results are to be interpreted cautiously.

A question appears whether persons who intensely correct their image in the on-line context also undertake traditional activities (e. g. in order to accomplish the ideal figure). Krzysztof Puchalski²⁶ notices that health may be put in danger relatively often in order to accomplish attractive appearance (for example, every fifth adult person who put information about silhouette modelling to practice was aware of the fact that, at the same time, it might be detrimental to health). Such phenomenon constitutes a challenge in the area of health education and promotion of health at schools, implementation of tasks conducive to the conduct of a healthy lifestyle by young people and limiting the negative effects of socially popular models related to the desired appearance. It seems that in the case of persons strongly focused on their own image and having serious doubts with respect to being negatively assessed by others with respect to appearance, the potential consequences of negative cyberbullying-type behaviour on the part of other users of social media websites constitute a serious and real risk. This primarily relates to cyberbullying where the underlying cause is the appearance of victims or the victims' conviction that it had serious significance in such situation.

Recapitulation

Image-related cyberbullying among young adults is not a common phenomenon, which is also confirmed by other data; such be-

²⁶ K. Puchalski, *Internet a możliwości poprawy efektów edukacji zdrowotnej*, „Studia Edukacyjne” 2012, No. 23, p. 131.

haviour tends to reach its' peak in the period of adolescence (e. g. Smith, 2011). It is however clear – as shown in the study – that persons with disabilities and persons whose appearance was altered by disability experience it significantly more often. More frequent victimisation refers both to face-to-face aggression, as well as its' on-line version (cyberbullying). When analysing these results, it is worth remembering that they refer to students. In this age group, as indicated by the majority of studies, interpersonal peer violence is lower than in comparison to the earlier period, in particular adolescence (Pyżalski, 2012). This allows for assuming that many victims of peer violence at this stage had also experienced similar situations at earlier stages.

Special attention should be paid to on-line violence. In spite of the fact that the study shows its' relatively low scale, yet on account of the potential negative individual and social effects resulting from the modern significance of “digital self-presentation”, it is necessary to undertake further diagnostic and preventive activities²⁷, also on the level of work with the community of students.

Attractive physical appearance is one of the most significant components of self-presentation and may often turn to be the key to interpersonal success. Furthermore, the role of the media which nourish the obsessive dreams about ideal appearance is undoubtedly significant in the popularisation of physical attractiveness standards in the modern media world²⁸. Nevertheless, the mode of defining this standard tends to be varied, e. g. determined by the image of thin models from catwalks, but also the practice of ritualising purposeful body damages, e. g. scarification.

In the face of such data, the obtained result which shows that fear of assessment of physical appearance in persons with disabilities or body damages affecting appearance is significantly more

²⁷ S. Berne, A. Frisén, J. Kling, *Appearance-related cyberbullying: a qualitative investigation of characteristics, content, reasons, and effects*, “BodyImage” 2014, No. 11(4), pp. 527–533. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.08.006.

²⁸ N. Rumsey, *Psychological consequences of appearance dissatisfaction*. In: *International Congress of Paediatric Dentistry*, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, 2015.

frequent than in the case of the rest of the population, is not surprising. As shown by our study, this also refers to such dimensions as, e. g., “fear when meeting new people in relation to the fact of what they may think about my appearance” or “being stressed by the assessment of physical condition”. On-line self-presentation offers – thanks to the various options of technical modification of materials – possibilities of improving own image. As shown in our study, they are used quite commonly in the entire population of students, but some categories of such modifications are applied more frequently by persons from specific groups that were distinguished by us. Such differences primarily referred to persons with disabilities and pertained to more frequent editing with respect to the regulation of light, corrections of appearance imperfections or showing the person as bigger/ smaller. The differences showed here indicate the necessity of taking into account specific victimisation mechanisms for this group in the area of cyberbullying, along with special preventive activities addressed to this group, also at earlier stages of education. This is particularly important, as the trend of focusing on the physical appearance results in the fact that the process of building self-image on-line often acquires a risky nature. Self-presentation is replete with clear stimuli, which may easily attract the attention of cyberbullies, e. g. in the form of intensely negative, vulgar comments testing the borders of social standards, or naked photos. Such behaviour often leads to the accomplishment of goals and becomes the source of popularity, even though not necessarily the type of popularity that the person publishing the photo was hoping for. It forms a part of the catalogue of risky on-line behaviour, carrying a significant victimisation potential²⁹.

Special attention should be devoted to young people who suffer from visible body damages, disabilities or who have serious health

²⁹ S. Berne, A. Frisé, J. Kling, Appearance-related cyberbullying: a qualitative investigation of characteristics, content, reasons, and effects, “BodyImage” 2014, No. 11(4), pp. 527–533. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.08.006; M. R. Leary, R. M. Kowalski, Impression Management: A Literature Review and Two Component Model *Psychological Bulletin*, 1990.

issues. It is worth educating such persons, stimulating the awareness of building own on-line image and paving a path for proper stances of emotional resistance with respect to the assessment on the part of other people. It is interesting to note that certain researchers acknowledge that³⁰ many people with disabilities make positive integration of own disability with a positive self-concept and own image. Unfortunately, those who do not succeed, develop a negative self-image, at the same time sustaining serious consequences, e. g. of psychological and adjustment nature, which may be related to being prone to cyberbullying.

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³⁰ e.g.: J. M. Behel, B. D. Rybarczyk, *Physical Disability and Body Image in Adults*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia of Body Image and Human Appearance* 2012, pp. 644–649, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-384925-0.00101-2> [access: 16.02.2017].

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Educational and occupational choices of secondary school students, including with special educational needs, in the context of the state of career counselling

ABSTRACT: Joanna Kozielska, *Educational and occupational choices of secondary school students, including with special educational needs, in the context of the state of career counselling*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 135–152. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

The present paper presents the results of a research project delivered in the first half of 2016, which consisted in empirical examination of the way secondary school and upper secondary students in Gniezno plan their educational and vocational future. For the purpose of analysing the situation of the local labour market and its prospects for the group of respondents, the author surveyed secondary school students as they indirectly affect the job market since in a few years' time, they will enter the that market. The awareness of their plans affords predictions and thus preventing job market difficulties. The respondent groups consisted of the students of secondary schools, principals of secondary schools and major local employers. This paper focuses on students with special educational needs and the issues concerning the state of vocational education and young people's professional and educational choices in the light of the correlation between their planning strategies and the current needs of the local labour market.

KEY WORDS: Planning the educational and professional future; Career counselling; Labour market; Young people; Vocational education; Students with special educational needs

Educational and career choices at the time of continuous changes

Giving rise to a plethora of ambivalence and ambiguity and part of the modern life (along with uncertainty and the need to take incessant risks), the state of continuous change make individuals face numerous life- and career-affecting challenges¹. Transformed starting from 1989, the Polish job market forces a wide range of individuals to take numerous actions in order adapt to the new face of the job market. The once universal forms of career paths in Poland (now a state with a stable modern economy) as it had been prior to the transformation of its political system have been turned into an array of opportunities, concerns and career risks, as evidenced by the research projects by M. Piorunek², L. Myszkas-Strychalska³ et al.⁴

The awareness of local labour market conditions allows us to prepare to face such changes and constantly respond to them by adjusting the educational system to the needs of the job market and employers. By nature, such activities take multiple steps and are

¹ Z. Bauman, *Ponowoczesność jako źródło cierpień*. Warsaw. Wydawnictwo Sic!, Warsaw 2002; Z. Bauman, *Razem osobno*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2000; Z. Bauman, *Życie na przemiał*. Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2005; U. Beck, U. *Spółczesność ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw 2002; A. Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość. „Ja” i społeczeństwo w epoce późnej nowoczesności*. Warsaw 2001.

² M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004.

³ L. Myszkas-Strychalska, *Orientacje zawodowe młodzieży z zespołów szkół zawodowych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2016.

⁴ J. Kozielska, *Perspektywy i nowe rozwiązania w doradztwie zawodowym. Coaching jako narzędzie pracy doradców zawodowych w kontekście idei lifelong learningu*, *Studia Edukacyjne* No. 37, Poznań 2015; J. Kozielska, *Adaptational difficulties of Polish economic emigrants in the context of globalisation processes* *Culture – Society – Education* No. 1(11), Poznań 2017; A. Suchorab, *Wpływ zadań z zakresu orientacji i poradnictwa zawodowego realizowanych w szkole ponadgimnazjalnej na wybory edukacyjno-zawodowe studentów*, *Szkoła – Zawód – Praca*, 2012, No. 3; A. Suchorab, *Plany edukacyjno-zawodowe i zatrudnieniowe uczniów szkół zawodowych*, *Szkoła – Zawód – Praca*, 2015, No. 10.

time-intensive. However, they can help reduce many social problems such as unemployment and poverty. It also takes competent career counsellors to put this idea into practice.

The present paper provides an overview of the author's empirical verification of the process of planning educational and career futures as done by secondary and upper secondary school students of the Poviát of Gniezno. As part of examining the local job market and its perspectives, the survey groups included, among others, secondary school students with special educational needs (SEN). It is them who will enter the job market in just a few years' time and are now indirectly impacting its state. The awareness of their plans may allow us to predict and prevent situations that cause difficulties in the labour market. Some of the survey respondents were also upper secondary school students, the principals of post-secondary schools and major local employers. The project comprised four modules: I – Employer; I – Secondary school student; III – Upper secondary school student/graduate; IV – Principal of the high school⁵. Within this paper, I wish to focus primarily on junior

⁵ I. What are the educational and career plans of secondary school students of the Poviát of Gniezno, including with SEN? II. What is the local labour market situation like? III. What is the role of a secondary school career counsellor in choosing subsequent educational stage?

“PANEL: SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS”: 1. What is the social structure of secondary school students of the Poviát of Gniezno? (gender, place of residence, parents' education, average grades) 2. What are secondary school students' educational and career plans? Including SEN students? (Are they going to pursue further education? What kind of schools are they going to pick to pursue further education? What kind of programmes are they going to pick? What kind of career have they picked? Do secondary school students consider studying in other cities? What do they know and think about the professions in short supply within their region? 3. What is their opinion on professional advice at their schools? (Are they familiar with the range of educational opportunities in Gniezno? Whose assistance do they use in choosing a school? What criteria are crucial to their choosing a given school? What associations do they have with specific types of schools? What is their opinion on individual secondary schools in Gniezno? What are their definitions of “a good job”?

“PANEL: PROFESSIONALS” A STUDENT/GRADUATE OF AN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL 1. What is the social structure of students in terms of gender

secondary school students, including those with special educational needs.

The sample was selected at random due to the specific research subject⁶. The survey covered secondary school students (N = 486), of which 17% were SEN students (students with disabilities, or at risk of social maladjustment, or socially maladjusted students, or students without SEN certificates, without opinions from Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres, for whom the school delivers

and careers. 2. Do students feel prepared to begin professional careers matching their current field of training? 3. What are their greatest concerns when it comes to moving from the role of a student to a role of the employee? 4. Would they like to attend an internship, job placement or a course (free of charge) that would complement their professional skills and help them fare better in the job market? 5. What training sessions or courses would the respondents use? 6. Does the school have a career counsellor? 7. Would the respondents like to use a training course on writing job application documents (CVs, motivational letters) to prepare to seek employment? 8. Would the respondents attend an individual meeting with a career counsellor? SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION What are the needs of schools in terms of equipment/extra equipment? 2. What courses/training sessions would be useful to the vocational training teachers? 3. What courses/training sessions could be offered to the "final year" students to prepare them to enter the job market in an optimum way?

EMPLOYER A 1. What is the professional field represented by the respondent? 2. What equipment/machines/devices is/are used by professionals hired by businesses? 3. What is the number of staff members working in the business (administration/professionals)? 4. How does the employer describe the job situation in the Poviát of Gniezno? 5. Are the respondents going to hire any new staff members anytime soon? (within the coming 3 years) 6. How many people are they going to hire? 7. What positions/professional fields do they want to fill? 8. How are the business seeking/has sought staff members? 9. What is the respondents' opinion on the quality of vocational training among graduates of vocational schools? 10. What is the respondents' opinion on the quality of vocational training among graduates of technical high schools? 11. What knowledge and skills should a respondent's prospective staff member possess? 12. What training sessions/courses/internships should graduates or the students have completed while in training in order to perform their professional duties in a professional way in their new workplace? 13. What is the scope of the business's cooperation with vocational schools?

⁶ E. Babbie, *Badania społeczne w praktyce*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2005.

aid, sociotherapeutic, therapeutic, talent-development and other measures), upper secondary school students (N = 503), the principals of upper secondary schools (N = 6) and major job providers of the Poviát of Gniezno (N = 14) as well as career counsellors (N = 22).

The primary method employed within the project was that of diagnostic survey. A technique that finely fits the diagnostic survey method are survey questionnaires, used herein as a research tool. This project has also used the content analysis method⁷, with the content being traditional local press, both print and digital, and thematic studies provided by the Poviát Job Agency in Gniezno and other institutions.

Educational and career choices made by young people

The recurrent job market problems are not just problems of the adults, labour unions, economists and politicians. Over the past few years, they have become the crux of young people's problems. The adolescence is no longer a protective preparatory period, a moratorium of sorts; it has become a period when young people become emancipated in terms of labour market problems.

Education and work are the core elements that help individuals construct social profiles of their biographies and young people embark on diverse life paths typical of adults' lifestyles⁸. It is worth observing that the paradigm whereby an individual's following an available educational and vocational path warranted predictable work life in the domestic job market is no longer valid. The young people of today enter their adult lives under difficult market, social and economic conditions and face growing competitiveness and are expected to embrace career mobility and flexibility. Unsurprisingly,

⁷ K. Żegnałek, *Metody i techniki stosowane w badaniach pedagogicznych*, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna Towarzystwa Wiedzy Powszechnej w Warszawie, Warsaw 2008.

⁸ M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004b, p. 27.

over the past several years, we have observed a dynamic growth of interest in the subject of young people's educational and career choices. This situation is manifested in numerous research papers penned by, among others: A. Bańka, S. M. Kwiatkowski, A. Cybal-Michalska, M. Piorunek, E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, R. Parzęcki, A. Suchorab, E. Kasprzak, K. Klimkowska, A. Miś, Z. Wołk, A. Kargulowa, D. Kukła, E. Turska, I. Mandrzejewska-Smól, B. Wojtasik, A. Rajchel, J. Ambroży, D. Dziewulak, W. Duda et al, including ministerial reports and studies delivered by the Institute for Educational Research and Education Development Centre etc.

The survey among secondary students, the core part of this paper, was attended by 256 female and 230 male students (all of them final-year students), including 68 students with SEN, of which 40% were female students (27 people) and 60% were male students (41 individuals). The most active survey participants⁹ were the students of the secondary schools in Gniezno; the commitment in filling the questionnaires from the students of other secondary schools in the Poviát of Gniezno was low, as was the case with students of 2 private secondary schools in Gniezno. The vast majority of secondary school students (68.30%) involved in the survey were city dwellers; only one in three of them lived in the countryside (31.70%). The structure of respondents' parents' education varied greatly, with more than 50% of the fathers being graduates of vocational schools and technical schools. When it comes to mothers' education, many more of them have completed higher education (26% mothers vs. 14% fathers); a considerable number of mothers have completed vocational schools (every 3rd mother). Every 5th secondary school student does not know what kind of school their parents graduated from, which is concerning. The awareness of parents' education is the first stage in career counselling, or the pre-

⁹ The survey questionnaire was filled in at an IT lab, in the presence of the researcher and the school's guidance counsellor; not all of the students were sure of the category they belonged in – SEN/no SEN – the SEN section was filled in by the school's guidance counsellor after the students had completed their questionnaire sections.

liminary career orientation, aimed at inspiring student's interest in career life and educational choices made by the closest people around, not only parents, but also grandparents, siblings etc.

Average grades varied greatly among the student respondents. Most of them (almost 20%) had a grading average in the winter semester 2015/2016 between 3.5 and 4.0. Almost as numerous were the groups with averages of 3.00–3.50 and 4.0–4.5 (approx. 17.00% each). Every 5th student had an average of 4.50–5.00.

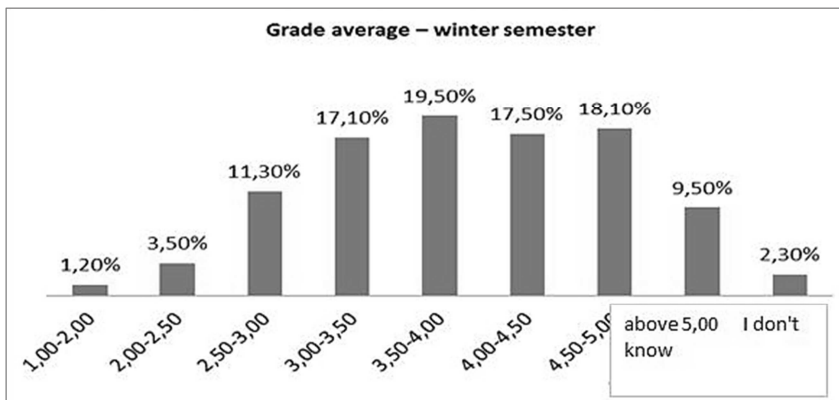


Fig. 1. Respondents' grading average

Source: Author's own research

15 individuals did not know where they would continue their education or did not intend to pursue further education, and close to 97% of respondents of the research sample were going to pursue further education. The category of special educational needs did not translate into the results. The secondary school students' had their plans primarily defined (figure 2). More than 50% of them stated that they were familiar with the range of educational and career opportunities but needed further advice on educational opportunities in the Poviát of Gniezno. Every 10th stated that they were not familiar at all

with educational and career opportunities in their city, with 37.40% saying that they were fully aware of the range of available educational and career opportunities. Interestingly enough, even the ones unfamiliar with the range of opportunities said that they have already chosen their prospective schools. The survey in question had been conducted half a year ago, before the students actually got the opportunity to pick their next schools. The comparison of the February survey and the data of the Poviát Administrative Bureau of Gniezno with the actual admission data (July) revealed that survey declarations reflected the actual choices made by secondary school graduates (43% of the graduates chose to continue at high schools of general education; 37% went to technical schools, and every 5th picked a vocational school). February declarations (figure 2) prompted Poviát authorities to reduce their admission quotas. Aware of the specific nature of the poviát job market and the fate of those graduating from high school of general education, a campaign entitled *Zawódówka jest OK* was held (*Vocational schools are OK*), which resulted in a higher number of secondary school graduates admitted into technical and vocational schools in the 2016/2017 admission season.

The February declarations showed that almost 40% of secondary school graduates planned to pick a high school of general education, with every 10th of them not knowing yet what type of programme they would pursue (the most popular were the humanities and defence programmes). Every third wanted to continue their education at a technical school, and only every 10th, at a vocational school. Educational and career choices among students with SEN were similar; however, more of them said they would pick technical and vocational schools rather than high schools of general education. 22% of them eventually picked vocational schools and just as many did high schools of general education, and every 2nd student would select a technical school (56%). The vast majority of those picking the more vocationally oriented schools (technical and vocational schools) were boys. Only 5% of them were girls (their share in the group of SEN students was higher – every 6th female chose vocational and technical schools).

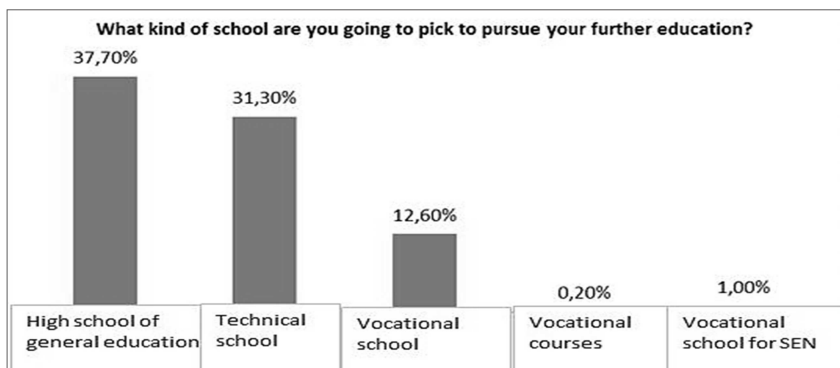


Fig. 2. Educational plans of secondary school students of the Poviato of Gniezno

Source: author's study

School choices are unrelated to respondents' parents' education; they do not reproduce their parents' life scripts or educational models; however, we can see that the respondents who pick high schools of general education wanted to eventually go to universities want to achieve a level of education higher than their parents did. Importantly, the students pick high schools of general education regardless of their grading average, which means that very good and very bad students equally often pick high schools of general education, which ends with A levels (technical and high schools of general education were picked by 78% students with SEN).

The students (with or without SEN) declaring they were going to continue their education in vocational and technical schools much more frequently (72%) were able to describe and name the profession of their choice, but some students picked professions for which training was not available at the schools they picked, e. g. psychologist, therapist, doctor, teacher, physician, lawyer, sports commentator etc. Additionally, the vast majority of them (64%) could not specify the skills needed to pursue the career they chose. Over 62% of the students could not point to professions sought after by the job market, even the local job market. They basically make their decisions haphazardly.

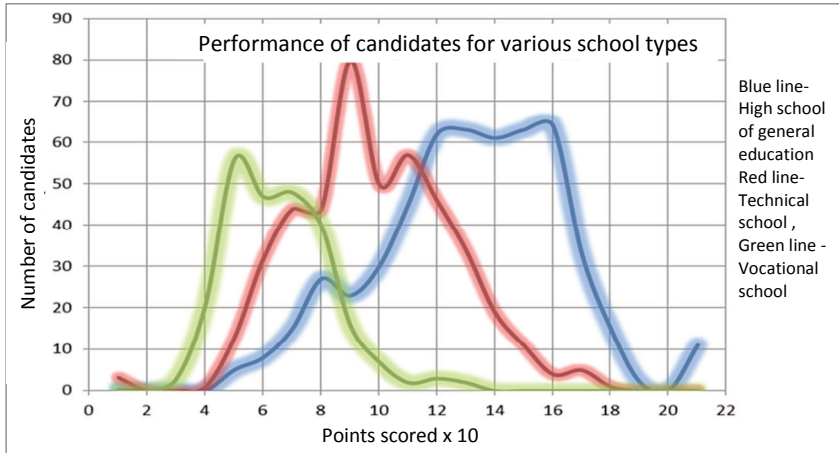


Fig. 3. Results of *gimnazjum* leaving exams (blue line-High school of general education red - Technical school, green - Vocational school)

Source: Author's own compilation based on the Poviata Administrative Bureau of Gniezno

The dilemmas related to career choices are connected to the fact that career counsellors' presence is poorly visible at the schools. The students claiming that the school has a career counsellor are as numerous as the number of students who say the schools have none or that they do not know if there are any. The students with SEN fared slightly better in this case - at 4 out of 13 schools who took part in the survey, SEN students attended meetings with career counsellors as part of the extra time provided by the principal). 67% of them knew that the school had a career counsellor. The statutory obligation and the inquiry into the schools taking part in the survey shows that all of the surveyed schools have an individual delivering career counselling activities (although their presence is often hardly visible) and activities defined under the School Career Counselling System. The low recognition of the role of the career counsellor is related to the fact that career counselling/career orientation activities are delivered incidentally, are not schedule-based and, in many cases, are delivered in the event of a teacher's absence. Furthermore, the con-

tent of the counselling meetings is not unequivocally recognized by the students as career counselling as such. For example, self-awareness classes provided by a career counsellor who is also guidance counsellor or teaches another subject, might have been thought of by the students as classes with the school's guidance counsellor rather than a dedicated career counsellor.

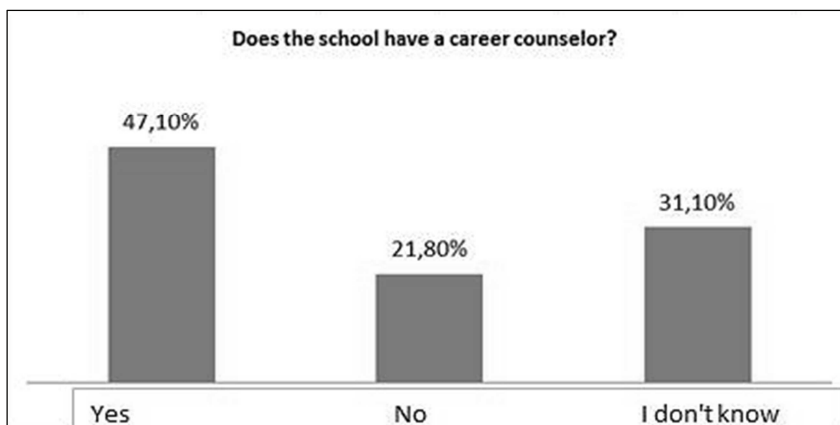


Fig. 4. Career counsellors at secondary schools

Source: author's study

Alarmingly, the vast majority of students (without SEN) (68%) point out that they have not used career counsellor's assistance and have not attended any career counselling classes. Almost 70% of the respondents (with or without SEN) declare they use some assistance in making their choice about their future schools and careers; 30% claim they are fully aware of this aspect. The significant ones contributing to their educational choices are mostly their parents (78.60%), followed by the Internet (31.30%), friends (28.40%) and other family members (25.50%), siblings (24.30%), career counsellors (17.50%), teachers (11.50%) and supervising teachers (8%). This part of the research project shows that parents play a significant role in

career counselling, which is why career counsellors should also work with them; after all it is them that young people ask for support. The parents might not be competent in providing career counselling; they might be ignorant of the career counsellor working at the school. If so, they will not refer their children to a career counsellor. Therefore, it is worth offering lectures and workshops for parents on how to assist children with their career choices.

Young people claim that their choices of schools are based on their interests, the fact that a given school will let them pursue a specific career and have a good position in the job market and the fact that they will be able to go to a university. As many researchers point out in their papers, the choice of a high school of general education followed by university studies is the response to the hard times and a way of postponing the decision about one's career¹⁰. Over 80% of the respondents declare that they choose a given school because it fits their interests (interestingly, almost 50% could not specify their interests and what they are good at). Almost half of the respondents say that what was decisive in their school choice was the fact that, upon graduating from the school, they could secure a decent job or go on to attend a university. Nearly every 5th respondent (with or without SEN) picked a given school because it was "nice" or the fact that it was close to their neighbourhood (21.80%). Almost half of the respondents could not explain which of the local vocational and technical schools and high school of general education they thought was best. Every 10th respondent was guided

¹⁰ M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004; J. Kozielska, *Perspektywy i nowe rozwiązania w doradztwie zawodowym. Coaching jako narzędzie pracy doradców zawodowych w kontekście idei lifelong learningu*, Studia Edukacyjne No. 37, 2015, Poznań 2015; J. Kozielska, *Adaptational difficulties of Polish economic emigrants in the context of globalisation processes Culture – Society – Education* No. 1(11), 2017 Poznań; A. Suchorab, *Wpływ zadań z zakresu orientacji i poradnictwa zawodowego realizowanych w szkole ponadgimnazjalnej na wybory edukacyjno-zawodowe studentów*, *Szkoła – Zawód – Praca*, 2012, No. 3; A. Suchorab, *Plany edukacyjno-zawodowe i zatrudnieniowe uczniów szkół zawodowych*, *Szkoła – Zawód – Praca*, 2015, No. 10.

by the fact that their friends were interested in a given school or they were already attending it, and every 20th person was convinced by their parents to make a given choice.

Secondary school students made their choices, as they put it themselves, "at random", without knowing the needs of the local job market, let alone regional and nationwide job markets. The list of industries identified as the ones with the largest growth potential and/or strategic industries for the Region of Wielkopolska and the rank of occupations and specialties lists 44 occupations in short supply. The vast majority of them are ones that require vocational or technical school background (24 occupations). The occupations identified as being in short supply within the Poviát of Gniezno are: administrators of computer systems; analysts, testers and IT system operators; concrete placers and steel fixers; car sheet metal workers; construction carpenters and joiners; financial and investment advisors; electrical mechanics and electricians; hairdressers; graphic designers; plumbers; mechanical engineers; waiters and bartenders; tractor drivers; construction site managers; EU project coordinators; tailors and clothing workers; cooks; car painters; doctors; building painters; machine and equipment mechanics; motor vehicle mechanics; plumbers/gas/HVAC fitters; masons; vocational training teachers; teachers of vocational subjects; boot makers; caregivers for the elderly or disabled persons; nurses; kitchen aids; floor layers; accounting and book-keeping staff; database designers and administrators; sales representatives; construction workers; wood workers and carpenters; farmers and breeders; chartered accountants; MIG/MAG welders; TIG welders; automation and robotics professionals; organization of production professionals; real estate market professionals; IT implementation professionals; chefs; upholsterers; electrical technicians; mechanical technicians; and plasterers. The vast majority of the occupations identified as being in short supply are occupations that require vocational or technical schooling. Thus, the choices made by the SEN students seem to fit in the nature of the local and regional job markets better.

Career counsellors and students with SEN

The state of career counselling is far from fine. Career counsellors in the Poviát of Gniezno (N-22) were asked if their schools had any SEN students. The vast majority said 'yes' (97%). Surprisingly, only 6 of them were members of the bodies responsible for the management of psychological and counselling support, thus at the organizational level, few of them contribute towards the counselling agenda. This is baffling as the activities related to career choices and planning students' ensuing education and training are some of the many kinds of psychological and counselling help. The nature of a career counsellor's work with individuals with, for instance, disabilities, should rest on the conviction that career life is a form of rehabilitation as individuals need to secure job, keep it and get promoted. It is an opportunity for them to be part of the community. Taking up a random or inappropriate career decision comes with serious consequences for those with disabilities. They are at risk of making futile efforts to gain vocational qualifications, which then do not result in them embarking on their careers. As a result, they might grow frustrated and give up on further occupational rehabilitation and professional life. Only 54% of career counsellors in the group in question have formal education, 8% were able to indicate more than 10 professions listed as being in short supply, and 94% of them rely on tests, although none of them had any psychometric training or valid certificates.

"A life and career project – a random project"

The strategies aimed at planning one's future make a vast theoretical domain. In a specific way, the strategies connect the realm of designing individual stages of one's educational and professional path to how these stages translate into social practice, i.e. the verification of preparatory assumptions in the course of the actions an

individual undertakes"¹¹. The strategies mentioned by M. Piorunek are as follows:

- Condensation strategy ('narrowing the field of vision');
- Additive strategy ('solving the jigsaw puzzle');
- Stochastic strategy ('choosing at random' or 'relying on others');
- The currency strategy, which might consist in postponing decisions ("we will sort it out as the time comes") or a passive strategy, the motto of which is "I don't see perspectives for myself";
- Security strategy ("a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush").

The first of the strategies, the condensation strategy, consists in a highly defined educational orientation and early crystallization of essential outlines of one's professional orientation (...). This situation is more often the case with those who are highly successful educationally and have high educational ambition¹². Another strategy, the additive strategy, is a manifestation of "mature educational orientation and fluid, unstable career orientation (...). For instance, an individual might clearly aspire to complete higher education, but they are not quite sure about a specific field. As they progress through their education, they come up with ever-new career ideas (...)"¹³. The stochastic strategy is one that is the result of 'vague' educational and career orientation (...). It applies to people who struggle to make a decision on their career"¹⁴. The security strategy is manifested by "a comparably mature career orientation, later on validated by the progressing educational orientation. In this case, the eventual decisions are made with respect of the biographical dimensions marked by the comparably lowest risk of failure"¹⁵.

¹¹ M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004b, p. 56.

¹² M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004b, p. 57.

¹³ M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004b, p. 58.

¹⁴ M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004b, p. 59.

¹⁵ M. Piorunek, *Projektowanie przyszłości edukacyjno-zawodowej w okresie adolescencji*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004b, p. 60.

Summary

In the light of the following research problems of this project: I. What are the educational and career plans of secondary school students of the Poviát of Gniezno, including with SEN? II. What is the local labour market situation like? III. What is the role of the secondary school career counsellor in choosing subsequent educational stage? we may arguably conclude that the vast majority of the respondents are going to continue their education at high schools of generational education, with SEN students pointing to technical and vocational schools more frequently than their schoolmates without SEN. Educational choices and, resultantly, career choices among secondary school students of the survey group, including SEN students, seem to rest on the stochastic and security strategies. In planning their future, young people seem to rely on others' opinions and current trends (annual high school ranks; when it comes to the popularity of vocations, the 3 most prevalent were: an economist, a hairdresser, construction industry and mechanics/mechatronics careers, the usual choices among secondary school students over the past few years), which unfortunately do not fit in the local, or regional, job market, which makes it hard to optimize the trends even within the local dimension. They make their decisions without knowing the range of available educational opportunities, without self-knowledge (strength, weaknesses and interests) and without knowing the nature of the regional and the local job markets. What is not quite optimistic in this light is the state of career counselling, with over half of career counsellors having no formal training and real impact on the frequency and the programme of vocational guidance activities. Unsurprisingly, the parents play a decisive role in helping their children choose their occupation. SEN students' educational and vocational choices seem to fit in the needs of the job market better. Is it the result of career counselling, which is delivered to those students most frequently, or the result of the stereotype saying that "challenged students/graduates make for perfect candidates for vocational schools", which the respondents, i.e. sec-

ondary school students, view as the schools for the weaker and less ambitious ones. This is a highly misguided view since, as observed by S.M. Kwiatkowski, vocational and technical education is full of challenges and is difficult and demanding – the students need to study Polish, maths and numerous vocational subjects and do internships.

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Binary and Ternary Relation between Participants of the Diagnostic and Therapeutic Process in Speech-language Pathology

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The article discusses the problem of the main binary relation in speech-language therapist (therapist-patient) and the interrelated ternary relationship (speech-language therapist-patient-family/carer), which should be addressed with respect to dialogue personalization, respecting the autonomy of each participant in speech-language therapy as well as the specificity of the primary group (family) and secondary (organizational, contractual). The sequence of appropriate interactions, that is the interactions of the main actors of the diagnostic and therapeutic process, can transform into a lasting relationship and thereby influence the progress in speech-language therapy and the quality of the patient's life, if personal contacts and utterances are characterised by mutual kindness, respect and willingness to work together in partnership.

KEY WORDS: speech-language therapist, patient, family, carer, binary relation, ternary relation

Introduction

Civilisational changes and the changing model of social and cultural life motivate the transformations of objectives and role of speech therapy in the contemporary world. It is a science which deals with the linguistic image of the world and, in a specific manner, the biological conditions of language and linguistic behaviour¹. Different approaches to speech therapy, treated as a multi-, inter- or transdisciplinary science², results from its subject matter and from the necessity to involve specialists from other fields in the care of patients with speech disorders, among others: psychologists, educators, SI therapists, doctors (audiologists, orthodontists, neurologists, neurosurgeons, phonists, psychiatrists), physiotherapists, preschool educators and teachers of early school education. They are an important link in identifying patients in need of speech therapy and can provide the necessary expertise and additional support in the treatment of speech disorders. The most significant influence on the speech therapy procedure is also exerted by persons who are constantly taking care of the patient and accompanying him/her in everyday activities: family members (e. g. parents, spouses, children, grandchildren) or specialist carers of dependent patients.

The assistance that takes into account the multifaceted needs of the patient refers to the sphere of linguistic behaviours viewed from the individual's perspective and forming a personal individuality, as well as linguistic interactions, which pertain to behaviours that build up each – even the smallest – community³, i.e. a group of peo-

¹ S. Grabias, *Teoria zaburzeń mowy. Perspektywy badań, typologie zaburzeń, procedury postępowania logopedycznego*, [in:] *Logopedia. Teoria zaburzeń mowy*, red. S. Grabias, M. Kurkowski, Wyd. UMCS, Lublin 2014, p. 32.

² Cf. S. Michalik, *Transdyscyplinarność logopedii – między metodologiczną koniecznością a teoretyczną utopią*, [in:] *Metodologia badań logopedycznych z perspektywy teorii i praktyki*, eds. S. Milewski, E. Czaplewska, Harmonia Universalis, Gdańsk 2015, pp. 32–46.

³ S. Grabias, *Teoria zaburzeń mowy. Perspektywy badań, typologie zaburzeń, procedury postępowania logopedycznego*, [in:] *Logopedia. Teoria zaburzeń mowy*, eds. S. Grabias, M. Kurkowski, Wyd. UMCS, Lublin 2014, p. 17.

ple connected by various types of relations. In the course of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, the interaction should mainly be carried out through a binary relation between the patient (individuality) and speech therapist (a specialist in the subject, a therapist of speech disorders). From the very first meeting, building the bond should be based on a dialogue⁴, mutual respect, recognition of the autonomy of the other, and mutual authenticity. This is facilitated by a friendly atmosphere and proper organisation of meetings, taking into account the individual needs and limitations of both parties. However, a significant percentage of speech therapy patients are children and adults in need of care, which is why one often observes the patient-therapist binary relation to be transformed into a ternary system, namely: patient-therapist-family/carer relation. In every case, maintaining proper relations, i.e. activities that the subject initiates or undertakes, which s/he undergoes and whose effects s/he receives⁵, requires the application of an appropriate motivation strategy and involvement in ongoing activities. The sequence of proper interactions, i.e. the interaction between the main actors in the diagnostic and therapeutic process, may be transformed into a lasting relationship, and thus influence the progress of speech disorder treatment and individual's functioning on a daily basis.

Knowledge about the cooperation between the speech therapist and the patient along with his/her immediate environment is still insufficient⁶ and requires more in-depth studies. The relations of the participants in the diagnostic and therapeutic process are primarily related to the overriding practical goal of speech therapy, i.e. eliminating speech disorders and improving the process of linguistic

⁴ Cf. M. Kaźmierczak, *Dialogiczna relacja logopedy i pacjenta*, [in:] *Problemy badawcze i diagnostyczne w logopedii*, eds. I. Jaros, R. Gliwa, Wydawnictwo UŁ, Łódź 2016, pp. 9-17.

⁵ M. Gogacz, *Człowiek i jego relacje (materiały do filozofii człowieka)*, ATK, Warszawa 1985, p. 33.

⁶ A. Banaszekiewicz, A. Walencik-Topiłko, *Model współpracy logopedy z otoczeniem pacjenta – założenia teoretyczne i rozwiązania praktyczne*, [in:] *Terapia logopedyczna*, ed. D. Baczała, J. Bleszyński, Wyd. Nauk. UMK, Toruń 2014, p. 86.

interaction, and achieving it depends on the patient's abilities, his/her cognitive activity, and professionalism of the speech therapist⁷. Less often and to a lesser extent is attention paid to the value of the meeting itself between people who thus fulfil their need to be in company and contact with others, and thanks to mutual personal relations, they can crystallize their individual identities and pursue their own fulfilment in dialogue and through dialogue.

Initiation of the speech therapist-patient relationship

According to the dialogical principle, human constitutes him/herself through the encounter with *Thou* (symmetrical relation – M. Buber), in relation to *Other* (asymmetrical relation – E. Levinas), but also to the surrounding reality⁸. Such a relationship is connected with a communion of actions and attitudes (including co-existence, co-feeling, co-cognition), in which the dignity of each participant in the dialogical situation is respected⁹. Personal relation excludes reification of a human being, domination or subordination of any of the parties to the dialogue¹⁰, therefore it constitutes something more than just the transmission of information (transmission and information model of communication), verbal transmission or exercise the remembered content.

During the meeting, even before verbal contact is initiated, the patient and speech therapist get used to the presence of the newly

⁷ M. Sochoń, E. Krajewska-Kulak, J. Śmigielska-Kuzia, *Oczekiwania rodziców dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym wobec logopedy*, „Pielęgniarstwo i Zdrowie Publiczne” 2016, No. 2, p. 110.

⁸ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Historia filozofii XX wieku*. Nurty, vol. 2 *Neokantyzm, filozofia egzystencji, filozofia dialogu*, Wyd. Znak, Kraków 2009, p. 506 and others.

⁹ B. Kiereś, *Współczesna pedagogika a problem godności człowieka*, [in:] *Personalistyczny wymiar filozofii wychowania*, eds. A. Szudra, K. Uzar, Wyd. KUL Lublin 2009, p. 188.

¹⁰ W. Chudy, *Pedagogia godności. Elementy etyki pedagogicznej*, Wyd. KUL, Lublin 2009, pp. 209–213.

met person, get used to each other, and the concern about the newly-established relationship becomes an important task for both parties. This can happen if none of the participants perceives the other as a threat, if they trust each other and feel each other's good intentions: the patient sees the speech therapist's kindness and willingness to help, and the speech therapist – the patient's readiness to (co-)work on the speech disorders. Different non-verbal and verbal behaviours are considered manifestations of the addresser's intentions; they serve to negotiate and build meanings in interaction, including the expression of emotions or mental and communicative needs of the dialogue participants. In speech therapy, different elements of the code used by the patients may be disturbed and their interpretation by the therapist may be hindered.

Experiences from the previous speech therapy treatment always have an impact on establishing new relations – when they were disturbed or took a form that ignored the patient's subjectivity (e. g. the need for the conscious patient to passively submit him- or herself to mechanical actions or authoritative decisions of the speech therapist)¹¹, they cause his/her mistrust and create a distance that needs to be gradually eliminated. When a speech therapist interacts with a patient and opens up to the same influence, a relationship of kindness occurs between them, which excludes absolute domination, aggression or destructive actions. A reference as a basis for human relations, resulting from the existence of each entity, is expressed in mutual respect and trust. Participants of a real dialogue in speech therapy are focused on counteracting uniformity and maximizing individual development. It is connected with perceiving the patient as an individual, an autonomous being, which allows to avoid relativism and authoritarianism.

¹¹ T. Szasz, M. H. Hollender called these types of patient-doctor interaction: management-collaboration and activity-passivity, whereas E. and L. Emanuel described them as informative and paternalistic; J. Barański, *Interakcja lekarz-pacjent*, [in:] *Zdrowie i choroba. Wybrane problemy socjologii medycyny*, red. J. Barański, W. Piątkowski, Wyd. Atut, Wrocław 2002, p. 159; A. Kowalska i in., *Etyczne aspekty komunikacji pacjent – lekarz*, „Medycyna Ogólna” 2010, No. 16, p. 428.

Moreover, the therapist is not just a passive listener or instructor, but also a committed partner who assumes an accepting attitude in interaction. To do this, s/he must first have a well-established individual identity, be open to new challenges and be open to others. Because of the epistemic authority (based on competences) and deontic solidarity (taking a leading role in achieving a common goal)¹², speech therapists are considered to be the cause of an asymmetrical relationship, through which and thanks to which the quality of linguistic behaviour, among other things, can be improved. In the patient, what is mainly sought for are the effects of the measures taken, but reciprocity implies that the interaction can also be initiated by the patient if s/he is not subject to passive therapy. Co-participation (T. Szasz, M. H. Hollender), or in other words joint consultation (E. and L. Emanuel)¹³, is characterized by the fact that the specialist clearly presents possible strategies of conduct, actively listens to the patient's comments, advises him/her and discusses each stage of work before developing the therapy programme. Thanks to partnership and mutual, two-way communication, the patient is more motivated to achieve the set goals, of which s/he is aware; s/he is more clearly engaged in individualised therapy, more often initiating dialogue and action, because s/he knows what to expect during the next meetings. S/he also accepts co-responsibility for the final effects of the therapeutic process.

The very diagnostic and therapeutic procedure is organized by the speech therapist him- or herself who, when making decisions about its form, takes into account the type of speech disorder diagnosed, the age of the patient, his or her family and legal situation, psychophysical condition, etc. Due to the patient's negative experiences or fears, the first meetings may require the presence of a par-

¹² J. M. Bocheński, *Co to jest autorytet?*, [in:] J. M. Bocheński, *Logika i filozofia. Wybór pism*, translated and collected by J. Parys, Warszawa 1993, pp. 242, 293.

¹³ J. Barański, *Interakcja lekarz-pacjent*, [in:] *Zdrowie i choroba. Wybrane problemy socjologii medycyny*, eds. J. Barański, W. Piątkowski, Wyd. Atut, Wrocław 2002, p. 161; A. Kowalska and others, *Etyczne aspekty komunikacji pacjent – lekarz*, „*Medycyna Ogólna*” 2010, No. 16, p. 428.

ent/carer (in a preschool institution – a group mate or a teacher) or even the active participation of a third person in the exercises. When it is necessary to have a third participant (parent, grandfather, spouse, nurse, guardian, etc.), it is necessary to define his/her tasks and role, to make him or her aware of his/her co-responsibility for the course of therapy and the patient's communication. The basis of the new relation is not a simple synthesis of the individual and the social. It is necessary to maintain the subjectivity of each person, as well as the specificity of primary (family) and secondary groups (of an organisational or contractual nature). In the case of independent patients, with time the parent/carer gradually reduces his or her activity during therapy, becomes an observer or, in consultation with the speech therapist and the child/charge, partially or completely resigns from his or her attendance in the office.

Respecting the autonomy of individuals and the distinctiveness of the primary group requires the speech therapist to respect different standards, patterns of conduct and behaviour of the patient and his or her family. However, when building a ternary relationship, one should also take into account the subjectivity of the speech therapist or specialist tutor, their values and principles. Only if cultural pluralism is taken into account and the accepted norms of linguistic and cultural interaction are respected can support and recognition strategies be transformed into sincere, genuine relations, providing a solid basis for cooperation, which is one of the teleological assumptions of the diagnostic and therapeutic process in speech therapy.

Thus, mutual kindness, acceptance of the subjects in the diagnostic and therapeutic process in speech therapy, results from the very presence of other people, the sense of co-responsibility for the other person. The willingness to know requires mutual openness to each other and faith in the success of the actions taken, which can be achieved thanks to the trust that people have in each other. Personal relations in the social dimension, i.e. focusing on oneself and mutual interactions between community members, are characterized by social support, both in the emotional and evaluative dimension (the

significance of an individual within a group), in the instrumental one (providing assistance, rendering services), and also in the informative one (advice, data and message transfer)¹⁴. Adequate support, resulting from signals and messages enabling people to believe that they are surrounded by friendly people and care in terms of speech disorders, contributes to the normalisation of family life, psychosocial development of the patient, and improvement of the quality of his/her daily linguistic behaviours.

Relations in linguistic interaction

According to philosophers of dialogue, building a personal relationship between I-Thou/Other during a meeting relates to the category of good. However, it was Hans-Georg Gadamer who took upon himself to rehabilitate the cognitive sphere in dialogue and stressed the unity of truth and goodness, logos and ethos¹⁵. Dialogue, understood as a conversation, can be considered as a kind of bridge between unrecognizable entities. The verbal message is important because it connects interlocutors who use the same language and function in a common tradition, but refrain from striving for uniformity and assimilation of their interlocutor. The verbalization and exchange of thoughts and feelings, as well as the confrontation of opinions in dialogue takes place in a dynamic way; it constitutes a result of the manifestation of interlocutors' personalities, abilities and their psychophysical condition, and also depends on external circumstances. Seeing *Thou/Other* as an unrecognisable being excludes objectification and reducing the individual to merely his or her representation. The principles of co-functioning concern both the emerging relation and its impact on speech therapy, the

¹⁴ K. Kmieciak-Baran, *Skala wsparcia społecznego. Teoria i właściwości psychometryczne*, „Przegląd Psychologiczny” 1995, vol. 38, No. 1, p. 202.

¹⁵ P. Sznajder, *Logos wyłaniający się z rozmowy. Inny a prawda w dialogu w filozofii Hansa-Georga Gadamera*, „Estetyka i Krytyka” 2012, No. 2, p. 197.

reference of each of the actors to themselves and to the interlocutor, but also to the linguistic interaction.

Reciprocity requires authenticity of utterance, consistency of verbal messages with body language and facial expressions. Choosing a communicate that is adequate to the therapeutic situation allows to take responsibility for one's words as well as a lack of any utterance, which gives time to decide whether or not to answer a question or respond to a contact initiated by another person. Left to the patient, the choice concerning the moment of undertaking the conversation with the therapist is an expression of respect for the interlocutor and for oneself, understanding the communication difficulties not only in the physical, but also psychological and emotional sphere. The responsible exercise of freedom, emphasised in dialogue personalism, requires empathy, understanding and acceptance of the interlocutor's personality, thanks to which a bond can be formed between the therapist and the patient, a certain alliance, which facilitates achieving subsequent goals related to the improvement of the quality of linguistic interaction. Mutual trust is also fostered by establishing clear rules accepted by both parties which form the basis for organizing the meetings. Such transparency is important in order to ensure informed and active participation in therapy¹⁶.

A genuine dialogue requires accepting the need to exchange the roles of the addresser-recipient of a message. In a conversation, it is the addresser who decides what truth he conveys about him- or herself and the world, to what extent s/he can afford to engage in a relation with another person. Thanks to the conversation, there occurs a manifestation of one's own desires, but also an exchange of thoughts with respect to the different opinion and attitude of the other person. In an interpersonal relation, language mediates in building the representation of another person, it becomes a tool of

¹⁶ G. Jastrzębowska, O. Pęc-Pękała, *Metodyka ogólna diagnozy i terapii logopedycznej*, [in:] *Logopedia. Pytania i odpowiedzi*, eds. G. Jastrzębowska i T. Gałkowski, Wyd. UO, Opole 2003, p. 327.

understanding and rapport, which requires exceeding one's own horizon of cognition, opening to another point of view, getting rid of prejudices without resigning from one's own position or wanting to dominate the interlocutor, which would mean introducing a subjective relationship. The assumption of linguistic interaction is not to fully recognize the other person and eliminate differences between the participants of the conversation. Although in the speech therapy dialogue the relation of cognition results from affirming the other person, it refers to the system of *I-It* and *phronesis*¹⁷, practical wisdom of the subject, i.e. the form and content of the linguistic and extra-linguistic message.

Nevertheless, the dialogue is not a simple conversation where participants focus on technical skills. The art of dialogue is a search for original ways of establishing interpersonal contacts, leading to the transformation of interactions, including the increase in internal motivation to work on speech disorders and the willingness to talk. Thanks to trust laid in the authority and support for the patient's natural potential, even in an asymmetrical dialogue, the work in the speech therapy room is focused mainly on the development of the person, and not just on the therapy programme, which often requires critical reflection, verification, and adaptation to the needs in the particular moment. In a therapeutic situation, it is difficult to describe in detail and predict the course of the dialogue. The reflective (self-)consciousness of the speech therapist and the patient accounts for the unpredictability of the answers given, and allows for the problematic nature of the occurring or provoked communication situations, in which what may emerge are ambiguous or residual statements as well as understatements, characteristic of living speech.

Mutual respect and partnership are also required in the relations between the speech therapist and the participants of speech therapies and diagnoses who play a supporting, additional role. The

¹⁷ Arystoteles, *Etyka nikomachejska*, transl. D. Gromska, PWN, Warszawa 1982, 1140 a 24-1142 b 31.

support provided to the patient by his or her family results from the attitude of the closest environment to the individual and constitutes an expression of ongoing relations, not occasional actions, taken in random situations. Especially after the therapy comes to an end, the parent becomes the main partner in the dialogue with the speech therapist, with whom s/he discusses the course of exercises, the patient's progress or tasks to work on at home, and often shares his or her observations on the everyday life of the child. If the young patient is present but does not actively participate in the conversation, he or she must not be objectified in any way.

In the course of speech therapy, it is important to satisfy the emotional needs of the patient and for the family to perform emotional and social functions. This can be done by spontaneously demonstrating an interest in communication interaction on a daily basis, as well as by providing a protective and supportive function through remedial action or intervention in an exceptional situation¹⁸, such as the diagnosis of a speech disorder and the need for speech therapy. Satisfying the needs for closeness, bonds or interest gives the patient a sense of security and support. Therefore, the quality of the ternary family-speech therapist-patient relation depends to a large extent on the attitudes not only of the therapist, but also of the relatives, who themselves need support in the new situation.

Parents adopt different attitudes towards their child: positive (acceptance, autonomy) or negative (rejection, excessive demands, excessive protection, inconsistency)¹⁹. Because of their own experiences and world views, they exhibit various approaches to the therapy of speech disorders offered to children: they either perceive it from the perspective of their own childhood experiences, or they are sceptical and only want to have the sense of undertaking a remedial

¹⁸ G. Filipiak, *Funkcja wsparcia społecznego w rodzinie*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny” 1999, Annals XI, p. 135.

¹⁹ M. Plopa, *Więzi w małżeństwie i rodzinie. Metody badań*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2005, pp. 235–238.

action, because they have never met a speech and voice therapist, or are open and willing to cooperate, as in the case of any other specialist child consultation, or they ignore the recommendations and fail to refer to the speech therapist. Already during the first contact, the therapist shall remember that each member of the primary group comes with set goals, expectations and beliefs, which are based on the available knowledge about speech disorders and speech therapy, with the attitude towards the therapist resulting from the belief about the role and tasks of the patient. Divergent expectations and assumptions on the part of the speech therapist on the one hand, and the patient and parent on the other, in relation to therapy may make it particularly difficult to establish a true ternary relation at the beginning; however, it is worth taking this effort. Parents of young patients play an extremely important supporting role, but they are also a valuable source of information, decide which intimate details of the patient's life and health condition to reveal, become the main recipients of information and diagnostic function messages, often also persuasive, whose aim is to introduce desirable changes in the child's approach. They are responsible for performing exercises at home, eliminating habits that have a negative impact on speech, which sometimes requires modification of the behaviour and attitudes of all members of the household. Partnership, as the basis of the relationship between the speech therapist and the parent, becomes one of the most important factors determining the effects of speech therapies on young patients²⁰.

In the family, there are first and foremost real relationships, such as friendship, kindness, trust, faith in others and acceptance. They can also appear in the speech therapy practice, as they do not depend on decision or knowledge. However, in a group of organisational character, it happens that real relations are dominated by

²⁰ M. Sochoń, E. Krajewska-Kułak, J. Śmigielska-Kuzia, *Oczekiwania rodziców dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym wobec logopedy*, „Pielęgniarstwo i Zdrowie Publiczne” 2016, No. 2, p. 114; K. Węsierska, *Profilaktyka logopedyczna w praktyce edukacyjnej*, vol. 1, ed. K. Węsierska, Wyd. UŚ, Katowice 2012, p. 41.

mental ones, i.e. taking place between people and their creations, among others, conversations and ideologies²¹. The activities undertaken by the speech therapist are a part of the system activity of the network of aid institutions employing specialists, including speech and voice therapists. Reducing a person solely to the role of a patient, customer or supplicant only focuses the speech therapy on a speech disorder (*It*), and not on a patient as a person with a speech disorder (*Thou/Other*).

No less important is the relationship of the speech therapist with the caregiver who professionally deals with a patient who is not fully independent. Specialized caregivers represent institutions providing temporary assistance, in specific cases and within the specified scope²²; therefore, they are generally less emotionally involved, expecting primarily instruction and professional advice on the work at hand to eliminate or limit the disorder. However, this professional group is not only expected to provide professional help and reliable information on the course of treatment, the effectiveness of the measures and treatments applied, and on the progress in (re)education of speech. Although their perception of the disease and the related speech disorders is different than the family's, specialised staff should also be characterised by empathy, understanding and provide the patient with safety and comfort of everyday life. The very presence of another person generates the need to manifest emotions connected with the therapy – at the beginning often negative, but over time in many cases a desire arises in the patient to initiate positive contacts, also verbal.

The problem of cooperation between a speech therapist on the one hand and a patient, their family or carer on the other shall be resolved in dialogue and through dialogue. However, due to their knowledge and authority, the family/carer and the speech therapist

²¹ M. Gogacz, *Człowiek i jego relacje (materiały do filozofii człowieka)*, Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, Warszawa 1985, p. 133.

²² G. Filipiak, *Funkcja wsparcia społecznego w rodzinie*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny” 1999, Annals XI, p. 133.

often discuss the problematic issues among themselves and make key decisions aimed at the patient's well-being. If in the ternary system the authority is used to exert pressure and the patient is only expected to obey and submit to the imposed strategy, it is difficult to assume good interpersonal relations; similarly, in a situation where the therapist expects absolute adaptation and humble implementation of the imposed action plan. The change from the adaptation paradigm to the subjective therapy paradigm enables to define the role and place of each person in the organized community, a reasonable and consistent division of tasks, as well as the emergence of a real dialogue.

Conclusions

The activities undertaken in the diagnostic and therapeutic process are a response to irregularities in linguistic communication, the aetiology of which should be sought in the biological, psychological and social conditions of speech. The overriding practical goal of speech therapy is to extinguish, reduce or eliminate problems related to the observed disorders of linguistic interaction. The activities are indicated by standards of conduct and the final form of each stage is adjusted individually to each particular patient with a speech disorder.

The emergence of relationships resulting from interpersonal contacts can be considered as a constitutive component of speech therapy, especially in the face of today's social contacts of a transient and impersonal nature. Sensitivity of both the family/carer and the speech therapist to the patient's needs, supporting him/her during therapy, taking into account his or her limitations, is not only a matter of striving for a norm, i.e. a set of features, competences and skills which should be available to him/her at a given age. The principle of individualisation²³ applied in speech therapy requires

²³ G. Jastrzębowska, O. Pęc-Pękała, *Metodyka ogólna diagnozy i terapii logopedycznej*, [in:] *Logopedia. Pytania i odpowiedzi*, eds. G. Jastrzębowska, T. Gałkowski, Wyd. UO, Opole 2003, p. 327.

empathy and greater care to adapt strategies or stages of work to the patient's abilities, which excludes thoughtless pursuit of the assumed goal of speech therapy.

In mutual contacts, the patient needs help and support, the family needs understanding, and the speech therapist needs the best possible action based on his or her competences and professional experience. In the ternary system, effective and harmonious communication facilitates the division of tasks in accordance with the capabilities and needs of each entity, allows for the clarification of the principles of cooperation to be accepted by all participants of the diagnostic and therapeutic process, and can significantly influence the subsequent coordination of procedures and verification of effects.

The methods of teacher-centred instruction, verification and control, known from lessons at school and expressed by the school's scale of assessment, should be replaced by participation, cooperation, (self)control and even (self)evaluation of a conscious patient who decides about his or her own activity and takes responsibility for the effects of their own speech therapy. In situations of internal conflict (the patient does not want to attend therapy, but knows that s/he should) or dispute with the family/carer, there may occur a denial of the patient's own feelings and submission to the stronger, i.e. the transfer of the situation of coercion (e. g. compulsory education/learning, the need to submit to the superior) to speech therapy, which in the case of conscious patients should be based on the principle of voluntary participation.

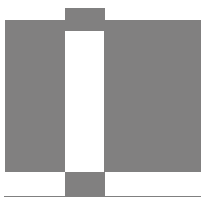
Reflection on relations in speech therapy indicates the necessity of theoretical justifications of empirical research, but due to the difference and autonomy of each of the subjects, it is impossible to determine a single paradigm according to which cooperation related to the correction of speech disorders can be designed. It should be noted, however, that humanization of speech therapy results from treating the patient as a person, which requires making attempts to counteract disturbed interpersonal relations and non-normative linguistic behaviour. Such proposals may be considered to include a shift towards the philosophical and anthropological

trends of the 20th and 21st centuries, including the existential and dialectic trend, or personalism, understood as an attitude oriented towards respect for another person who – (self)conscious and free in decisions – can fulfil him- or herself. What is more, it is important to equip future speech therapists already in the course of professional training of students with communication competences that take into account the principles of real dialogue and linguistic interaction, which are part of subjective interpersonal relations. With regard to these assumptions, the tools, technical or financial measures, which are used during the specialist training and later in the diagnosis and therapy of speech therapy, must be given a secondary, auxiliary role, although in general awareness they are assigned a greater meaning than they actually have.

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Ruling on the Beed for Special Education as the Basic Document for Organising Conditions for Special Education

ABSTRACT: Mariusz Wielebski, *Ruling on the Beed for Special Education as the Basic Document for Organising Condi-tions for Special Education*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 171-188. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

Parents who have children with intellectual disability have many difficulties in getting help for their children. The first step is collecting documents, the second – delivering them to a psychological and educational consultancy centre, the third – waiting for the decision, the fourth – submitting them to school, and finally, getting help. My role is try and help them and other people. I show, how important is the cooperation between parents, teachers, and specialists. If this stage is well organized, we do not have any problems and everything is easy and takes little time.

MAIN WORDS: decision, disability, special educational needs, special education

KEY WORDS: ruling, disability, special educational needs, special education

Introduction

In the Polish system of education, special education may currently be introduced not only in special schools (kindergartens, institutions), but also in integrated institutions and as part of inclusive

education¹. Due to the varying capabilities of these institutions (such as the preparation of the teachers to support pupils with special educational needs), public psychological and educational consulting centres, which issue rulings on special educational needs, are now facing a considerable challenge. The opinion is the basic document which makes it possible to organise the conditions for special education in the school selected for a particular pupil. In this article, I would like to include some reflections on creating such a document and its functioning, presented from the perspective of the confrontation of the assumptions behind the theory of special education, current legal framework and consulting practice. Parents or legal guardians of a child address a psychological and educational consultancy centre to request “the ruling”. Sometimes they do not realise what the opinion is supposed to refer to. It’s hardly surprising, as the support system for children with disabilities and for their families is rather complex in Poland². The parents don’t know that public psychological and educational consultancy centres offer rulings on various issues, whose list is defined in the educational law³.

¹ I. Chrzanowska, *Pedagogika specjalna. Od tradycji do współczesności*, Impuls, Cracow 2015; G. Szumski, *Integracyjne kształcenie niepełnosprawnych*. Wyd. APS i PWN, Warsaw 2013.

² G. Mikołajczyk-Lerman, *Między wykluczeniem a integracją – realizacja praw dziecka niepełnosprawnego i jego rodziny. Analiza socjologiczna*, Wydawnictwo UŁ, Łódź 2013; J. Pyżalski, D. Podgórska-Jachnik (ed.), *Badanie potrzeb i satysfakcji z wybranych usług skierowanych do rodzin z dziećmi z orzeczoną niepełnosprawnością w wieku 8–16 lat*; Regionalne Centrum Polityki Społecznej w Łodzi, Łódź 2016; D. Podgórska-Jachnik, *Praca socjalna z osobami z niepełnosprawnością i ich rodzinami*, Centrum Rozwoju Zasobów Ludzkich MPiPS, Warsaw 2014.

³ Regulation of the Minister of Education of 7 September 2017 on the opinions and rulings issued by evaluation boards operating at the public psychological and educational centres (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1743).

Ruling on the need for special education as the basis for revalidation and adaptive measures provided by the school

Pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Education of 7 September 2017 on the opinions and rulings issued by evaluation boards operating at the public psychological and educational centres (Journal of Laws 2017 item 1743), public psychological consultancy centres issue ruling on the need for special education. It should be noted that such rulings may only be issued by public centres⁴. A ruling on the need for special education may be issued on the account of a pupil's disability, social maladjustment or a threat of social maladjustment. The Ministry's regulation includes a closed list of disabilities which may be taken into account while issuing a ruling on the need for special education – it defines precisely who is a disabled child/pupil and it specifies the conditions for the education and guidance of such pupils⁵. In this document we can read:

“§ 13 section 2 In the ruling on the need for special education, the team shall define:

- 1) the diagnosis on the child's or pupil's functioning, considering the potential for development, strengths and talents of the child/pupil as well as barriers and limitations impeding the child's/pupil's functioning, present in the environment where schooling and guidance is offered;
- 2) period in which special education will be needed;
- 3) recommended conditions and forms of support, which make it possible to meet the child's/pupil's individual development and educational needs, including the conditions for de-

⁴ In the event of receiving such a ruling from a non-public centre, the School Superintendent should be notified of the breach of law.

⁵ Regulation of the Minister of Education of 9 August 2017 on the conditions for organising the education, guidance and care for disabled children and youth, as well as socially maladjusted pupils and those threatened with social maladjustment (Journal of Laws of 24 August 2017, item 1578).

- veloping his/her potential, skills and strengths, to reinforce the child's or pupil's activity and participation in the life of the kindergarten, school or institution and whether a need arises for individual support of the child or pupil, as provided by additionally employed staff, as mentioned in the provisions on the conditions for organising education, guidance and care for disabled children and youth, as well as socially maladjusted pupils/children and those threatened with social maladjustment - and the scope of such support;
- 4) recommended development and therapeutic goals to pursue during the kindergarten or educational classes, revalidation session, social therapy and social rehabilitation sessions and as part of psychological and educational aid provided to the child or pupil and, depending on the needs, also to their parents, whereas such aid is provided by the kindergarten, school, centre or institution and the psychological centre, along with the indication of recommended forms of support offered by the psychological and educational consultancy centre, and in the case of disabled children and youth - also recommended type of revalidation classes;
 - 5) all of the possible forms of special education, starting from the one that is best for the child/pupil, considering the type of team and form of special education, selected from among the following:
 - a) mainstream kindergarten (unit), integrated, special, other form of kindergarten education - in the case of disabled children,
 - b) mainstream school (unit), integrated or special - in the case of disabled pupils, socially maladjusted pupils or those threatened with social maladjustment,
 - c) special school at the care facility for the youth - in the case of minors who were ordered by the court to be placed in such a facility,
 - d) special school in a social therapy centre for the youth - in the case of pupils threatened with social maladjustment,

- e) special kindergarten or special school at a special educational and care facility – in the case of children or pupils who cannot attend a kindergarten or school in the place where they live on the account of their disability,
 - f) special care facility – in the case of the following pupils:
 - disabled pupils who cannot attend a school where they live on the account of their disability, a special care and education facility or cannot stay at a boarding school,
 - threatened with social maladjustment,
 - g) revalidation and care facility – in the case of children or pupils with multiple disabilities, whereas one of them refers to intellectual disability;
- 6) the need for some of the kindergarten or educational classes to be conducted individually with the child or pupil or in a group of no more than 5 children or pupils – in the case of a child or pupil who experiences difficulties when functioning in a group of kindergarten children/school pupils;
- 7) recommended actions aimed at improving the functioning of the child or pupil, and reinforcing their participation in kindergarten, school, facility or institution activities, along with actions supporting the child's or pupil's parents;
- 8) depending on the needs of the disabled child/pupil, specialist equipment necessary for the educational process and necessary teaching aids, including those using ICT;
- 9) recommended methods of evaluating the results of the actions taken by the kindergarten, school, facility or institution in order to comply with the recommendations listed in sections 3-8"⁶.

Information included in individual modules thereof is extremely important in writing a good Individual Education and Therapeutic Programme (IETP), and therefore also crucial for the school where the pupil will be educated. Since the ruling specifies the period for which it is valid (it's usually a single education stage), an Individual

⁶ Regulation of the Minister of Education of 7 September 2017 on the opinions and rulings..., op. cit.

Education and Therapeutic Programme is usually written for the same period as the one stipulated in the ruling. It is worth remembering that under certain circumstances, an individual education stage may last longer than the prescribed number of years. Pupils with mild intellectual disability may have extra 3 years added to their education, i.e. until they are 21, while those with moderate and severe intellectual disability may have as many as 5 years more, i.e. until they are 24. Education stages may therefore be respectively extended, depending on the pupil's intellectual development and progress in education⁷.

The first substantive part of the ruling on the need for special education is the diagnosis. *"The Evaluation Board presents the diagnosis on the child's/pupil's functioning, considering their development potential, strength and talents"*⁸. Pursuant to the results of psychological and education tests and medical records (available photocopies of medical certificates, discharge summaries from hospital, description of other specialist examinations provided by the requester, i.e. the child's parent or legal guardian) and functional diagnosis completed by the teachers, the ultimate diagnosis is formed – the first part of the ruling. It is important in that it is the basis for recommendations and their justification – next parts of the document. Any contradictions between the content of the gathered documents and the ruling issued by the centre may be the basis for the parents to appeal against the content of the ruling⁹.

In the everyday work of psychological and education consultancy centres we are faced with various attitudes of the parents/legal guardians – the requesters, with whom the whole diagnostic and ruling procedure begins. It is worth mentioning that a lack of the

⁷ M. Grzesiak (this year), *Kogo dotyczy wydłużanie cyklu edukacyjnego*, Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna w Lubaniu, http://www.pppluban.org/www/porada_dnia/ppp_porada_dnia_wydłużenie_etapu_edukacyjnego.pdf [accessed on: 15.03.2017].

⁸ Regulation of the Minister of Education of 7 September 2017 on the opinions and rulings..., op. cit.

⁹ A. Dudzińska, A. Niedźwiedzka, *Najczęstsze pytania...*, op. cit., pp. 11–13.

formal consent of the parents to the child's examination (it is an important formal requirement) may be decisive in determining a legal defect of the document itself and thus it may result in it being considered invalid. Some parents only file a request. It is only after they arrive at the centre that it becomes evident that the child needs to be examined first. This is when another problem may arise, related to the waiting time for the ruling, which may be up to a few months. This is so when it is necessary to perform additional specialist medical examinations. In this case, the centre may offer to issue a temporary opinion about the child, or on the basis of the available documents issue a ruling for one school year only, and include the information in the recommendations concerning the need for further diagnosis performed by a specific specialist. However, sometimes the problem is obtaining any documents from the parents, apart from the request for the ruling. This is when the head of the evaluation team may address a respective school/institution and ask for a written opinion whose elements are defined in the regulation on the rulings. The school has seven days to prepare the abovementioned opinion¹⁰.

Sometimes you encounter parents whose main objective is only to obtain the ruling, because it will become the basis to claim additional funds in the form of a benefit or other forms of social support. Unfortunately, as mentioned in the introduction, it sometimes happens that the parents cannot tell the difference between a ruling on the need for special education (or other rulings issued by the centres) from a ruling on disability and they are not aware of the related specific (different) rights¹¹. It often happens that these people are quite demanding – they agree to the child's diagnosis or bring diagnostic documents from non-public centres and often even from pri-

¹⁰ § 7 para. 3 Regulation of the Minister of Education of 7 September 2017 on the opinions and rulings..., op. cit.

¹¹ Unfortunately, in practice it turns out that it's not only the parents, but also schools – especially mainstream ones, with limited experience in working with disabled pupils – that have problems with differentiating between these rulings and the relevant rights.

vate practice. It is only the possibility to obtain the ruling on the lack of need for special education that makes it possible to perform a proper diagnosis of their child. Such parents are aware that if their child is not diagnosed and therefore receives a ruling on the lack of need for special education, they will not be able to claim any support (financial, e. g. extra revalidation classes). In extreme cases, the school may refer inform the family court of the shortcomings in exercising parental authority. Fortunately, it follows from the experience of the centres that there are fewer and fewer such cases with each year.

After the end of the diagnostic tests coordinated by the centre, the results are described in the first part of the ruling. How do you use them when writing the Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programme? This document provides knowledge: 1) about the core curriculum appropriate for the pupil, 2) about the child's somatic illnesses, 3) about the number and type of specialists the pupil should have classes with, 4) about how the child/pupil functions in a group, how advances his/her mental and physical capacity is, how he/she compares against the norms for his/her metrical age, what potential he/she has (the child's capabilities and strengths).

The second part of the ruling concerning the need for special education includes the recommendations. Pursuant to the template included in the Regulation, the recommendations precisely define how support should be provided to a specific pupil¹². A mandatory element in this part of the document is revalidation classes, i.e. *complex therapeutic, psychological, educational, social and vocational activities aimed at developing or restoring the skills, ability and capacity necessary for a permanently injured person to function properly*¹³ or in other words: *restoring – as far as possible – the efficiency of the organism and self-esteem – in social, professional and family context*¹⁴. The term

¹² Regulation of the Minister of Education of 7 September 2017 on the opinions and rulings..., op. cit.

¹³ A. Maciarz, *Wybrane zagadnienia rewalidacji dzieci*, Wyd. WSP, Zielona Góra, p. 18, 1984.

¹⁴ Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN (1085), Warszawa, 3rd edition, vol. 3, p. 861.

revalidation is related to the term *rehabilitation*, whereas the former usually refers to the upbringing and education of children and adolescents¹⁵; therefore, in special education it is treated as a basic impact on students with disabilities. Depending on the type of disability, the level of adaptation and the resulting scope of remedial activities are determined on the basis of a specialist diagnosis¹⁶. For the visually impaired students in particular, as an element of revalidation, it is recommended to learn spatial orientation and mobility, Braille's alphabet or other alternative communication methods; for pupils with impaired hearing or aphasia – sign language or other supportive or alternative communication methods; for students with autism, including Asperger syndrome, to learn social skills, including communication skills¹⁷. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the determination of revalidation objectives as a key and at the same time one of the most individualized elements of the counselled diagnosis, also taking into account the wider environmental context of the child's situation. I emphasize this because although the concept of revalidation is ubiquitous in the Polish educational system since the moment it began to implement the assumptions of inclusive education, it still remains largely misunderstood. B. Grochmal-Bach describes the problem of setting the objectives of revalidation accurately as she writes: *When conducting the process of revalidation, one should define what is common for all people with and without disabilities, as well as what is individual and requires a specific approach. The determining factor is the extent and severity of the imbalance between the individual and the environment, not the type of impairment*¹⁸.

Students with a special educational need ruling shall complete additional and obligatory two hours of revalidation. The number of hours and method of implementation is specified in the Regulation

¹⁵ B. Grochmal-Bach, *Wychowanie i terapia w rewalidacji dzieci i młodzieży*, Oficyna Wyd. Impuls, Kraków 2001, pp. 10–11.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

¹⁷ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 July 2015 on the conditions of organising education..., op. cit.

¹⁸ B. Grochmal-Bach, *Wychowanie i terapia w rewalidacji...*, op. cit., p. 9.

of the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on the framework curricula in public schools¹⁹.

Another obligatory provision in the recommendations is to define the scope of psychological and pedagogical assistance for a given child. The task of the evaluating board in the psychological and educational consultancy centre is to indicate all the necessary specialist classes aimed at helping the child. It is worth noting that these activities are not defined for a specific school, but for a specific child. The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on the principles of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions contains a list of forms of psychological and pedagogical assistance; it specifies the procedures of creating therapeutic classes, the types of classes in which a student may participate and the maximum number of participants²⁰.

Sometimes schools complain to the consultancy centre that among the recommended activities there are ones the schools does not offer or does not employ a specialist ready to run the class. As I mentioned, the statement is not written for the school, let alone for a particular school. It is an independent document to which certain educational conditions must be adapted, not the other way round. The applicant – a parent or legal guardian – may apply in writing to the given school headmaster for additional classes to be made available. The headmasters of public schools are obliged to organise classes conducted, for example, by a school pedagogue. Not always – especially in the case of inclusive education, when the school has not yet met the requirements resulting from the student's intellectual disability – is the school management familiar with all the rules of cooperation in this area with the local authorities of powiat or gmina²¹.

¹⁹ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 March 2017 on framework curricula in public schools (Journal of Laws 2017, 31 March 2017, item 1578).

²⁰ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on the principles of granting and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance ..., op. cit.

²¹ The school should apply for appropriate funds from the educational subsidy to the governing body, as it is the local authorities that are obliged – pursuant to

It is worth noting that while applying to the body running the school or institution for funding for the education of students with disabilities, the key issue will be the content of the judgments on the need for special education at the disposal of the school. Therefore, one should be able to interpret them properly (on the one hand, which remedial and specialist classes should be organised for students, how many and which teachers or assistants should be employed, on the other hand, which diagnostic units are eligible for a targeted subsidy and which conversion rates can be used here²²).

It also happens, for example, that a pupil with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities attends a public school due to his or her parents' decision, while s/he has a special school placed in the first place in the recommendation from the consultancy centre. In this respect, the choice belongs to the parent or legal guardian, with all its consequences. They are guided, on the one hand, by their own assessment of the quality of education and, on the other hand, by the prospect of integration. It is worth noting that, despite inclusive tendencies, a special school can sometimes be a better choice for such a pupil: it offers services of many specialists, while a public school can only employ them if it has the financial means. The decision of whether to hire them is always made individually by the given governing body. Sometimes the only available form of im-

Article 90 of the Act of 7 September 2004 on the Education System (Journal of Laws 2004, No. 256, item 2572, as amended) – to secure financial conditions for the implementation of recommendations resulting from the judgments. In order to receive a subsidy, the educational institution (school) must report the number of students supported by the subsidy by 30 September of the year preceding the allocation of funds, although adjustments are possible later, which not all headmasters are aware of (detailed advice: A. Dudzińska, A. Niedźwiedzka (2016), *Frequently Asked Questions about Special Education...*, op. cit.).

²² See: e.g. discussion and (changing) attitude of the Ministry of Education: Children with comprehensive developmental disorders do not have the right to a decision on the need for special education, „Wszystko Jasne” Association Web Portal, 24 August 2014, [online] <http://www.wszystkojasne.waw.pl/dzieci-calosciowymi-zaburzeniami-rozwoju-nie-maja-prawa-orzeczenia-potrzenie-kształcenia-specjalnego/> [access: 8 May 2017].

plementation of the recommendations proposed by the consultancy centre are two hours of remedial classes, for which there are separate funds for each student who has a special educational needs ruling – no matter what school s/he attends. Regardless of whether the school has the financial resources or not, its task is to organize the best possible help for the child. In this respect, the school may offer some of the activities – e. g. pedagogical and/or speech therapy classes – in a psychological and educational consultancy centre or look for other institutions or centres, e. g. community centres, social welfare centres, sometimes local NGOs²³ implementing their own projects or tasks ordered by the local government, where their students will be able to receive such assistance. Much depends on the entrepreneurship and creativity of the school's headmaster, sometimes the parents themselves.

Each recommendation requires justification, in which one should indicate the elements of the diagnosis substantiating the need for special education and recommended as most beneficial for the student forms of psychological and pedagogical assistance, and determine their expected results. In the event a new decision on the need for special education is issued, the circumstances which the Evaluation Board of the Consultancy Centre deemed essential for the re-examination should be indicated and the reasons for the new decision should be explained²⁴. In this part, the need for special education should be justified and the motivation of the Board to choose such forms of psychological and pedagogical assistance should be explained. For students with intellectual disabilities, it is necessary to justify the choice of a specific type of school. The core curriculum determines that these choices may vary. As it is the same for students within the intellectual norm and students with mild intellectual disabilities, the latter should be directed to public, inclusive

²³ I. Chrzanowska, *Strategia kształcenia osób niepełnosprawnych. Diagnoza pozoru* [in:] Z. Gajdzica (ed.), *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w rezerwacie przestrzeni publicznej*, Oficyna Wyd. Impuls, Kraków 2013, pp. 194–195.

²⁴ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 September 2008 on rulings and opinions ..., op. cit.

schools or schools with integration departments. The core curriculum is different for people with moderate and significant intellectual disabilities²⁵ who should be enrolled in special schools. We should also justify why, for example, pedagogical therapy has been chosen and how it can contribute to the proper development and functioning of our charge. That is why the first part of the ruling – the diagnosis – is so important, as it affects its further parts.

Nowadays, it is increasingly common for parents of children with moderate intellectual disabilities to decide to leave them in public schools. The knowledge of a child's intellectual disability is very unpleasant and difficult to accept for the parent, hence the choice of a special school is often unacceptable to him/her. That is regrettable, because a special school has qualified teachers, not such numerous classes, appropriate textbooks and teaching aids, and often enables its pupils to acquire professional qualifications. Such a school also helps to find a job or places a graduating adult in sheltered workshops or occupational therapy workshops.

Why, then, does the parent choose a public school? From the perspective of many years of professional experience of a consultancy centre employee, it appears that one of the most frequent factors influencing making such a decision is the pressure of the environment. The parent takes into account the opinion of his neighbours, friends and family. S/he often thinks that thanks to this choice his child will not be so "different" – after all, s/he will go to the same school as all the children from the housing estate. The parent also hopes that his child will develop, remaining in the envi-

²⁵ It is worth adding here that the core curriculum for students with moderate and significant intellectual disabilities has been included in the education reform (2017) and is now in force (see: Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum of pre-school education and the core curriculum of general education for primary school, including students with moderate or significant intellectual disabilities, general education for the first degree of vocational education, general education for a special school preparing for work, and general education for the post-secondary school, Journal of Laws of 24 February 2017, item 356).

ronment of his playground friends from the neighbourhood. Another frequent reason is the need to take the child to a special school far away from home, which demands additional financial resources. Sometimes it is necessary to consider placing the child in the boarding school, which may again increase the resistance of carers. In these circumstances and under such great pressure from the community, the parent decides to leave his/her child in a public school, where his/her child will work on the basis of the Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programme prepared for him/her.

It should also be added that the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by the President of Poland in 2012 created a kind of hierarchy, as the provision on the right to inclusive education at all levels of education²⁶ is sometimes interpreted as giving it the absolute highest value in educational choices concerning people with disabilities. However, inclusive education, which was to be the educational system's response to the exclusion process, should be treated more as an opportunity to choose the optimum form of education. This means that it is individualised for different students²⁷. Therefore, the decision to choose a school for a student requires reflection – both by the employees of psychological and educational consultancy centre, and by the parents – on the actual needs and motivations related to this choice, preceded by a discussion and agreement of both parties, which will also be reflected in the recommendations in the ruling on the need for special education.

Finally, it should be mentioned that currently the Ministry of National Education informs about the ongoing works on new solutions aimed at improving the quality of support for students in the process of education and upbringing. This concerns increasing the reliability and accuracy of the diagnosis of their educational and

²⁶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York, 13 December 2006 [online], Article 24 [online] [access: 2 May 2017] <<http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20120001169>>.

²⁷ D. Podgórska-Jachnik, *Praca socjalna z osobami z niepełnosprawnością...*, op. cit., pp. 63–66.

developmental needs, taking into account its functional biopsychosocial model, including the context of the child's functioning in the teaching and upbringing environment: *This model of diagnosis is based on the analysis of not only data on individual characteristics of a child, but also on barriers and resources in his or her environment, taking into account information from various sources (e. g. doctor, school, welfare institutions)*²⁸. The new model is planned to use the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), the version for children and youth (ICF-CY – International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – Children and young people)²⁹. The model of diagnosis for students with Special Educational Needs developed in this way has been reflected in new models of rulings on the need for special education. Its positive feature will certainly be the greater objectivity and reliability of diagnoses made, unification of their language and phraseology, as well as profiling of functional aspects of diagnosis from the point of view of its usefulness in the planned educational support. This means that it will certainly be easier for schools to draw up Individual Education and Therapeutic Programmes (IETPs) and to select the necessary forms of assistance more accurately. The negative aspect is certainly a challenge related to the environment's confrontation with a new diagnostic and therapeutic techniques, the need to overcome mental resistance to novelty and to reconstruct the way of thinking about tasks related to the assessment of the need for special education.

Summary

To sum up these considerations, I would like to point out the most important problems that have been raised. It is worth remembering that:

²⁸ Education reform and a student with special educational needs, „Dobra Szkoła”, Information Portal of the Ministry of National Education, [online] <https://reformaedukacji.men.gov.pl/aktualnosci/reforma-edukacji-a-uczen-ze-specjalnymi-potrzebami-edukacyjnymi.html> [accessed: 29 May 2017].

²⁹ Ibidem.

1. due to various possibilities of choosing a student's education path in the educational system that implements the principle of inclusion, the Evaluation Board of the Consultancy Centre, issuing a decision on the need for special education, faces a great challenge. The quality of this document is a prerequisite for optimal organisation of the conditions for special education – regardless of the school chosen by the student's parents;
2. given the status and importance of the decision on the need for special education, it is necessary to disseminate knowledge about it, especially among parents, guardians of the child and teachers of inclusive education (i.e. among the teaching staff of public schools);
3. the psychological and educational consultancy centre should make every effort to facilitate parents' optimal choice of school for children with disabilities through reliable diagnosis and appropriate recommendations, and the school should provide good material for the creation of IPET;
4. teachers – especially in public schools, who are not special guidance counsellors – should acquire knowledge and skills necessary to understand the records contained in the decisions, in particular in their diagnostic part. The recommendations provided in the rulings, e. g. the choice of the type of remedial classes, may be used as an indication in the event of any ambiguities. It should be remembered that the school can count on the cooperation and support of consultancy centres or teacher training centres in this respect, and that it is worth taking advantage of this support.
5. The educational systems – both consultancy centres and schools, kindergartens and other institutions – should prepare for a new model of functional diagnosis, based on ICF categories. This may be difficult at first, but it is worth looking at it as an opportunity to improve the quality of rulings in the future and to make it easier for institutions to work on IPETs adapted to the individual developmental and educational needs of a student / child with disabilities.

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List of legal acts

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- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2013 on the rules of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and educational institutions (Journal of Laws of 2013, item 532).
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 July 2015 on the conditions of organising education, upbringing and care for children and young people with disabilities, socially maladjusted and threatened with social maladjustment (Journal of Laws of 7 August 2015, item 1113).
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum of pre-school education and the core curriculum of general education for primary school, including students with moderate or significant intellectual disabilities, general education for the first degree of vocational education, general education for a special school preparing for work, and general education for the post-secondary school, Journal of Laws of 24 February 2017, item 356).



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Dating Barriers of Women with Motor Disabilities

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The article addresses the issue of dating barriers experienced by women with physical disabilities. This phenomenon was presented in reference to the available research results and analysis. Dating barriers were described in a division into external and internal barriers. External barriers included social issues, which encompassed negative stereotypes, patterns, attitudes and architectural barriers. Internal barriers related directly to women with physical disabilities, including their attitudes towards themselves, self-esteem and social skills. The analysis showed that women with physical disabilities may have more difficulties with finding partners and forming personal relationships leading to intimacy than women without disabilities.

KEY WORDS: women with disabilities, dating barriers, dating, physical disability.

Introduction

Love is one of the most complex phenomena in psychology. According to E. Berscheid¹, it is one of the few psychological con-

¹ E. Berscheid, *Some comments on love's anatomy: Or, whatever happened to old-fashioned lust?*, [in:] *The psychology of love*, ed. R. J. Sternberg, M. L. Barnes, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988, pp. 359–374.

structs that are so difficult to capture. In spite of it, attempts were made at examining the essence of love by building various theories of this phenomenon. The first proposal for understanding love was presented in 1922 by Z. Freud², who showed it in the categories of striving for the ideal ego. In the area of clinical psychology, this term was also explained in the context of anticipating salvation³. Further explorations in the area of personality psychology allowed for determining it as a subject that requires understanding through individual "styles" of human love. According to J. A. Lee⁴, there are six types of love: ludus - game-playing love; eros - type of love characterised by searching for the loved one, whose physical presentation is the image of the lover kept in the person's mind; storge - slow development of feelings; mania - obsession, jealousy, emotional intensity; agape - altruistic love; pragma - paying attention primarily to the demographic features of the other person. On the other hand, in the context of social psychology, R. Stenberg presented the understanding of love via a three-component concept⁵. The author created a theory where love between a woman and a man consists of three components: intimacy, passion and commitment. These elements describe the ideal feeling, which should characterise a close relation of two people. According to M. Parol⁶, the basis for such a relation is primarily the accomplishment of the need of security, attention, close contact, emotional support, sense, emotional and sexual bond, understanding and friendship. Accord-

² S. Freud, *Certain neurotic mechanisms in jealousy, paranoia, and homosexuality*, "Collected Papers" 1922, vol. 2, pp. 235-240, 323.

³ T. Reik 1944 quoted from: R. J. Stenberg, *Construct validation of a triangular love scale*, "European Journal of Social Psychology" 1997, vol. 27, pp. 313-335.

⁴ J. A. Lee, *A topology of styles of loving*, "Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin" 1977, vol. 3, pp. 173-182.

⁵ R. J. Stenberg, *Construct validation of a triangular love scale*, "European Journal of Social Psychology" 1997, vol. 27, pp. 313-335.

⁶ M. Parol, *Potrzeby a relacje między mężczyznami i kobietami*, „Kwartalnik Naukowy” 2013, No. 2(13), pp. 5-15.

ing to B. Wojciszke⁷, it is however the need of emotional contact that is the most important in the formation of inter-human relations. Satisfaction with such a relation determines the quality of human life and becomes an element of the feeling of happiness⁸. People who want to be happy in life try to find a proper person with whom they could have a close and loving relationship. The cultural construct of the manifestation of love of two people is a date. It is a fixed element of modern life, culture, art and the media. In Poland, it appeared just 80 years ago and its' popularisation in America and Europe was influenced by custom-related changes at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century⁹. The most important of them include the first, second and third wave feminism¹⁰, consumerism and globalisation, emancipation of sexual minorities, democratisation and laicisation. Thanks to them, young people gained the opportunity of meeting outside of home without having the meetings supervised by other persons¹¹. Nowadays, dating has

⁷ K. Schier, *Johna Bowlby'ego teoria przywiązania i psychoanaliza*, [in:] *Koncepcja przywiązania. Od teorii do praktyki klinicznej*, ed. B. Józefik, G. Iniewicz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2008, pp. 35–45.

⁸ K. Doroszewicz, *Bliskie związki a jakość życia*, „Psychologia Jakości Życia” 2008, vol. 7, No. 1/2, pp. 5–18.

⁹ E. Warumzer, *Wzór idealnej randki a współczesne dążenie do idealnego związku*, “Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis Studia Sociologica V” 2013, vol. 2, pp. 100–116.

¹⁰ Women's movements had various forms; they aimed for independence or united with other movements. According to this, the so-called waves of feminism are distinguished. The first wave of feminism denotes the period until the middle of the 19th century, when demands were made for granting women equal rights. On the other hand, the second wave of feminism was called modern feminism, in reference to its' idea for the sake of anti-war movements, civil rights and libertarian theory. The third wave of feminism is also known as post-feminism and it had its' beginnings in the 1980s. It primarily resulted in withdrawal of multiple political accomplishments that were attributed to the earlier waves of this movement. At the same time, a concept emerged that women no longer need feminism (J. Helios, W. Jedlecka, 2016, p. 10).

¹¹ P. Szarota, *Anatomia randki*, Wydawnictwo Muza, Warsaw 2011, pp. 5–6.

undergone thorough changes; first of all, it was transferred to the public sphere and no longer entails marriage-related intentions and is no longer so closely bound with romantic love¹². A date may be analysed in a variety of ways, e. g. in the context of social rituals, a historically and culturally ideal model or in relation to the preferred and dispositional types of love. It may also be defined as an arranged meeting of two persons, aimed at deepening or establishing an intimate relationship. It may take place in the real or virtual space¹³. According to E. Warumzer¹⁴, many people strive to accomplish the model of an ideal date. In line with the author's studies, young people believe it to be an important element of their life; thus, dates are planned in advance and later remembered for a long time.

When discussing dating, it is necessary to emphasise at the very beginning that this issue is not frequently encountered in psychological and pedagogical studies. A review of English and Polish literature allows for ascertaining a significant absence of studies devoted to dating, both with respect to fully able people and people with disabilities. According to J. Barlińska and P. Szarota¹⁵, unwillingness to discuss this subject matter may result from the fact that the term "date" belongs to the colloquial language and therefore it does not seem to fit the academic discourse. However, it should be emphasised that the common nature of dating behaviour and intimate relations that result from it make this subject very important. In-depth analyses of the phenomenon could enrich the knowledge in the area of love psychology.

A. Hulek believes that "there are many more common aspects, both among people with disabilities, as well as between people with

¹² J. Wróblewska-Skrzek, *Architektura randki a kryzys matrymonialny*, „Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów” 2017, No. 18, pp. 389–402.

¹³ J. Barlińska, P. Szarota, *Światopogląd a style randkowania*, „Psychologia społeczna” 2014, vol. 9, No. 4(31), pp. 437–444.

¹⁴ E. Warumzer, *Wzór idealnej randki...*, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁵ J. Barlińska, P. Szarota, *Światopogląd a style*, op. cit., p. 438.

disabilities and fully able people, than aspects that separate them"¹⁶. Thus, the needs experienced by fully able persons are identical with the needs experienced by people with disabilities. Nevertheless, they are often forgotten, in particular in reference to women with disabilities, whose image is created in the society via stereotypes that are predominant in it. As shown by studies of M. R. Nario-Redmond¹⁷, women with disabilities are perceived as asexual, dependant on fully able persons and incompetent, in particular with respect to family roles. Women with disabilities are exposed to stereotypes related not only to disability, but also sex. They influence the formation of the feelings of causality, social stances, professional aspirations and motivation, feeling of sexuality, as well as formation of identity in these women¹⁸. Moreover, general stereotypes are imposed on women with disabilities, which describe them as defenceless victims, as well as stereotypes pertaining to sex, which distance them from the sexual standards that are valid in the context of their sex¹⁹.

In spite of the identical needs of women with disabilities and fully able women, it is most often women with disabilities who encounter a number of barriers limiting their participation in the social life, including dating²⁰. According to the studies of A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska²¹, finding a partner is much more difficult if a woman is disabled. On the other hand, in case of already existing relation-

¹⁶ A. Hulek, *Człowiek niepełnosprawny w społeczeństwie*, Wydawnictwo PZWL, Warsaw, 1986, p. 10.

¹⁷ M. R. Nario-Redmond, *Cultural stereotypes of disabled and non-disabled men and women: consensus for global category representations and diagnostic domains*, "British Journal of Social Psychology" 2010, vol. 49, p. 471.

¹⁸ A. Nowak, *Zagrożenie wykluczeniem społecznym kobiet niepełnosprawnych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2012, p. 10.

¹⁹ A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, *Zanikanie? Trajektorie tożsamości kobiet z niepełnosprawnością*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej, Warsaw 2013, p. 230.

²⁰ D. H. Rintala, C. A. Howland, M. A. Nosek, J. L. Bennett, M. E. Young, C. C. Foley, C. D. Rossi, G. Chanpong, *Dating Issues for Women with Physical Disabilities*, "Sexuality and Disability" 1997, vol. 15(4), pp. 219–242.

²¹ A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, *Zanikanie? Trajektorie...*, op. cit., p. 227.

ships, the fact of being disabled results in their reorganisation. A number of aesthetic and functional changes appear in the body that directly influence the formation of female-male relations.

In relation to this, according to the studies of C. A. Howland and D. H. Rintala²², disabled women experience delayed development of dating behaviour. At the moment of the first date and the first serious relationships, they are usually older than non-disabled women. Reference books dealing with these issues include publications referring to the barriers in dating in reference to women with disabilities. They can be divided into external barriers that encompass the social environment and internal barriers that are experienced by women with disabilities²³.

External Dating Barriers

Social barriers that hinder the dating of women with disabilities include, in the first place, stereotypes. The term "stereotype" is defined in the social sciences as a "set of relatively fixed, simplified and unauthorised generalisations pertaining to a certain group or a class of people. In this respect, their negative and unfavourable characteristics are significant, yet some authors believe that the ingredients of stereotypes may also include positive convictions, yet biased and inaccurate"²⁴.

Stereotypical perception of women with disabilities by the society as, e. g., asexual, is related to the lack of "permission" for them to

²² C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of women with physical disabilities*, "Sexuality and Disability" 2001, vol. 1, p. 47.

²³ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors...*, op. cit., p. 44; D. H. Rintala, C. A. Howland, M. A. Nosek, J. L. Bennett, M. E. Young, C. C. Foley, C. D. Rossi, G. Chanpong, *Dating Issues for...*, op. cit., p. 220; M. A. Nosek, C. Howland, D. H. Rintala, M. E. Young, G. F. Chanpong, *National study of women with physical disabilities: final report*, "Sexuality and Disability" 2001, vol. 19(1), pp. 5-39.

²⁴ A. S. Reber, E. S. Reber, *Słownik psychologii*, Wydawnictwo SCHOLAR, Warsaw 2005, p. 743.

engage in romantic relations or for them to go on dates. In line with such prejudices, women with disabilities should not be taken into account as persons who desire to and who may form a romantic relationship with another person²⁵. Furthermore, there are also social fears that dating on the part of women with disabilities may lead to an unwanted pregnancy and, in consequence, birth of a child with a disability²⁶. According to the majority of the society, this is unacceptable, as, in the society's opinion, women with disabilities are incapable of bringing up children, taking care of their partner or running a household. Thus, they are useless members of a broader community²⁷.

Possibilities of dating by women with disabilities in comparison to fully able women are much more limited. These impediments primarily refer to the issue of suffering from a noticeable disability. Women with disabilities examined in the studies of C. A. Howland and D. R. Rintala adopt a standpoint that dating "before was much easier"²⁸. According to the participants of this survey, if a woman is fully able, men look with interest at her. On the other hand, when she becomes disabled, they feel sorry for her and only want to be friends with her. A woman's disability influences her relations with men. In the studies of A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska²⁹, one of the examined women (with an inborn disability and with higher education) believed that "in the relations with the opposite sex, such disability is an impediment. After all, men are guided by appearance. In order to become involved, a man has to fancy the girl physically"³⁰. According to M. J. Philips³¹ women with disabilities are very often

²⁵ M. R. Nario-Redmond, *Cultural stereotypes of ...*, op. cit., p. 483.

²⁶ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of...*, op. cit., p. 41.

²⁷ C. J. Gill, *Dating and relationship issues*, "Sexuality and Disability" 1996, vol. 14(3), pp. 183-190.

²⁸ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of...*, op. cit., p. 49.

²⁹ A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, *Zanikanie? Trajektorie tożsamości...*, op. cit., p. 229.

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ M. J. Phillips, *Damaged goods: Oral narratives of the experience of disability in American Culture*, "Social Science and Medicine" 1990, vol. 30(8), pp. 849-857.

perceived by men as “damaged goods”, and they should be grateful for any attention or interest on the part of other people, also negative one.

C. J. Gill³² claims that limitations in dating of women with disabilities result primarily from the canons of beauty and physical attractiveness adopted in a given society. The appearance of a woman’s body is very important, as it is subject to evaluation and tends to be accepted or not in line with the male standard of femininity³³. Thus, women with a noticeable disability may very often be perceived as “defective.” In the studies of A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska³⁴, women with disabilities, both acquired and inborn, talk about issues of rejection on account of “different” body and physical limitations which, in their opinion, are an impediment in building corporeal love.

Subsequent limitations in dating on the part of women with disabilities may be created by friends and family. They often discourage them from establishing closer relations, in particular with fully able persons. In the surveys of C. A. Howland and D. H. Rintala³⁵, one of the respondents with an inborn disability believed that persons close to her discouraged her from dating fully able men by arguing that men dating a woman with a disability must have some serious dysfunction which makes them unattractive for fully able women. It has to be emphasised that stances of parents towards women with disabilities have a great significance for their ability to establish intimate relationships in adult life. Parents who encourage their daughters to social meetings make them feel attractive and important, thereby helping them establish a strong foundation for future relations in adult life³⁶.

³² C. J. Gill, *Dating and relationship...*, op. cit., p. 184.

³³ E. Kaschak, *Nowa psychologia kobiety. Podejście feministyczne*, translated by: J. Węgrodzka, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2001, pp. 90–96.

³⁴ A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, *Zanikanie? Trajektorie tożsamości...*, op. cit., p. 228.

³⁵ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of...*, op. cit., p. 52.

³⁶ D. H. Rintala, C. A. Howland, M. A. Nosek, J. L. Bennett, M. E. Young, C. C. Foley, C. D. Rossi, G. Chanpong, *Dating Issues for...*, op. cit., p. 221.

Another important aspect is the mobility of persons with disabilities. It happens quite frequently that women with disabilities encounter physical barriers which make it difficult to go on a date³⁷. In line with P. Todys' findings³⁸, public transport is not adjusted to the needs of people with disabilities, both on the level of infrastructure and the rolling stock. What is more, the number of dating locations is also limited on account of non-adjustment of a majority of buildings for the needs of people with disabilities. The hindrances in the form of, e. g., lack of lifts, prevent their access to a number of attractive locations.

The presented external barriers in the dating of women with disabilities encompassed primarily the stereotypes, stances and models in the society, as well as architectural barriers. Apart from physical disability, some of the causes of life failures of people with disabilities include the social limitations that they encounter on their way³⁹. In some cases, this may result in almost complete blocking of the possibility of dating, as well as establishing intimate relations on the part of women with disabilities.

Internal Dating Barriers

Another equally important group of limitations in dating are barriers that are within the women suffering from disabilities. These limitations are primarily related to the reluctance of women with disabilities to date and establish relations with other people. They may result from women's fear of rejection by other persons, caused

³⁷ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of ...*, op. cit., p. 53.

³⁸ P. Todys, *Przejawy dyskryminacji osób z niepełnosprawnością ruchową* – Towarzystwo Edukacji Antydyskryminacyjnej – II specjalist seminar entitled "*Motor and Intellectual Disability as Premises for Discrimination*", [in:] http://www.tea.org.pl/userfiles/file/Seminaria/Niepelnosprawnosc_%20ruchowa_PTodys_TEA.pdf [access: 01.11.2017].

³⁹ Cf. L. Marszałek, *Spółeczny kontekst niepełnosprawności*, "Seminare" 2007, No. 24, pp. 339–353.

by the fact of their disability. Many women with disabilities assume that already at the very beginning of a meeting, when the partner finds out about her disability, he would treat her "differently" and that is why they do not try to establish any relations whatsoever⁴⁰.

In line with the studies of D. Hassouneh-Phillips and E. McNeff⁴¹, women with motor disabilities have a greater problem with establishing and maintaining intimate relations than fully able women. A. Długołęcka claims⁴² that the lack of the feeling of physical attractiveness caused by the disability greatly hinders establishing an emotional relation based on acceptance and security. Women with disabilities are much more exposed to dissatisfaction with their own body, as they have a tendency to compare themselves with the cultural construct of the ideal female beauty⁴³. The model of physical attractiveness which is conditioned culturally leads to the exclusion of women with disabilities, their suffering and the feeling of lack of physical attributes due to changes in their body image⁴⁴. In consequence, this leads to the weakening of emotional ties with the present partner, as well as problems with finding a new life partner, ready to create an intimate relation. According to the studies of A. Długołęcka, women with disabilities establish contacts with men less frequently than the other way round.

The appearance of a disability causes significant changes in the hitherto habits of women and men, changing the entire outline of their conduct. In consequence, this threatens the feeling of self-value and attractiveness at the moment when the need of intimacy and belonging is the greatest. This primarily refers to personal, social

⁴⁰ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of...*, op. cit., pp. 47–48.

⁴¹ D. Hassouneh-Phillips, E. McNeff, *"I thought I was less worthy": low sexual and body esteem and increased vulnerability to intimate partner abuse in women with physical disabilities*, "Sexuality and Disability" 2005, vol. 23(4), pp. 227–240.

⁴² A. Długołęcka, *Znaczenie kategorii płci w procesie rehabilitacji osób z niepełnosprawnością ruchową*, „Niepełnosprawność i Rehabilitacja” 2011, No. 4, pp. 52–67.

⁴³ D. Hassouneh-Phillips, E. McNeff, *I thought I...*, op. cit., p. 230.

⁴⁴ A. Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, *Zanikanie? Trajektorie tożsamości kobiet...*, op. cit., p. 229.

and sexual interactions with other persons. In result, people with disabilities feel lonely and isolated from others⁴⁵.

According to the studies of A. R. Craig *et al.*⁴⁶, women with disabilities are aware of their limitations with respect to the cognitive and physical functions, social potential and sexual knowledge. In spite of it, they often fail to realise the lack of social skills thanks to which they could be successful in striving for intimate relations. As shown by the studies of C. A. Howland and D. H. Rintala⁴⁷, some women who have been experiencing disability from an early age, lacked the level of social skills adequate to their age with respect to dating. This primarily refers to the ability to establish and maintain contacts and lack of maturity in relations with men, which were characterised by childishness. It should be stressed that even when women with disabilities are equipped with social skills and have many friends, it is less probable that the friendships established by them could evolve into romantic relations, as it happens in the case of fully able women⁴⁸.

A very important factor which has great impact on whether a woman with a motor disability decides to establish relations is the level of self-esteem that she possesses, which, to a greater degree, depends on social and environmental factors rather than the fact of being disabled. This is testified by the studies of A. M. Nosek *et al.*⁴⁹, which showed that the respondents (fully able women and women with disabilities) who were in a romantic relationship, worked and did not experience violence, had a high level of self-esteem. On the other hand, when fully able women and women with disabilities

⁴⁵ D. D. Glass, F. J. Padrone, *Sexual adjustment in the handicapped*, "Journal of Rehabilitation" 1978, vol. 44(1), pp. 43-47.

⁴⁶ A. R. Craig, K. M. Hancock, H. Dickson, J. Martin, F. Chang, *Psychological consequences of spinal injury: A review of the literature*, "Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry" 1990, vol. 24, pp. 418-425.

⁴⁷ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of ...*, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴⁸ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of ...*, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴⁹ M. A. Nosek, C. Howland, D. H. Rintala, M. E. Young, G. F. Chanpong, *National study of ...*, op. cit., p. 8.

did not work, were not in a relationship with anybody and experienced violence, fully able women had lower self-esteem in comparison to women with disabilities.

A person's self-esteem impacts the accomplishment of goals, guarantees optimum vigilance, protects from fear, misfortunes and stress, preventing exclusion from the society⁵⁰. High self-esteem supports a person in the control of own behaviour, as well as realisation of own desires and plans in life⁵¹. Thus, in the majority of cases, low self-esteem is a factor hindering establishment of relations and participation in dating in the case of women with disabilities⁵².

Another aspect that significantly affects dating is the stance of women with disabilities with respect to themselves and their disability. In the opinion of respondent women, care stances that they manifest in relation to themselves may materially hinder their dating⁵³. Dating behaviour of women with disabilities was extremely varied. In some cases, women with disabilities rejected everybody who asked them on a date. On the other hand, some women accepted every date offer fearing rejection, loneliness and living in a conviction that they were not worthy of anybody's love⁵⁴.

Fear of abuse from other persons discourage women with disabilities from dating. In many cases, such abuse included emotional, physical and sexual violence⁵⁵. In line with the report of the United Nations (2006), over a half of women with disabilities were victims of physical violence at a certain point in their lives⁵⁶. As noted by

⁵⁰ B. Wojciszke, *Funkcje samooceny*, [in:] *Motywacje umysłu*, ed. A. Kolańczyk, B. Wojciszke, Wydawnictwo Smak Słowa, Sopot, 2010, pp. 111–126.

⁵¹ J. Kirenko, *Wsparcie społeczne osób z niepełnosprawnością*, Wydawnictwo Wyższa Szkoła Umiejętności Pedagogicznych i Zarządzania, Ryki, 2002, p. 129.

⁵² M. A. Nosek, C. Howland, D. H. Rintala, M. E. Young, G. F. Chanpong, *National study of ...*, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵³ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of ...*, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵⁴ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of ...*, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁵ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of ...*, op. cit., p. 57.

⁵⁶ E. Del Rio Ferres, J. L. Megias, F. Exposito, *Gender – based violence against women with visual and physical disabilities*, "Psicothema" 2013, vol. 25(1), pp. 67–72.

C. A. Howland and D. H. Rintala⁵⁷, such abuse often takes place with a “tacit consent” of women with disabilities who, wishing to keep the relationship at any price, become overly submissive and lenient towards the decisions and demands of their partners.

When analysing the dating issues, it is also necessary to mention the issue of the mode of choosing a partner. It is quite important due to the fact that the approaches of fully able women and women with disabilities are diverse. In the case of fully able women, such selection is subject to strict rules. Yet it is interesting to note that the requirements of women with respect to a potential partner tend to be much higher than the requirements of men⁵⁸. Searching for a partner may take place in line with the principle of homogamy, i.e. choice of a person who has a similar socio-economic status, including the level of education, denomination or origin⁵⁹. In reference to women, it is also possible to mention hypergamy, understood as searching for a partner who belongs to a higher category and social group than one’s own. This need is so strong that women who try to find such a person are capable of adjusting their own romantic feelings to their rules and requirements⁶⁰.

Choosing a dating partner in the case of women with disabilities greatly differs from the choices of fully able women. First of all, it is because they feel the necessity of going on a date with anybody who asks them out, in fear of loneliness. Many women with disabilities look for the same positive features in their partner. In particular, they are looking for a person who is not only interested in the sexual aspect of the relationship, but who also thinks about marriage in the future, who is friendly, attractive and has similar interests. Yet first of all, they are looking for somebody who is able to accept their

⁵⁷ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of...*, op. cit., pp. 57–58.

⁵⁸ J. Wróblewska-Skrzek, *Architektura randki a...*, op. cit., p. 393.

⁵⁹ E. Paprzycka, E. Mianowska, Z. Izdebski, *Jak dobieramy się w pary? Płeć biologiczna i płeć społeczno-kulturowa a preferowane cechy partnera*, „Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów” 2014, No. 15, pp. 329–345.

⁶⁰ T. Szlendak, *Antropologia miłości. Socjobiologiczny model wyjaśniania ludzkich strategii seksualnych i próba jego krytyki*, „Studia Socjologiczne” 1999, No. 1, pp. 5–39.

disability. A significant limitation with respect to the choice of the partner may be the lack of experience of women with disabilities in dating. In relation to this, their ideas are full of idealised relations based on television and films, which may replace the actual experiences, resulting in unrealistic expectations. Thus, if they do not find anybody who complies with such standards, they continue living alone without a romantic relationship⁶¹.

It is worth adding that in the case of women with disabilities, ending a relationship or reluctance to date often has the same causes as in the case of fully able women. Most often, they include the partner's move to another country, disappearance of relation, the partner's unattractiveness or excessive dominance, the fact that the partner is married or engaged to another woman. However, it also has to be emphasised that if the man ends the relationship, the woman with a disability automatically assumes that the disability was the cause of the split-up⁶².

Recapitulation

Summing up the discussion, it has to be emphasised that not all women with motor disabilities are ready to establish closer relations with other people. There are many women who find it hard to accept their disability and, in consequence, consider themselves disabled persons. In the explorations of A. M. Nosek *at al.*, it is possible to find a statement of a woman with an inborn motor disability who does not identify with her disability. She believes that: "she has always felt as if her body did not belong to her"⁶³. Women who decide to date are probably the ones that are presented in the statement of another woman with inborn motor disability. She emphasises that getting to know herself allowed her to find her identity as

⁶¹ C. A. Howland, D. H. Rintala, *Dating behaviors of...*, op. cit., p. 49.

⁶² *Ibidem*, s. 65.

⁶³ M. A. Nosek, C. Howland, D. H. Rintala, M. E. Young, G. F. Chanpong, *National study of...*, op. cit., p. 10.

a woman who is valuable and has a lot of beauty. That is why she should not hide and should definitely engage in social behaviour. Authors of the study emphasise that the first and the second woman are united by a very long path that the former has to complete. Women with motor disabilities need a lot of time to acknowledge their own value (including their femininity) and become ready for romantic relations and dating.

Women with motor disabilities, as compared to fully able women, encounter many more obstacles (external and internal) that prevent them from establishing romantic relationships and dating. Social barriers in dating on the part of women with motor disabilities encompass primarily the negative stereotypes that are rooted in the society, as well as models and stances of behaviour towards women with disabilities. Another important aspect of restrictions is the ideal of the female corporeal beauty rooted in culture, which is the basis for building interest in women on the part of men. Friends and family may sometimes be the source of discouragement and demobilisation with respect to the issue of dating on the part of women with disabilities. The stances adopted by parents who brought up women with disabilities result in specific behaviour in adult life that they manifest, intent on establishing or not establishing new relations. The most obvious social limitations in dating on the part of women with disabilities include the issues of mobility and architectural barriers which are a serious obstacle in this respect. Apart from external barriers in dating, there are also inner issues of women with disabilities. They primarily encompass self-attitude and the level of self-esteem. If a woman manifests a positive self-attitude and her level of self-esteem is high, it is easier for her to establish new contacts. Social skills of women with disabilities, which facilitate their desires for romantic relations and maintenance of existing ones, are also important.

The performed analysis of a slight portion of the available literature on dating behaviour of women with motor disabilities provides valuable information in reference to the issue that is new and practically unexplored in the Polish reality. Commonness of dating

behaviour, as well as its' significance in the weakening of social stereotypes and auto-stereotype of women with disabilities is an important contribution to studies in this respect. In-depth and thorough analyses could enrich the hitherto knowledge in the area of love psychology in reference to women and men with disabilities.

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Alternative forms of support for the elderly: telecare, elderly people's cohousing and intergenerational home-sharing¹

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This article presents examples of alternative forms of support for the elderly. The first part presents the concept and use of telecare: the information and communication system that monitors the situation of the elderly and alerts in the case of danger. The second part contains the advantages and disadvantages of senior cohousing. The third part is about the idea of intergenerational (senior and student) home-sharing popular in Spain and France and the analysis of the capacity to promote this solution in Poland.

KEY WORDS: old age, telecare, care for the elderly, alternative forms of support for the elderly, senior cohousing

Introduction

According to demographic data and predictions of the UN, we are likely to see a global trend whereby the size of population will

¹ The paper contains unpublished passages from the thesis: „Opieka formalna i nieformalna nad seniorami – rzeczywistość i perspektywy” supervised by prof. zw. dr. hab. Kazimierz Przyszczypkowski (Department of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań).

keep shrinking while at the same time the elderly population will steadily grow². The aging of societies, including of the Polish society, will be the outcome of this process³. Consequently, social and individual needs regarding elderly care will increase. Besides cultural and social factors, what significantly impacts elderly care is the mental, physical and financial condition of the elderly people, and this is increasingly better compared to previous generations. Therefore, we can surmise that the needs of today's and future elderly people will evolve and head in the direction of the elderly people's maintaining their self-reliance and independence. What is immensely interesting within the broader subject of care and support for the elderly are alternative solutions aimed at improving elderly people's quality of life. The majority of those solutions are addressed to people who are active and quite self-reliant, and whose main elderly needs are proper housing and community facilities as well as leisure and entertainment amenities, and assistance in having their

² It is immensely difficult to define the beginning of old age. Depending on the author or a researcher, the age that can be defined as the onset of the old age ranges from 55 (or even 45) to 70. [M Straś-Romanowska, *Późna dorosłość. Wiek starzenia się*, [in:] ed. B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała, *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Charakterystyka okresów życia człowieka*, PWN, Warsaw 2014, pp. 264–265]. Furthermore, there is no consensus regarding the boundaries between different phases of the final stage of human life. Due to the large diversity within the population of elderly people and the smooth 'boundary' of old age, the author assumed that the age criterion is not so relevant anymore and a greater role is played by individual indicators such as: decreased efficiency of biological functions, which correlates with old age, physical and intellectual limitations, as well as retirement. Therefore, within this paper, I will use the term 'elderly people' or 'elderly individuals' or 'the elderly' interchangeably as synonyms, in line with their common significance of "people within their final life stage."

³ Cf. A. Ptak-Chmielewska, *Stan, struktura i dynamika ludności Polski według prognozy GUS za lata 2003–2030 oraz prognozy ONZ za lata 2000–2050*, [in:] „Zeszyt nr 9. Sekcji Analiz Demograficznych” 2004, pp. 7–27; M. Szczyt, M. Kowalska, *Stan, struktura i dynamika ludności w Europie według prognozy ONZ za lata 2000–2050*, [in:] „Zeszyt nr 9. Sekcji Analiz Demograficznych” 2004, pp. 33–73; M. Stonawski, *Stan, struktura i dynamika ludności świata według prognozy ONZ za lata 2000–2050*, [in:] „Zeszyt nr 9. Sekcji Analiz Demograficznych” 2004, pp. 83–117.

security and independence needs met. Alternative forms of care and support address the evolving elderly people's care needs and expectations. Unfortunately, the majority of the services and solutions offered are for-profit, thus those who can access them are limited to the considerably wealthy individuals. Nevertheless, some of the solutions proposed do not need large expenditure, and so they can be successfully delivered on a larger scale. This paper presents examples of Polish and international good practices in this field. To deliver and disseminate these good practices might be one of the recommendations for the Polish formal and informal care system for elderly individuals.

Telecare⁴

An innovative response to the market needs comes in the form of telecare. It is an ICT system aimed at monitoring the condition and situation of the elderly (prevention of hazards) and reporting any concerning situations (no contact, a fall etc.). The system is based on a transmitter with a very sensitive microphone and a loudspeaker, which can be used hands-free (without the need to lift the handset or dial the number). The elderly individual keeps a small alert system, mostly in the form of a watch or a pendant. When pressed (for example, during a fall or a significant deterioration in well-being etc.), the system immediately calls the intervention centre. The intervention centre has the elderly person's details, including on their health condition and diseases and contact details of people living in their community that can be notified. This makes it possible for the telecarer to assess the situation, notify the relatives or relevant services and oversee the help until they are sure the problem has been successfully solved. Importantly, the devices

⁴ The information on telecare and the operation of the system used herein originate from the website: <http://www.zdaniemseniora.pl/teleopieka-aniol-stroz-dla-seniorow/> [access: 10.03.2016].

that make up the system are reliable, water-resistant and do not need charging. The system may also comprise the devices to monitor the elderly individual's body position and vital functions, a wide range of smoke detectors and home security systems. This can be complemented with telemedicine: surprisingly, by means of the devices at the elderly individual's disposal, a physician may carry out some measurements (including pressure) remotely.

Hence, this is an extremely interesting and promising elderly care solution, yet it does come with some disadvantages. A pretty obvious disadvantage is the elderly people's resistance against new technology and their doubts about the way the system operates. The experience of system managers show that elderly individuals are afraid of being wired and excessively controlled due to their associations with the system of microphones and speakers. To address these concerns, one needs to explain the way in which this system works to their prospective users. What is a huge milestone is the moment when initial resistance is being broken – positive experiences among the elderly people who become telecare pioneers in their own communities will raise other elderly people's interest in this form of support. It should be noted, however, that telecare comes with a risk of elderly people's growing increasingly lonely. 'Adequately cared' remotely, they often lose their opportunities to interact with and talk to others while using traditional forms of care. Another problem is the financial aspect. If offered on a commercial basis, telecare is provided at a charge resembling a telephone plan fee. The prices start from a few dozen zlotys per month. In Scandinavian countries, the fees are sponsored by the government, yet in Poland, they are funded by the elderly people themselves or, in some cases, local authorities, as long as the latter agree to that. The author's conversations with the elderly people living in Poznan show that the financial aspect of telecare is a barrier to them. However, what deters them is the very fact of the need to pay a fee rather than the amount of this fee.

It is optimistic that the system is growing increasingly popular and is being deployed in cities across Poland, including Sopot,

Gdyni, Katowice, Koszalin, Poznań, Piła and Opole; at times, it is deployed as free support for the elderly people thanks to local authorities and NGOs. Additionally, as the government and local authorities are growing increasingly aware of telecare, it will likely be subsidized by state authorities. It is important primarily because, without excluding other forms of support, telecare increases improves people's safety and reduces the risk of them receiving no help in critical situations. Thus, we can expect it to become a standard solution in future.

Foreign experience shows that it is an economically efficient and effective solution, which provides the elderly people with care while at the same time maintaining their autonomy and independence; besides, it helps the elderly people stay at homes, in the familiar environment they like⁵.

House-sharing for the elderly

Another alternative to institutional care is house-sharing for the elderly people, which is undertaken either formally or informally. The former are self-organized by the elderly people (mostly friends), who move in together in order to help each other. In other words, they form self-help groups, where they keep company to each other and provide each other with mental and physical support. This solution consists in a group of elderly people moving into one or several houses (of the person with the best conditions and who provides their consent) or even buy a house (if the budget allows, designed to meet elderly people's needs and located in the preferred location). An example of such a solution is the story about four friends presented in the film „Zamieszkajmy razem” (dir. Stéphane Robelin). After one of them suffers a heart attack, he is asked by his son, who cannot take care of him, to move to a nursing home. His friends then visit him and, unimpressed by the atmosphere and

⁵ D. López, M. Doménech, *Embodying autonomy in a Home Telecare Service*, "Sociological Review" 2009, No. 56 (s2), pp. 181-195.

the quality of life at this institution, take him from there and move in together. In this case, their self-organized house-share is an act of opposition against institutional care providers and aims to prevent the elderly individual from living there. The elderly move into a home of one of the couples so that they can help each other. This also stimulates their social life at the cost of compromises and the need to adapt to the needs and preferences of other people. It is not by accident that the film was produced in France since such solutions are pretty popular there. In France, there are even organizations such as Cocon 3S, an abbreviation for “the Solidary Single Elderly People’s Nest”, which pair peers who seek flatmates⁶. In Poland, due to limited finances and the cultural context, such solutions are not popular among unrelated elderly people. However, decisions to move in together when the old age comes are sometimes made by relatives, e. g. siblings. It is possible, however, that in future, when the generation of singles, mindful of their student years, will be entering the old age, this kind of self-help will become widespread.

Another form, which is more formal and has a slightly different profile, is the idea of “joint occupation”, whereby compounds of flats and houses are delivered. They are adapted to the needs of the elderly and located in an environment friendly to the elderly people. “Elderly-friendly housing” is growing increasingly popular, not only as commercial solutions executed by developers, who aim to fill in the market niche, but also as projects that are part of local authorities’ elderly policies. It is increasingly the case that Polish cities (e. g. Stargard Szczeciński) purchase apartments from developers to resell or rent them to the elderly people at preferential prices⁷. These apartments are free of any design barriers that could pose threat to or trouble the elderly people. Instead, they offer additional amenities to meet all of the special needs in the elderly (broad passages, elevators

⁶ K. Wyrzykowska, *Szalone domy starości we Francji*, <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/szalone-domy-starosci-we-francji,73142,1,1.html> [access: 10.03.2016].

⁷ <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/425550,Miasta-buduja-osiedla-seniorow> [access: 10.03.2016].

and handrails). This model is often integrated with telecare solutions, which adds value and increases elderly people's safety.

Although it might seem that this kind of solution must be very costly and unprofitable, this measure does provide local authorities with certain benefits. In the long-term perspective, local authorities make savings; after all, the longer an elderly person stays self-reliant (this being supported by elderly-adapted apartments and communities), the lower the demand for admissions into day-care institutions, which cost local authorities a great deal.

An example of dedicated elderly-adapted housing is the Community Elderly House in Poznań (*Środowiskowy Dom Emeryta*), delivered at the initiative of Inteligencja Katolicka „Korab Wielkopolski”, an outcome of many years of efforts. Adapted to the needs of its elderly residents, the residential complex includes amenities that are not typical of residential complexes; these address the needs of the elderly⁸. The residents have access to medical and rehabilitation services, shared utility rooms, the Elderly Club and the shops and services one needs on a daily basis etc. Relevant facilities and amenities help elderly residents have their medical and social needs met. Socializing and entertainment opportunities are also provided. The advantage of this kind of a solution is that the apartments are fully independent. The elderly people can maintain their privacy and independence while at the same time having easy access to the aspects that are essential due to their age (mostly medical facilities) and which are not always readily available in regular housing communities. In typical neighbourhoods, an elderly person might often need to overcome a series of architectural impediments (stairs, narrow passages). The elderly-dedicated housing estates have those barriers kept at a minimum by original designers⁹. Additionally, thanks to

⁸ A detailed description of the building available at: <http://www.budowaroku.pl/laureaci/2010/nagroda-iii-stopnia/15-2010/nagroda-iii-stopnia/48-srodowisko-wy-dom-emeryta-w-poznaniu-przy-ul-drewlanskiej-10.html> [access: 10.03.2016].

⁹ Further information about design barriers and the solutions that can reduce them is available at: I. Benek, *Architektoniczne problemy dostosowania przestrzeni mieszkaniowej dla osób starszych*, [in:] *Przestrzenie starości*, ed. M. Zrałek, Wyższa Szkoła Humanitas, Sosnowiec 2012, pp. 125–140.

the shared functional space, the elderly people can establish close relationships with their neighbours, which promotes integration and may contribute towards development of support groups.

Nevertheless, this idea comes with a risk of elderly ghettoization. By grouping them in age-uniform communities, the elderly people are deprived of the opportunities to interact with other generations. In extreme cases, this may marginalize them and distort the view of the elderly people's role among younger generations, who might have no opportunities to naturally interact with elderly people (for instance neighbours). It can be seen in American cities dedicated to elderly people such as famous Sun City, considered to be the "heaven for the elderly people". As recounted by Monika Magdziak: "*The area of 37.8 km² includes a shopping centre, a full-size gold course, a sports centre, a dance and gymnastics studio and 5 various home models. Later on, a hospital was delivered, too*"¹⁰. Drawing great interest, Sun City and other similar places keep expanding, providing their inhabitants with ever more amenities and opportunities to spend their time in an active way and have a wide range of needs met. Built specifically for the elderly people and restricted to people at a given age (to buy a house in Sun City, one needs to be 55 years old or more, and 99% of inhabitants are aged more than 45¹¹), they have many advantages but also one big disadvantage: they are becoming enclaves of elderly people, who are isolated from intergenerational realities and have no opportunities to interact with people of different ages.

Similar risks, although at a smaller scale, are related to housing estates and blocks of flats for the elderly that are now being constructed in Poland. What, therefore, seem to be better solutions are the practice of adapting regular residential spaces to the needs of the elderly and residential spaces with disabilities and the housing

¹⁰ M. Magdziak, *Mieszkalnictwo dla osób starszych w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki Północnej*, "ARCHITECTURAE et ARTIBUS" 2009, No. 1, pp. 41–42.

¹¹ M. Rudnicka, A. Surdej, *Gospodarka senioralna. Nowy sektor gospodarki narodowej w Polsce*, Centrum im. Adama Smitha, Warsaw 2013, pp. 12–13.

geared towards the elderly needs in a standard fashion. Examples are houses available for everybody that include special apartments adjusted to elderly people's needs (ground-floor apartments built for people with disabilities and the elderly with compromised fitness, other apartments with regular standards as built by the developer). What is extremely advantageous is the idea of Universal Design, whereby apartments are designed and built so that people with various levels of fitness can conveniently use them and that residential space can be readily converted to follow family's changing needs (including physical limitations and disabilities that come with old age). Unfortunately, due to the costs and the space-intensive nature, developers and investors resist this idea, and so we should not expect it to gain widespread popularity anytime soon¹². Let's also keep in mind that, for practical reasons, this solution will likely attract only future generations of elderly people and the relatively wealthy who can afford newly built apartments. Another non-financial cost is the need to move, which mostly comes with strong stress, especially for the elderly.

An extremely important and much needed kind of help for the elderly people who are not so well-off is the assistance in adapting elderly people's houses to meet the needs that change with age. For that help to be effective and factually cover all elderly people, the responsibility for the renovation, including funding, should be taken by local authorities and governmental bodies. The example of the Netherlands, where apartment conversions and moving into an elderly-adapted apartment are subsidised, shows that this is an important element in supporting the care and self-care of elderly people¹³.

¹² E. Niezabitowska, *Mieszkania dla ludzi starych i młodych w kontekście potrzeb i cyklu życia budynku mieszkalnego*, [in:] *Przestrzenie starości*, ed. M. Zralek, Wyższa Szkoła Humanitas, Sosnowiec 2012, pp. 106–124.

¹³ E. Gerke, B. Głuszak, *Mieszkalnictwo dla seniorów w Polsce – potrzeby i wyzwania. Głos w sprawie*, Wspólnota Robocza Związków Organizacji Socjalnych, 2013, http://www.wrzos.org.pl/download/STANOWISKO_MieszkalnictwoSeniorow2013.pdf [access: 10.03.2016].

Intergenerational flatmates

Another joint occupation solution, which also prevents subculturation of the elderly, is 'intergenerational living'. The difference is that it is not peers who are flatmates, but pairs of residents (or less frequently – groups) of various ages. The main benefit of this solution is that the elderly are provided with assistance in exchange for a part of the apartment. And students who seek for an apartment move into apartments of elderly people who seek help. It is a kind of a barter exchange between the old person and the student. In exchange for the room, the student offers the old individual company and provides them with help (including with cleaning and shopping). This solution has been growing increasingly popular in Spain and France – to the point that special organizations are being established (such as Ensemble 2 Générations – “Two generations together”), acting as intermediaries between old people and students and spreading the idea of intergenerational living¹⁴. The positive aspects of this kind of solutions is the increase in intergenerational tolerance and cooperation as well as the following direct benefits for both parties: the old person is provided with care and company (which is of particular importance in the light of elderly people's loneliness); and the young person can use an apartment free of charge or at a small charge, often in an attractive location.

While observing the situation in Poland, including students' apartment preferences, we should assume that this solution is of an incidental nature and will not be hugely popular in future. Paid rooms at elderly people's homes are a niche solution, regarded by students as a solution of the last resort, something that partly results from stereotypes about problematic elderly people and the common opinions that renting a room limits one's freedom. On the other

¹⁴ Cf. M. Rębała, *Francja: Starzy i młodzi w jednym stają domu*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,17976202,Francja__starzy_i_mlodzi_w_jednym_stoja_domu.html [access: 10.03.2016]; K. Wyrzykowska, *Szalone domy starości we Francji*, <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/szalone-domy-starosci-we-francji,73142,1,1.html> [access: 10.03.2016].

hand, the elderly people can be mistrustful about the idea of living with an unknown person. Nevertheless, these are just assumptions. After all, these are universal problems, and intergenerational flat-sharing is very popular in France and Spain. An interesting idea for a research project would be to look into cultural factors that impact the level of elderly people's and students' interest in this solution. Arguably, besides the many cultural and personality-related factors, a huge role is played by the financial aspect. Should assistance be the only 'payment' for the apartment, many students, especially those in poor financial situations, would likely choose to enter such agreements. For the elderly people, this solution is also financially advantageous compared to the professional services offered by nurses and carers.

Therefore, it might be a good idea to promote this concept among elderly people and students. A good way might be to establish cooperation between the Student Government Board and Universities of the Third Age and Elderly Clubs. One can also assume that in future this idea will be used for commercial purposes and businesses will emerge that will connect potential intergenerational flatmates.

Summary

The examples of telecare, elderly people's house-sharing and intergenerational flat-sharing shown in the above section may be a bridge between informal and formal kinds of care and, above all, reduce the deficiencies in supply of traditional forms of care. Additionally, these solutions correspond to the new profile of an elderly individual as a person who is self-reliant, independent and possesses ever-greater internal and external resources. Unfortunately, these solutions are relatively new, and thus absent from the public awareness and seen as a novelty and a curio rather than a real support proposal. In many cases, the barriers are financial matters (which is

the case with the implementation of telecare). The situation in which the possibility to use effective forms of support on condition they have adequate funds is disheartening. Hopefully, funding regulations will be passed in response to the emergence of new solutions to support the elderly so that possibly all elderly people interested could use them. The main goal seems to be to promote the alternative solutions covered herein and the professional management of these solutions (especially for the joint occupation), which would not only improve their use, but also help prevent any possible abuses.

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“A Child with a Child from an Orphanage” – Stigmatisation and Self-stigmatisation vs. Life Opportunities of Minor Mothers, Former Wards of Childcare Facilities¹

ABSTRACT: Agnieszka Skowrońska-Pućka, *“A Child with a Child from an Orphanage” – Stigmatisation and Self-stigmatisation vs. Life Opportunities of Minor Mothers, Former Wards of Childcare Facilities*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 221-242. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

The article is a theoretical and empirical study; it presents fragments of an individual qualitative study of the issue of teenage motherhood among the wards of childcare facilities. The range of the discussed issues includes the stigmatisation and self-stigmatisation of the girls who had babies while they were still under-eighteen and then stayed with their babies at the childcare facility. Stigmatisation practices are presented in the context of the opportunities and the actual life of the former wards of childcare facilities who became mothers while they were still teenagers.

KEY WORDS: minor mother, childcare facility; stigmatisation; self-stigmatisation; exclusion; marginalization

¹ This is the phrase used by one of the women, a former ward of a childcare facility and a participant of my research, when she referred to having a baby before coming of age and her stay at the childcare facility together with the baby.

(Self)stigmatisation – a self-fulfilling prophecy – introduction of the subject matter

In every society, as Iwona Przybył observes, there is an axiological and normative system which should be followed by its members. "It is the society that defines the categories and sets of features perceived as normal and natural"². As she continues to point out, it is the society that decides who will become a degenerate³.

Although the Polish society respects the values related to motherhood, the value of teenage motherhood is not recognised and as such, it is quite differently labelled. Underage mothers, wards of childcare facilities, can be classified as a group of stigmatised individuals, i.e. those that possess a profoundly discrediting social attribute and for this reason are perceived as inferior⁴. What is important in the case of the described group, such an attribute may be both being placed in a childcare facility and having a baby early in life as well as coming from a dysfunctional family. Social stigmatisation is a "process or experience, where multiple forms of social behaviour or attributes are perceived subjectively as social disapproval and thus become discrediting in other people's perspective, which in turn enables the exclusion from proper relationships and leads to identity dysfunction"⁵. As E. Olszewska indicated, quoting E. Goffman, society does not believe that a person affected with a stigma, or ostracised in any other way, is a complete human being.

² I. Przybył, *Naznaczanie społeczne i samonaznaczanie osób niepełnych*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny XV”, Poznań 2003, p. 44.

³ I. Przybył, *Naznaczanie społeczne i samonaznaczanie osób niepełnych*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny XV”, Poznań 2003, p. 44.

⁴ M. Świątkiewicz-Mośny, *Tożsamość napiętnowana. Socjologiczne studium mechanizmów stygmatyzacji i autostygmatyzacji na przykładzie kobiet z zespołem Turnera*, NIMOS, Cracow 2010, p. 26; E. Czykwin, *Stygmat społeczny*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2007, p. 16.

⁵ E. Czykwin, *Stygmat społeczny*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2007, pp. 59–60, op. cit.; E. Goffman, *Pietno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości*, GWP, Gdańsk 2005, p. 31.

Believing in the righteousness of its own (pre)assumptions, society applies various forms of discrimination against an individual, thus effectively reducing his/her life opportunities. As a result of this process, ostracised and stigmatised individuals and groups have a negative perception of themselves, which might affect their future decisions and actions⁶. As E. Czykwin points out, "(...) a stigma becomes a foundation of one's own self-perception. This means that it becomes a source of depression, dissatisfaction, dejection and the feeling of pointlessness of one's own life, anger, discouragement and other adverse sensations that additionally tend to be extrapolated onto all other actions and thoughts. Furthermore, a stigma may be related to a series of thoughts, attitudes and expectation of oneself, which means that the afflicted person starts to perceive himself/herself as (...) an injured or negative personality. If various aspects of self-image are dominated by the stigma, a perception scheme is created which narrows down the individual's self-perception with the dominant category of stigmatisation. This is how the blinding function of the stigma becomes so important that the person may fail to notice his/her other attributes. The blinding function of the stigma means you perceive yourself in this light and thus the stigma is internalised"⁷. Pushing an individual into a defined role, imposed by the society, is also possible due to the mechanism of a self-fulfilling prophecy. A person starts to believe in an initially (often) false diagnosis and acts according to it⁸. A person – in this case an underage mother, a ward of a childcare facility – is given a label (first labelled as a child from a dysfunctional family, then an underage mother, a ward of a social rehabilitation facility) and then starts to be isolated and separated from participating in conformist groups – in this case, groups of peers without children –

⁶ See also: E. Olszewska, *Stygmat przestępcy jako czynnik utrudniający readaptację społeczną byłych skazanych*, Resocjalizacja Polska 2012, vol. 3, pp. 174–175.

⁷ E. Czykwin, *Stygmat społeczny*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2007, p. 222.

⁸ E. Goffman, *Pietno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2006.

as a result of social ostracism⁹. "This is how the social audience informs an individual of his/her non-conformist behaviour, thus reinforcing the deviation and expecting further behaviour of this kind"¹⁰.

Apart from changes in the perception of the stigmatised person, the changes in self-perception are also vital, occurring as a result of social evaluation. Experiencing stigma, as Elżbieta Czykwin points out¹¹, reduces the feeling of control and empowerment, which also affects the relationships between the individual and others. "Supremacy of the stigma, (...) may result in self-isolating decisions of the stigmatised person, which is how their previous interactions become more superficial, weaker or non-existent altogether. A hypertrophy of a negative label may have serious consequences, as it becomes a permanent element of self-image, this being included in the new identity"¹². Self-stigmatisation may lead to reduced self-esteem and as such it may be a crucial obstacle to assuming social roles and functions at work and in personal life. Self-stigmatisation removes any hope, positive self-esteem and morale, and it reduced the quality of life¹³. What is significant, having a feature that is not tolerated by the society may lead to a systematic change in self-

⁹ Its scale can be seen when analysing internet forums where teenage mothers are looking for support and help (see also: A. Skowrońska-Pućka, *Nastoletnie macierzyństwo – charakterystyka fenomenu na podstawie analizy cyberprzestrzeni*, [in:] *Społeczeństwo internautów a kultura globalna. Młody użytkownik w sieci*, M. Kalczyńska, A. Rajchel (ed.), Opole 2014; A. Skowrońska-Pućka, *Przemiany macierzyństwa. Obraz nastoletniego macierzyństwa w sieci*, [in:] *Współczesna rodzina. Szanse-Zagrożenia-Kierunki przemian*, ed. K. Pujer, Wydawnictwo Exante, Wrocław 2016.

¹⁰ E. Olszewska, *Stygmat przestępcy jako czynnik utrudniający readaptację społeczną bytych skazanych*, *Resocjalizacja Polska* 2012, vol 3, p. 177.

¹¹ E. Czykwin, *Stygmat społeczny*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 224.

¹² P. Chomczyński, *Problem etykietowania i stygmatyzacji wśród wychowanków zakładów poprawczych i schronisk dla nieletnich. Socjologiczna analiza zjawiska*, „*Studia Socjologiczne*” 2015, vol. 4, p. 209.

¹³ P. Malik, 2010 <http://www.psychiatria.pl/wiadomosc/schizofrenia-a-autostygmatyzacja/8585> [access: 20.06.2017].

image – this is how a new identity is formed, focused on the deviation: in this case, it will be the early pregnancy and the stay at child-care facility, and it happens regardless of the stigmatisation as performed directly by the society¹⁴.

As Iwona Przybył points out, quoting E. Pfuhl, in order for self-stigmatisation – the so called symbolic stigmatisation – to occur, three conditions should be fulfilled: the awareness of the rules, the awareness of acting in a way that is not approved, and the awareness that "such" people are evaluated very poorly. The results of my research – although the stigmatisation issue was not the focus at that time – show that all the three conditions are fulfilled in the case of the studied group. This should be a source of concern, because it could mean that "an individual who violates a norm may start labelling herself in accordance with the negative significance attached to a particular behaviour by the culture"¹⁵.

Research methodology¹⁶

The subject matter of the research whose fragments are presented in this paper, conducted in 2013–2014, is the experience of early motherhood, which is the permanent element of biographies of young girls growing up in childcare facilities. As I was in direct contact with girls who experienced early motherhood, and also because of the specific nature of the subject matter of this research and the discussed research issues related to "difficult motherhood" experienced in an institutional setting, and also for methodological and humanistic reasons, in this research, I have chosen the qualitative method for empirical verifications. Biographical method made

¹⁴ M. Sajkowska, *Stygmat instytucji: społeczne postrzeganie wychowanków domów dziecka*, Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych, Warsaw 1999.

¹⁵ I. Przybył, *Naznaczanie społeczne i samonaznaczanie osób niepełnych*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny XV”, Poznań 2003, p. 50.

¹⁶ A. Skowrońska-Pućka (*Przed*)wczesne macierzyństwo-perspektywa biograficzna. *Diagnoza, pomoc i wsparcie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2016, pp. 128–137.

it possible for me to learn about the specific trajectory of life of these girls, whose common experience was early motherhood. The technique I used during the empirical verifications was in-depth interview.

In my research, I focused on the following objectives:

1. Describing the problems and experiences related to critical life events, such as being placed at a childcare facility as a child (which entails the limitation or withdrawal of parental responsibility), early pregnancy, and in turn, early motherhood.
2. Disclosing a subjective manner of perceiving and interpreting one's own crisis situation by underage mothers. Understanding the meanings and significance attributed to early motherhood by underage mothers. Understanding how motherhood rendered meaning to their lives.
3. Showing the emotions that accompany the event, as well as sensations, demonstrated types of behaviour and reactions displayed by underage mothers.
4. Determining the needs of underage mothers as regards social support (informal and institutionalised).
5. Obtaining information about the effectiveness of the prevention and support system addressed to underage mothers.
6. Defining main directions for creating a support system for underage mothers and their children (considering their specific life circumstances).

I have made a purposeful selection of the research sample. My research included women who fulfilled the following conditions:

- became pregnant or had a baby when they were no more than eighteen; additionally, they were placed in a childcare institution while, or before, they were pregnant, as a result of their own parents' or guardians' parental responsibility being limited or withdrawn;
- provided a written consent to the research and agreed that the information provided by them would be used for academic purposes;

- stayed at a childcare facility (or other institutions) with their children for more than two years, as a result of their own parents' or guardians' parental responsibility being limited or withdrawn;
- at the time of the research at least two years had passed since they left the institution;
- the contact between the researcher and the researched individual was deep enough for both parties to develop mutual trust, so as to make it possible to obtain honest, reliable information.

The location of the research was the natural environment of the mothers – as indicated by them. It was usually the place where the narrators' parents were living, their own flats or the institution that supported them. This is how the researched women could feel safe and comfortable, and the researcher had the opportunity to obtain empirical data through observation at the same time.

“A child with a child from an orphanage” – multiple labels – as perceived by the audience and¹⁷ the actor

21st century is the time of growing social acceptance of the model, where you first gain increasing education, diverse professional qualifications, financial independence and a place to live, which means the decision to start a family is postponed. At the same time, though, we are facing an increasingly popular and visible reduction of the age of sexual initiation, and consequently, early – or even premature, as specialists in this area emphasise – pregnancy among very young, girls – teenagers¹⁸, Although the Polish society respects

¹⁷ In order to obtain the perspective of the audience, I refer to fragments of statements taken from Internet forums, where underage mothers look for help and support. Only mothers who fulfilled the abovementioned conditions participated in my research.

¹⁸ See also: P. Bunio-Mroczek, *Wczesne rodzicielstwo jako zagrożenie biedą i wykluczeniem społecznym* (PDF) 2010, K. Wąż, *Spółeczno-kulturowy kontekst zjawiska (przed)wczes-*

motherhood, in the case of teenagers motherhood loses its absolute value. The problems of this group seem to be unnoticed or “they function in the social consciousness as an image composed of sensational, outrageous facts highlighted by the media, as a result of promiscuous, unlimited sexual activity undertaken by teenagers, often under the influence of alcohol and drugs”¹⁹, which contributes to and reinforces the stereotypical perception of this group and may lead to social isolation, thus determining their future life.

When a teenager gets pregnant and the young girl (not prepared for the role of a mother as yet) may not rely on the support of her family, which, as a result of adverse, often sudden transformations, cannot fulfil its basic functions, the control and consequently intervention of public support system becomes necessary. The ultimate form of supporting a family and an underage pregnant girl or an underage mother is placing them in foster care. It is worth noting that it is an immensely difficult situation for a young girl, who experiences strong emotions related to her own adolescence and an often unplanned pregnancy, being placed in a childcare institution, separated from her own family and the need to adapt to new conditions in the institution (where the situation is dramatically different from the circumstances at the family home), as well as starting education at a new school, in the role of a child with a child from an orphanage.

[Iga] *I went to the institution straight from the hospital, with the baby. I was afraid of everything. It was difficult. Very difficult. Everything*

nego rodzicielstwa, [in:] *Kultura mediów, ciało i tożsamość – konteksty socjalizacyjne*, eds. W. Jakubowski, S. Jaskulska, Impuls, Cracow 2011, pp. 133–136, P. Szukalski, *Nastoletnie macierzyństwo we współczesnej Polsce*, „Polityka społeczna 2001, vol. 1. (PDF).

¹⁹ Z. Izdebski, T. Niemiec, K. Wąż, *(Zbyt)młodzi rodzice*, Wydawnictwo TRIO, Warsaw 2011, p. 9; M. Andrzejewski, *Podstawy prawne ochrony macierzyństwa w Polsce status prawny małoletnich matek i nieletnich matek*, [in:] *Sytuacja prawna, społeczna i wychowawcza nieletnich ciężarnych i nieletnich matek przebywających w placówkach resocjalizacyjnych*. (Implementation Report of Project titled „Chcę być z Tobą Mamą!”, eds. A. Sikora, M. Konopczyński, Warsaw 2013, PDF, pp. 88–89).

was new... strange to me... Plus the hormones. A new institution, a small baby, and friends. And a new school on top of all this...

[Angelika] (...) *The worst thing was I went to a new school and I was pregnant – It felt so strange. I enter the school and I feel bad... I feel everybody’s looking at me, thinking God knows what. It wasn’t pleasant. No, no, no. I remember I entered a classroom and the teacher introduced me to the class: that I am their new pupil... Fortunately, she didn’t say I was from an institution or something, because that would have been it... I would have died right there. It was only after a while that the class learnt I was from an institution, but when they saw a young pregnant girl, they must have known I have come to the (name of the institution). I remember a few people came up to me and said hello, but I still felt strange... I felt they were thinking something else than they said...*

Angelika’s narration confirms that “the stay at the childcare institution stigmatises the child, who feels she is perceived by teachers and peers as someone different that children from normal families”²⁰.

The group of underage mothers, as the specialist researchers indicate, is a diverse one. It includes individuals with different social origin, social and economic position and resulting financial situation, relational situation in the family home, living conditions etc. Yet it seems that the characteristic feature they have in common are labels they receive on the account of their early pregnancy and the resulting early motherhood.

One of the strongest sources of such labels and the most painful consequence of the early motherhood, apart from the teenager’s own fears and concerns, is the constant pressure experienced from the society. Young girls face the “unfavourable attitude of the social

²⁰ M. Prokosz, *Dziecko osamotnione i sieroce. Między rodziną pochodzenia a rodzinną formą opieki*, [in:] *Człowiek w sytuacji (bez)nadziei – konteksty teoretyczne i praktyczne*, eds. R. Bibik, A. Urbaniak, Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa im. Witelona w Legnicy, Legnica (PDF), 2011, p. 13.

opinion, because of their failure to conform to social and religious norms, which assume that only a woman of age can have a baby, and only once she is in a formal relationship with her partner"²¹. The study conducted by Paulina Bunio-Mroczek shows that the girls in question have no widespread network of social relations²². This contributes to the occurrence and enforcement of the stigmatisation process of this group.

Teenage mothers are often attacked on internet forums, where they look for support and warm words. Below you will find an example of a comment that illustrates this phenomenon²³:

why did you go bonking – so young and without protection. do you know how such girls are called. Such pathology is the most amusing – when you can go and screw around, but when it comes to taking care of the child, you have your grandmas, grandpas and so on. You could f**k around? Now take care of it yourself. Where did you take it from that you can scr*w around without actually thinking at what age and with whom etc. Have you ever seen a girl die at this age for lack of sex Others can take care of themselves, and you, sluts, can't²⁴.

The scale of the phenomenon in cyberspace is enormous. Judgments offered on internet forums may be rather cruel.

Are we negating these teenage wh*****res?? Let me reply... so that they don't think they will get away with it, so that the rest of the society can see that you shouldn't do it.... I doubt whether every teenager who accidentally gets pregnant really wishes for a baby. Quite the contrary, but sometimes you just have to face the facts. (...) I don't like (...) teen-

²¹ M. Bidzan, *Nastoletnie matki. Psychiczne aspekty ciąży, porodu i połogu*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Cracow 2007, p. 66.

²² See also: P. Bunio-Mroczek, *Wczesne rodzicielstwo jako zagrożenie biedą i wykluczeniem społecznym* (PDF) 2010, p. 18; A. Resler, *Dzieci mają dzieci*, „Psychologia w szkole”, vol. 4, 2014, p. 14.

²³ In each of the quoted fragments from internet forums, original spelling was retained.

²⁴ Author: nie umiera sie jak sie nie daje, http://f.kafeteria.pl/temat.php?id_p=4729152 [access: 12.01.2014].

age snots and I actually feel sorry for you YOU HAVE LOST YOUR LIVES and I won't take your word for it that it's great to have a brat when you're 16-18 (...) ²⁵.

Hostile, unfriendly attitudes may largely enhance and increase a young mother's feeling of estrangement and consequently, loneliness. The issue of social stigmatisation and rejection as experienced by these young girls is a threat for their and their children's further growth and functioning. Małgorzata Karwowska points out that "lonely mothers, without any support from their child's father or other family members, isolated in their own local environment and devoid of any social relations to this environment usually fail at motherhood (...). They become incompetent mothers, retarded as regards social expectations for the mother's role. Consequently, the children under their care also develop at a slower pace. They don't have sufficient stimuli to boost their development, they are exposed to the discomfort of unwholesome motherhood and weakened bonds and disorders within the family generate disorders in the children's health, mental and motor development" ²⁶.

It is worth emphasising that both in literature and in reality, one can hardly see the appreciation of the difficult decision young mothers made to give birth to and bring up the child. Alicja Skowrońska-Zbierzchowska and Mariola Bidzan point out that they are ridiculed and ostracised also at school ²⁷, sometimes even by teach-

²⁵ Author: Anonymous <http://www.papilot.pl/historie-czytelniczek/6376/Wa-sze-listy-Nie-ponizajcie-nastolatek-w-ciazy/2.html> [access: 22.07.2013].

²⁶ M. Karwowska, *Macierzyństwo wobec dziecka niepełnosprawnego intelektualnie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego w Bydgoszczy, Bydgoszcz 2007, p. 53.

²⁷ It should be noted that in this respect, the situation has improved, which is proved by my empirical verifications. Teenage pregnancy does not have to mean the end of education. This is proved by the results of the research of the Sociology Department of the University of Adam Mickiewicz, conducted among underage mothers. It follows from the research that in a friendly environment 85% of them can continue their education after giving birth to the baby (S. Królikowska, *Sytuacja społeczna młodocianych matek*, „Dysfunkcje Rodziny. Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny XXI” 2011, pp. 95-97, A. Resler, *Dzieci mają dzieci*, „Psychologia w szkole”, vol. 4, 2014, p. 15.

ers and educators. M. Bidzan writes: "although times (and regulations) have changed and a pregnant girl is no longer expelled from school 'to avoid demoralisation', it is often the case that the environment makes it clear how improper her conduct is"²⁸. This is also corroborated by the results of other research²⁹. When analysing the results of the verification of the abovementioned authors, we get to know the stories of young girls, rejected by their teachers and friends, encouraged to drop out of school or at least change the school, which was justified with their adverse or demoralising influence on other pupils. Young mothers or teenagers expecting a baby are faced with intolerance not only of their teachers, school principals or educators, but also of other pupils and their parents. The pressure of the parents of other pupils (often) leads to the teenage mothers dropping out³⁰.

(...) I have such a case - my friend is pregnant. We are now about to finish second grade. She decided she would have the baby and come back to school, to pass her final exam. (...) And this is where the school builds obstacles - in particular the head teacher and her teacher. They tell her she wouldn't make it. The head teacher conceded and agreed to grant her one-year leave or extramural learning mode - she claims it's good for the baby, but in fact they want to get rid of the problem. (...) the head teacher has set other teachers, the school advisor, nurse and the girl's teacher against her, (...). No help or support whatsoever. The girl is only stressed because of this and can't spend her time learning while she still can³¹.

²⁸ M. Bidzan, *Nastoletnie matki. Psychiczne aspekty ciąży, porodu i połogu*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Cracow 2007, p. 37.

²⁹ See also: A. Skowrońska-Zbierchowska, *Doświadczenia matoletnich rodziców. Aspekty socjopedagogiczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2010.

³⁰ It should be remembered that it is often the case that such girls are underachieving at school even before they get pregnant (which is characteristic of this category of youth), lack of motivation to learn, social and economic origin - which also has its impact and often leads to the decision to drop out.

³¹ Author: Licealistka <http://szkola.wp.pl/kat,108836,title,Ciaza-szkole,wid,12353076,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=110ff2> [access: 22.07.2013].

One of the girls who participated in my research emphasised the negative behaviour of the peer group:

[Daria] (...) *in my class only some girls went about the school and insulted me – they said I have nothing better to do but produce children.*

[Julia] *I was always in the shadow, on the side. I knew what they (schoolfriends) all think of me and it wasn't nice...*

Another girl noted a teacher's unprofessional behaviour:

[Mirka] *Generally it was OK, but the school advisor made a silly comment about my pregnancy – she said I follow in my sister's footsteps or something ...*

[Asia] *I only remember that the priest once made a comment after religious education, that I'm so young and with a child, that it's shameful and something...*

No support in the school environment is a source of concern, because – as presented in the empirical verifications – it is the class teacher along with other teachers that can reduce the feeling of isolation, rejection and loneliness, experienced so strongly by pregnant teenagers and young mothers, by creating a friendly, warm atmosphere of acceptance and understanding. This is also indirectly how the impact of the stigma and the label may be reduced, which in turn may prolong the period of education and this is crucial for the girls' future lives³².

Another issue highlighted by young mothers is the painful experience of social isolation after being rejected by those closest to them. Apart from the conclusions from the related research on the subject, an example of this phenomenon is the post of an underage mother on an internet forum.

³² See also: A. Skowrońska-Zbierchowska, *Doświadczenia matoletnich rodziców. Aspekty socjopedagogiczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2010.

I only had one friend who stuck with me, supported me and offered good advice – she didn't leave me and didn't turn her back on me³³.

Isolation happens already during pregnancy. It may be due to the fact that the young girl voluntarily withdraws from social interaction, because she feels her pregnancy is not accepted, she is ashamed or fears the reactions of others. It may also be due to the prospective mother's health issues during the pregnancy, for which a young organism is not always ready. They often also experience rejection by their partners (the children's fathers)³⁴.

[Angelika] *When I didn't know I was pregnant yet – it must have been the first or the beginning of the second month – we split up and after a while I discovered I was pregnant. And it was already after I was placed at the emergency care unit.*

[Monika] *I was alone back when I was pregnant. He found a new girlfriend really quickly and I didn't want to ask for anything...*

After the baby is born, the isolation grows. New tasks and duties faced by the girls force them to make decisions and divide their time between what is typical of this stage – friendships, peer group, social life – and the absorbing job of a young mother, only just learning to function in her new role. Low self-esteem of underage mothers, as well as poor interpersonal skills make it difficult for them to make new friends to replace those lost ones, and the research in this respect shows that, paradoxically, they need friendship a lot³⁵. Furthermore, a series of new duties related to childcare, while continuing school education and the related tasks, means the old relationships gradually disappear. Losing contact with peers

³³ Author; Ona 182 <http://wizaz.pl/forum/showthread.php?t=620061> [access: 22.07.2013].

³⁴ See also: M. Bidzan, *Nastoletnie matki. Psychiczne aspekty ciąży, porodu i połogu*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Cracow 2007, P. Bunio-Mroczek, *Wczesne rodzicielstwo jako zagrożenie biedą i wykluczeniem społecznym* (PDF), 2010.

³⁵ See also: M. Bidzan, *Nastoletnie matki. Psychiczne aspekty ciąży, porodu i połogu*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Cracow 2007, p. 47.

and the very fact of being placed in a socialisation institution enhances the isolation. This, in turn, facilitates the process of social stigmatisation, which enhances the existing emotional problems, often experienced by this category of youth. Isolation may occur already when the girl is pregnant and then it exacerbates soon after childbirth. This is a very difficult time for young mothers. Apart from medical complications resulting from their young age, they also experience a psychological conflict related to a change in their hierarchy of values, lack of social maturity and not being ready for the role of a mother³⁶. This difficult psychological and developmental situation of underage mothers is corroborated by the studies of Tomasz Kucharski and Magdalena Palkij³⁷. The results obtained by young mothers corroborate the consequences they experience as a result of pregnancy and the operating stereotypes. The researchers have indicated that there is the characteristic feeling of social estrangement – withdrawal, difficulties in starting and maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships. They noted that underage mothers feel nobody understands them. They are lonely and often feel that others are tormenting them. Furthermore, the researchers pointed to emotional estrangement – feeling miserable, apathetic and experiencing condemnation, which is rather common in this group. As compared to their childless peers, these girls have lower self-esteem. Underage mothers, as follows from the studies, are convinced that life is hard on them and nobody understands them. They can't believe they may be liked by others and achieve something together. They have problems opening up, they are hardly active when in a group, as they are afraid of failure and ridicule³⁸.

³⁶ See also: M. Bidzan, *Nastoletnie matki. Psychiczne aspekty ciąży, porodu i połogu*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Cracow 2007, p. 68.

³⁷ T. Kucharski, M. Palkij, *Charakterystyka porównawcza wybranych cech osobowości młodocianych matek i uczennic liceum ogólnokształcącego*, [in:] *Środowisko – młodzież – zdrowie: pedagogiczne wymiary zagrożeń i rozwoju młodzieży*, ed. J. A. Malinowski [et al.] Wydawnictwo „Akapił”, Toruń. 2007, p. 241.

³⁸ See also: T. Kucharski, M. Palkij, *Charakterystyka porównawcza wybranych cech osobowości młodocianych matek i uczennic liceum ogólnokształcącego*, [in:] *Środowisko –*

The results of the research by Tadeusz Rymiarz provide equally interesting information about the emotional situation of underage mothers. The results let us conclude that underage unmarried mothers tend to be suspicious and distrustful of others, they often display envy, stubbornness and negativism, which is often the cause of misunderstandings and conflicts in interpersonal relationships. The researcher noted that what is characteristic is that underage mothers tend to blame themselves, experience loneliness and fail to believe in their own ability to cope with life tasks in an effective manner. Teenage mothers relatively often experience discouragement and sadness as well as self-aggression. They have rather low stress resistance, which is a source of negative emotional states – exhaustion, anxiety, fear, concern, lack of trust in oneself. Increased tension doubtless makes it difficult for them to adapt to social norms and requirements³⁹. The difficult emotional situation is also corroborated by other empirical verifications, which indicate that the group of underage mothers is “characterised by high anxiety level, feeling of dejection, helplessness, lack of faith in the effectiveness of one’s own actions and effective fulfilment of childcare and upbringing tasks – all of these form a significant obstacle to overcoming a crisis situation and striving for success in life”⁴⁰.

młodzież – zdrowie: pedagogiczne wymiary zagrożeń i rozwoju młodzieży, ed. J. A. Malinowski [et al.], Wydawnictwo „Akapit”, Toruń, p. 247, A. Resler, *Dzieci mają dzieci*, „Psychologia w szkole” 2014 vol. 4 (PDF), pp. 12–13, J. J McWhirter, *Zagrożona młodzież*, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne PARPA, Warsaw 2005, p. 219; D. Kornas-Biela, *Oblicza macierzyństwa*, Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1996, p. 133.

³⁹ See also: T. Rymiarz, *Sytuacja emocjonalno-społeczna nieletnich matek wychowujących nieślubne dziecko*, [in:] *Zagadnienia marginalizacji i patologizacji życia społecznego*, ed. F. Kozaczuk, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2007, p. 190.

⁴⁰ T. Rymiarz, *Sytuacja emocjonalno-społeczna nieletnich matek wychowujących nieślubne dziecko*, [in:] *Zagadnienia marginalizacji i patologizacji życia społecznego*, ed. F. Kozaczuk, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2007, p. 190; O. Padała, M. Podgórnica, M. Sadowska, A. Wdowiak, M. Piróg, M. Putowski, J. Zawislak, *Młodociane macierzyństwo jako problem medyczny i społeczny*, “European Journal of

Stigmatisation and self-stigmatisation of underage mothers, wards of childcare facilities, and their life circumstances – the actor's perspective

Stigmatisation and self-stigmatisation are examples of multifaceted processes, which may lead underage mothers to rejection, discrimination and being excluded from functioning in various fields of social life, thus determining their future life. Experts in this subject matter have identified a series of social factors which may affect the stereotypical perception and the shape of their current life circumstances – in this case, it refers to former wards of childcare facilities who became teenage mothers. The abovementioned factors include i.a.: social reception, which is still mostly negative in the case of teenage mothers, although considerable progress has been made in this respect; the media coverage of early motherhood, which unfortunately focuses on highlighting dysfunctions and bad practice in this respect; poor social network of a teenage mother, as shown by empirical verifications; the attitude and functioning of the family and friends, which additionally reinforces the poor starting position of the wards of childcare facilities; (and finally) the underage mother herself, who is in this case not only stigmatised with socialisation activities of her family and the institution, which affect her attitudes, behaviour, decision and low level of activity in life.

The phenomenon of stigmatisation and self-stigmatisation gains special meaning in the context of the process leading to underage mothers gaining independence and, what is most important, its effects. Underage mothers, convinced of their own low value, negatively evaluated by the society, and clinging to stereotypes, leave the institutions and proceed to experience serious adaptation problems, as proved by empirical verifications, and are threatened by social exclusion and marginalisation, which may be the result of the abovementioned phenomena.

Medical" 2014, vol. 2(3), pp. 62–63, A. Resler, *Dzieci mają dzieci*, „Psychologia w szkole” 2014, vol. 4, p. 12.

The analysis of the narration indicates that some of the young mothers decided not to continue education as a result of convictions delimiting their horizons.

[Julia] *I would like to go back to school, but I can't – as long as they (the children) are young. I want to, but the worst thing is, I can't do it. I would have to commute to the city (...) I would have to go there every day and this would not be economical, because in winter it's hard to travel every day with them...*

The analysis of the narration shows that the girls have also ceased to look for a job, which made them financially dependent on their partners or supporting institutions.

[Pola](...) *I prepare those CVs and so on and she (her mother) tells me: Yeah, right, and you think you will find a job! Instead of supporting me, she makes me more and more negative about the whole situation*

[Kasia] *Let's be honest about it, shall we? Who will hire me? Who? Knowing I have a young child... and will this be worth the while anyway?*

We can clearly see the pessimism regarding personal life, which is manifested in the fact that the girls don't believe they are capable of starting and maintaining a close and satisfying relationship.

[Pola] *Well, it was hard for me. I thought I would always be alone now, because who would like a girl with a child and from cari mari (that's how Pola describes the institution at which she stayed). Oh, I missed having someone, the significant other...*

Delimiting convictions often led them to remain in an unsatisfactory relationship.

[Daria] (...) *If I had somewhere to go, I would. But what can I do? (...) so I'm stuck with him, his brothers and his mommy.*

Stigmatisation and self-stigmatisation are an example of self-accelerating processes which lead to adverse defence mechanisms. The narrations show that underage mothers who internalise the stigma tend to accept discriminating social attitudes, which further reduced their self-esteem and makes them avoid any social challenge whatsoever.

Conclusion

The girls' lives may be seen as a result of inadequate preparation for independence at the facility, lack of cooperation among supporting institutions, although of course we also have to emphasise the passive attitude of the wards' families and the girls themselves as well as the impact of stigmatisation. Even in the "environment of practitioners" – among social workers and the employees of other supporting institutions – there is the conviction that being placed in an institution most often ends in a failure – there is the assumption that people brought up in institutional conditions usually fail to get on in life and cannot cope: they have low positions in the social structure and the children of the former wards often follow in their parents' footsteps"⁴¹. The picture of life of the former wards of childcare institutions who became mothers before they turned of age, although presented only in fragments in this paper, partly corroborates this thesis.

On the basis of the analysis of various dimensions of the current life circumstances of the girls⁴², it was determined that the group includes also "marginalised" cases, because of the continuation of the trajectory of the experience of the previous generations. The life

⁴¹ A. Golczyńska-Grondas, *Biografie dorosłych wychowanków domów dziecka – próba analizy socjologicznej*, "Acta Universitatis Lodziensis Folia Sociologica", vol. 41, 2012, p. 9.

⁴² A. Golczyńska-Grondas, *Biografie dorosłych wychowanków domów dziecka – próba analizy socjologicznej*, "Acta Universitatis Lodziensis Folia Sociologica" 2012, vol. 41.

of some of them may be characterised by a metaphor of a “rocking boat” – although the girls manage to achieve some relative stability in certain areas of life, this stability is still at risk because of the factors that may push them onto a different trajectory. Other cases include “the typical representatives of the working poor, who managed to have some organised personal life. Despite numerous difficulties and problems, mainly financial, they manage to “make ends meet”, which is why their situation is rather stable”⁴³. All of them have a low social and economic position. In no case can we observe a relative biographical success. A question emerges: to what extent did the abovementioned phenomena contribute to the current situation?

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⁴³ A. Golczyńska-Grondas, *Biografie dorosłych wychowanków domów dziecka – próba analizy socjologicznej*, „Acta Universitatis Lodzensis Folia Sociologica” 2012, vol. 41, pp. 9–10.

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Self-perception of the prospective self in adolescents with visual disability

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A young person's perception of his past, present, and future life is shaped during his adolescence. The potential/prospective self of an adolescent includes his ideas and plans concerning his future life and, therefore, constitutes an important source of his motivation for activity and development. This paper presents the results of its author's own research on the ways in which adolescents with visual disability receiving special education in the Silesian Voivodeship perceive their future lives. The theoretical part of the paper contains an analysis of the concept of self-perception and related concepts. Special attention is paid to defining different kinds of self-perception, analysing their functions and indicating factors that determine their development during adolescence. An overview of selected pieces of research on the self-image of blind and visually impaired people allowed a description of the influence of self-perception on social and personal functioning of adolescents with visual disability.

KEY WORDS: visual disability, adolescence, self-perception, „ prospective self/ potential self”

Self-perception in the context of the process of socialisation of children and youths

Socialisation is one of the basic factors of the shaping of the adaptation abilities of man. Determining factors for the correct or disturbed socialisation process are, generally speaking, searched for among environmental and individual ones. Among the very important (especially during adolescence) internal conditions, one finds self-perception. One must remember, however, that exogenous and internal (endogenous) factors continue to intertwine each other – self-perception influences our relations with the environment, but approval from the environment is also of importance for our self-perception.

According to Małgorzata Kupisiewicz, self-perception is: *an attitude towards oneself; a set of opinions of oneself, describing how the individual values themselves; the subjective evaluation of own abilities to execute particular actions and exercise particular behaviours*¹. The author lists so-called objects of self-perception, meaning, what it applies to and what it is related to in terms of key components of one's life. In its most basic of subdivisions, it may apply to physical, psychological and social conditions. The first ones include primarily one's appearance, one's external image, looks, but also one's physical condition and health. The second category spans intellectual abilities, our individual talents and abilities – that, in which we feel good. Lastly, the third group – social conditions – is related to one's family situation, professional situation, group memberships, networks of friends and acquaintances. Some researchers include among these conditions the financial status and morality, which, however, aren't a determining factor of a high opinion of oneself for everyone.

Subject literature contains concepts related to self-perception, e. g. self-image, self-esteem, self-love, self-knowledge, the "I", self-acceptance, and, accordingly, the approach towards the discussed

¹ M. Kupisiewicz, *Słownik pedagogiki specjalnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2013, p. 318.

issue. The concept of self-evaluation is defined in most cases as the concept covering both the cognitive as well as the emotional aspect. In other instances, one deals here primarily with the emotional sphere (e. g. self-perception, self-love) or the cognitive sphere (e. g. self-image, self-knowledge, self-awareness), or with the sphere of activity of man (e. g. self-acceptance)². In addition, researchers discern between several properties/ types of self-perception, considering such criteria as: value (positive or negative), level (high or low), durability (stability or instability), accuracy (appropriate, suitable or inappropriate, unsuitable self-perception), judgements and opinions on oneself (certain and uncertain self-perception). A further important aspect of self-perception is its function. The most important is its controlling action – as it influences our life activity, drives or hinders us, describes the course of our actions and the level of life motivation and aspirations³. The shaping of one's self-evaluation is a long-term process, and progresses almost throughout one's entire life. As the most important period of its development may be considered childhood and adolescence (hence it's worthwhile to „build“ self-perception beginning from the earliest years of life, when the perception of individuality, competition, individual talents and dispositions begins to take shape within the child). Considering the contents and the structure of one's self-image and its role in the control of behaviour, during adolescence and early youth (ages 12–24) one can speak of the so-called *mature knowledge stadium*. Thanks to the development of abstract thought and its new social situation, youth creates in itself their own image akin to a hierarchical structure. This image includes descriptive judgements, self-perception, personal standards and rules of communication. During this time, self-knowledge begins to fulfil important control functions⁴. The social conditions listed most often in subject literature

² D. Wosik-Kawala, *Korygowanie samooceny uczniów gimnazjum*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2007, pp. 12–25.

³ M. Kupisiewicz, *Słownik pedagogiki specjalnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2013, p. 318.

⁴ J. Koziński, *Psychologiczna teoria samowiedzy*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1981, pp. 214–215.

that influence the self-perception of children and youths include factors related to one's family environment, comparing oneself to other people, observing one's own behaviour or the influence of one's peer group.

The influence of self-perception on the behaviour of man is uncommonly important, it conditions e. g. the effectiveness of the activities undertaken by them; it influences the interpersonal relations and relationships with others. There exists an interrelation between the attitudes towards oneself and the attitudes towards others⁵. In relation to the above, one could speak of persons characterised by an adequate/ high self-perception, the functioning of whom with respect to others will be based on acceptance and favourable interpersonal relations, and of persons with an inappropriate (low or excessively idealised/ inadequate self-perception, the interpersonal relations of whom may be disturbed.

High or adequate self-perception is not only a key condition for the correct course of the socialisation process, but also leads to so-called self-acceptance, meaning: *the feeling of one's own value, self-satisfaction, one's positive attitude towards oneself coupled usually with the conviction of the suitability of one's own mode of thinking, value system and behaviour, and the acceptance of one's looks*⁶. Every person, beside basic biological needs, also has external social needs. One of these is the need of acceptance, as Halina Mielicka writes, related to the positive emotional reaction of people to our behaviour as an individual. *The observation of human reactions to activities undertaken by the individual may cause changes to one's self-perception, and in this regard, to choices made related to the social roles taken on*⁷. Important influence on our self-perception is thus exercised by the satisfaction of such social needs as: the need of emotional response and the need

⁵ D. Wosik-Kawala, *Korygowanie samooceny uczniów gimnazjum*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2007, p. 39.

⁶ M. Kupisiewicz, *Słownik pedagogiki specjalnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2013, p. 315.

⁷ H. Mielicka, *Podstawy socjologii: mikrostruktury społeczne*, Wydawnictwo Stachurski, Kielce 2002, pp. 187-188.

of long-term security. If one evaluates themselves negatively within one aspect or within multiple aspects, this need not influence the entirety of our self-perception. This happens in particular in persons with so-called high self-complexity. If the conviction of an individual of the lack of self-value endangers the comprehensive view of oneself, they look in themselves for other characteristics that will compensate them for what in their view is a lack, a flaw or an error. Individuals with low self-perception do not have such a "buffer", hence their self-perception is fairly easy to be reduced by other members of society⁸. An elevated self-perception is a separate issue, which in borderline cases can lead to tyranny over others, or crime.

It is worth stressing that self-perception is not a fixed value – for every individual, it changes throughout one's life under the influence of various social experiences. The fact, how much we are "worth" is determined by comparisons with other people and with our visions of ourselves. As our reality undergoes constant, dynamic changes, man must exercise high flexibility to keep up with social patterns or norms. Thus, it is worthwhile to shape in children and youths a fairly constant feeling of self-perception that will not depend to the end on the various fashions or fads promoted in the media. Researchers refer to this process as the *importance of having appropriate knowledge of oneself*. As one may read in the works of Wilhelmina Wosińska: *Having appropriate knowledge of oneself is viable from the practical standpoint, as it protects us against failure. (...) permits also the avoidance of certain situations, and seeking others, more comfortable ones, with our skills*⁹.

Hence, self-evaluation, as was already said, is not a constant value. It may change with age, one's environment, the social, economic or family situation (this fact is of importance in terms of the socialisation process of children and youths). Beside it having the power to control our mood, to influence our emotional states, it also reflects in our social relations with the world around us.

⁸ W. Wosińska, *Psychologia życia społecznego*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2004, pp. 67–68.

⁹ W. Wosińska, *Psychologia życia społecznego*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2004, p. 81.

Disability and self-perception of blind and weak-sighted youths – an overview and analysis of selected studies

One of the most common and frequently emerging psychosocial consequences of disability in case of blind and weak-sighted persons is disturbed self-esteem. This in turn, following Roman Ossowski, is related to two factors of life: the perception of oneself and the perception of others¹⁰. In terms of self-perception, the case could entail a feeling of being worse, dependent, less intelligent, less interesting than “healthy” people. This condition will not change until the blind person does not accept the lack of sight. The perception of others is strictly related to the perception of the blind by the seeing. In other words, this is a mutual interaction that cannot strictly be separated. Aggression and reluctance of the blind can be awakened both by indifference as well as by overprotectiveness of the environment.

Tyflopedagogical literature (as confirmed by numerous studies) frequently includes the statement that lack of sight hinders the satisfaction of many psychological needs of an individual. Among the most severe experienced issues one finds deprivation in terms of cognitive and aesthetic needs, independence and self-actualisation. This causes states of frustration. The basis for these is most commonly comparing oneself and one’s fate with the fate of the sighted. The case is similar with the self-evaluation of persons with damaged sight. The reaction to states of frustration includes defensive compensation mechanisms. One of these mechanisms related to self-perception – as indicated by Zofia Sękowska – is the reclamation of one’s own sense of security with respect to the sighted through the acceptance of estimates of one’s inadequacy as correct and as determining one’s self-perception¹¹. The shaping of the im-

¹⁰ R. Ossowski, *Pedagogika niewidomych i niedowidzących*, [w:] *Pedagogika specjalna*, ed. by W. Dykcik, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2005, p. 185.

¹¹ Z. Sękowska, *Przystosowanie społeczne młodzieży niewidomej*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1991, pp. 52–53.

age of oneself, with particular consideration of one's body image and the body image of the opposite sex gains material meaning during adolescence, in a particular manner in the life of blind youths. As Zofia Sękowska writes, referring to B. Wright and the studies of J. C. Davis, [...] *more intense self-awareness during adolescence makes the adolescent evaluate themselves considering "normality" or "anormality". Becoming aware in this time of the permanence of one's physical flaws can heavily impact one's prior system of self-evaluation, and may cause a reason of difficulties in adaptation*¹².

Studies concerning the image of one's own situation and of one own, and the changes that had occurred in this regard due to the process of rehabilitation in persons with eyesight disabilities were conducted by Roman Ossowski (1982)¹³. The studies were longitudinal. They spanned seventy people with sight disabilities, participants of a rehabilitation course that took place in a ten-month closed system. The control group was made up of sighted students. The self-image was assessed using the SQ self-acceptance scale developed by A. and J. Brzeziński and the A. Berger scale. The study disclosed lowered self-perception among the analysed blind, in particular with respect to physical properties. At the same time, thanks to ten months of rehabilitation at the facility of the Polish Union of the Blind (Pl. Polski Związek Niewidomych) in Bydgoszcz, Poland, in all studied aspects of the self-image of the blind, positive changes were recorded. The author, based on the obtained results, formulated e. g. the remark that it is not the sight disability itself that may be the source of reduced self-perception (especially in terms of one's own physicality) in the analysed persons, but it is the existing social stereotypes or the fashion overstating in our culture the physical aspects of man.

¹² Z. Sękowska, *Przystosowanie społeczne młodzieży niewidomej*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1991, pp. 56.

¹³ R. Ossowski, *Kształtowanie obrazu własnej sytuacji i siebie u inwalidów wzroku w procesie rehabilitacji*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, Bydgoszcz 1982, p. 122.

Further studies worth quoting at this point applicable to the self-perception of youths with damaged sight, were conducted by Zofia Sękowska (1991)¹⁴. The study encompassed 90 pupils with sight disabilities from two last grades of primary schools, learning at five special education facilities for blind children (Bydgoszcz, Łaski near Warsaw, Krakow, Wrocław, Owińska near Poznań). The studied group included 30 girls and 60 boys aged 13–16. The control group was made up of sighted pupils (including 40 girls and 50 boys). Studied was self-perception and the evaluation of other persons in social relations. For this purpose, the self-evaluation and estimation scale of colleagues developed by Teresa Stanula, was used. The achieved results, using the tool indicated above, permit the conclusion that blind youths as compared to sighted youths exhibited a tendency of elevation of notes concerning others, particularly in such respects as: preparations ahead of changing school, resourcefulness, life optimism or self-certainty. In addition, the test results showed that sighted adolescents, compared to blind ones, tended to favour themselves in the evaluation of their activity as compared to others, e. g. in the area of high evaluation of their own feeling of responsibility, independence in the execution of work, subordination to social activity organisers. In the discussed study, blind girls were characterised by a more positive self-image than was the case with their sighted peers, whereby boys exhibited a tendency towards lower self-perception.

An interesting study concerning self-perception and the perception of one's own situation by blind and weak-sighted youths within various education systems, e. g. special and public education, was conducted by Zofia Palak (2000)¹⁵. The study concerned the image of oneself (real and ideal), self-acceptance and properties of self-perception as its level, stability and adequacy. The author used

¹⁴ Z. Sękowska, *Przystosowanie społeczne młodzieży niewidomej*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1991, pp. 77–78; pp. 102–106.

¹⁵ Z. Palak, *Uczniowie niewidomi i słabowidzący w szkołach ogólnodostępnych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2000, pp. 83–111.

the Gough Adjective Check List (ACL), which can be used to study three aspects of the concept of one's self-image: 1) the real – "how I am", 2) the ideal – "how I would like to be", 3) the retrospective – "how I was", and the experiment of F. Hoppe analysing properties of self-perception. The analysis of data obtained by Zofia Palak permitted the researcher to formulate the following conclusions, namely that the real self-image of blind and weak-sighted youths educated within both systems turned out to be similar, whereby marked differences can be found in terms of the ideal self-image. In other words, the studied blind and weak-sighted educated along sighted peers assumed markedly lower standards of the perfect self-concept than their peers from the integrated system. The studied visually-impaired adolescents educated in the integrated system accepted themselves to a higher degree than comparative pupils from schools for the blind and weak-sighted. The author of the study believes that this might stem from the fact that the pupils with sight dysfunctions working under conditions of high threats for their self-perception as generated by a public school implement the natural need of high self-acceptance by accepting low standards of the "perfect self". The integrated or segregated education system turned out not to exert an influence on the differentiation of stability of the self-perception of the studied youths. In both systems about half of the studied pupils had a stable self-perception. The level of self-acceptance of the sighted adolescents from special and public schools was also similar, whereby girls educated in the integrated system tended to more rarely have lower self-perception than their counterparts from special schools. In addition, no significant differences were noted between the frequency of prevalence of adequate and inadequate self-perception in the group of youths from the integrated and segregated systems, and between the compared groups in terms of gender. Almost half of the studied pupils from both education systems evaluated themselves adequately¹⁶.

¹⁶ Studies concerning the dependence between the properties of self-perception and the gender of children and youths with sight disabilities may also be found in

The real and adequate self-evaluation is doubtless one of the more important individual factors causing correct social functioning. Subject literature as well as the studies described above indicate that issues of self-perception constitute an important area of scientific and research reflection and analysis for blind persons, in particular in the key time of adolescence.

The “perspective self” of visually-impaired youths – methodological assumptions of own research

The presented study was undertaken as part of a broader empirical undertaking that applied to the broadly defined social functioning of visually-impaired youths. The study was conducted based on the assumed rule of (quantitative-qualitative) triangularity: the qualitative study was used as an interpretation for the quantitative study¹⁷. In addition, they had the character of a diagnostic study with the purpose of verification. As self-perception constitutes one of the individual resources of an individual in the socialisation process – as substantiated towards the beginning of this paper – in case of the discussed study, it was treated as one of the dependent variables, at the same time a component and determining factor of social functioning.

works by foreign authors. This issue was handled, among others, by M. Zurich and B. Ledwith (conf. Zurich M., Ledwith B., *Self-concepts of visually handicapped and sighted children*, “Perceptual and Motor Skills”, 1965, Vol. XXI, pp. 771-774). In terms of the form of education as a factor possibly determining the social functioning of blind and visually-impaired pupils, noteworthy is the study conducted by R. Schindele (1974), which showed that integration systems provided better results in terms of socialisation of pupils with damaged sight than special schools. Studies published by such researchers as E. L. Cowen (1961) and I. F. Lukoff, M. Whiteman (1970) in turn, did not show any relationship between social functioning and the education system for visually-disabled pupils.

¹⁷ Conf. K. Konarzewski, *Jak uprawiać badania oświatowe. Metodologia praktyczna*. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 2008, p. 33.

Accordingly, the object of the presented fragment of own research was the self-perception of visually-disabled adolescents from special schools in terms of the "future/ perspective self". Getting to know the specifics of self-perception in persons with eye disabilities by other persons and the perception of the self and one's own situation in the future, permitting better understanding and possible aid or support in the described scope for this group of the disabled constituted the basic goal of the undertaken study. The main research objective was formulated as follows:

How do the studied youths with eye disabilities, educated at special lower secondary schools, see themselves and their situation in the future?

The diagnostic survey method was used. For the purpose of determination of the self-perception of the studied adolescents in terms of the "perspective self", applied was the questionnaire "*Future self-portrait*" developed by Danuta Wosik-Kawala.

The research group chosen for the study was composed of lower secondary school pupils with sight disabilities educated at special education facilities for the blind and weak-sighted from the voivodeship of Silesia in Poland (there are two such facilities in Silesia - in Dąbrowa Górnicza and in Chorzów). The studies used purposeful (intentional) selection. The main criteria of qualification of pupils for the studies were: 1) age and education level: pupils of lower secondary schools aged 14-16 (early adolescence), 2) disability category and level: pupils with eye disabilities - blind and weak-sighted in the intellectual norm, 3) youths in the special education system (special education facilities) from the voivodeship of Silesia. The study encompassed a total of 60 pupils from ten classes of two special lower secondary schools. Girls constituted 48.3% (29 persons), boys 51.7% (31 pupils). The majority of those analysed were weak-sighted persons - 44 pupils (75.8% of those studied). The blind constituted 24.2% of those studied (16 pupils), including persons sensing light, 5%, and with a sight sharpness in the range of 0.02-0.1 (19.2%). The own study lacked persons who were fully blind (no sense of light).

Results of own research and closing comments

The anticipation of own future is most frequently related to such concepts as: life plans, expectations, desires, aspirations, visions. The vision of one's own future is the result of thinking about oneself in the categories – I will be..., I would like to..., etc. As Maria Tyszkowa writes, the shaping within one of a relevant vision of one's future may encourage them to undertake actions aimed at the achievement of goals assumed in this vision.¹⁸ Hence, the image of one's own life perspective may become the basis of emergence of plans for the future.

The *"Future self-portrait"* questionnaire as developed by Danuta Wosik-Kawala used for the study is composed of 10 statements (questions). these questions apply primarily e. g. to one's housing, health and social situation¹⁹. Before the completion of the questionnaire, the studied persons were acquainted with the instruction manual and were to imagine themselves five years later. The completed tool entailed the description of the visualised condition of the self from the future, hence the statements were formulated in the present tense. In the presented study, the introductory instructions, including questions, were provided orally.

Responses of the analysed pupils concerning the perception of the self and of one's own situation in the future are provided in table 1.

Data obtained using the tool applied for the study indicates that the majority of visually-disabled adolescents anticipates their future and sees themselves in this future generally very positively. More than half of the analysed boys and girls are planning to live in a big city, whereby 46 of the 60 analysed pupils seeks to have their own flat. The majority of the analysed boys wants to study and have a sa-

¹⁸ M. Tyszkowa, *Zdolności, osobowość i działalność uczniów*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1990, quoted from: D. Wosik-Kawala, *Korygowanie samooceny uczniów gimnazjum*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2007, p. 79.

¹⁹ Conf. D. Wosik-Kawala, *Korygowanie samooceny uczniów gimnazjum*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2007.

Table 1. Self-perception of studied visually-impaired pupils in terms of the “perspective self”

Aspects of the future	Boys N = 31	Girls N = 29
I live:		
a. in a big city	18	16
b. in a small town	11	10
c. in the country	2	3
Housing situation:		
a. living with my parents	-	1
b. living at a dormitory	7	6
c. I have my own flat	24	22
Professional life:		
a. I am unemployed	-	-
b. my parents support me	-	-
c. I work part-time	2	-
d. I have my own company	8	4
e. I am studying	10	13
f. I work and I am satisfied	11	12
g. I work, but I am not satisfied	-	-
h. looking for work	-	-
Health:		
a. I'm perfectly healthy	9	7
b. I have issues with my health	3	5
c. I am always tired	4	1
d. I am always fresh and rested	15	16
Image:		
a. I am an attractive person	5	10
b. I am an average person	7	2
c. I have nothing to complain about in terms of my looks	17	14
d. I would like to change many aspects	2	3
Social prestige:		
a. I am valued by others	7	10
b. people underestimate me	5	2
c. people fear me	-	-
d. I engender the trust of others	19	17
My friends:		
a. I have many friends and I can count on them	12	11
b. I have a few friends who are always there for me	11	15
c. I would like to have more friends	4	3
d. I cannot call anyone a friend	2	-

cont. tab. 1

Aspects of the future	Boys N = 31	Girls N = 29
People speak of me:		
a. a good spirit	2	4
b. sucker	-	-
c. hard-working	14	9
d. diligent	5	6
e. honest	10	10
f. worthless	-	-
Self-perception:		
a. I like myself	30	29
b. I have many issues with myself	1	-
My relationships:		
a. others govern my behaviour/ I am dependent on them	-	2
b. I am independent of others	28	25
c. I do not care about opinions of others	3	2

Source: Own research.

tisfactory job. Girls perceive their education and professional situation similarly (13 of the 29 analysed girls perceive themselves in the future as students, 12 would like to have jobs that satisfy them). Despite the disability of sight and the physical and health consequences related to it, 47 of the pupils believe that they will enjoy good health and vitality in the future. In the aspect of looks, most boys believe that they will have nothing to complain about. Girls expressed themselves similarly in terms of their looks, and in addition a large part of them evaluated their looks in the future as attractive. Both the studied boys as well as the girls perceive themselves in the future as persons valued by others. The majority, e. g. 36 pupils, would like to be people that awaken in others a feeling of trust. Visually-impaired lower secondary school male pupils stress their future perception as being hard-working, with girls anticipating themselves to be perceived by others as being honest. The majority of the analysed youths (both girls as well as boys - 26 pupils) declare owning in the future few friends, but such that they would always be able to rely on. Almost all of the analysed adolescents

also declare the will to be independent in the future (53 of the 60 studied pupils). Solely two girls were convinced of the lack of their independence, with five pupils (three boys and two girls) expressed the belief that they do not wish to respect the opinions of others in the future.

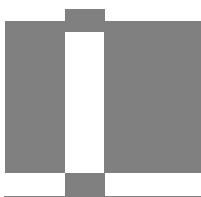
The conducted study shows that the „perspective self“ (the perception of oneself and of one’s future) of the analysed youths with sight disabilities shines in optimistic light. Based on the results of the studies available in subject literature and concerning the discussed topics, one could draw the conclusion that visually-disabled youths may exhibit uncertainty or even fear as to their future; this in particular within the context of future employment, studies, independence, their own place of residence, interpersonal relations, also those very close, the feeling of security, self-actualisation, etc. The conducted studies show in turn that the vision of themselves and of their future in the perception of the analysed visually-impaired adolescents is entirely different. Youths perceive themselves and their future situation very positively. What factors influence this? Is this really a realistic and adequate self-perception? Indeed, quite many fully able, young people, especially during adolescence, express uncertainty as to their own future. These questions doubtless require continued research. The author of the present study is aware that the obtained results apply to but a very narrow area – one of the dimensions of self-evaluation that applies to the perception of the future of the analysed pupils. These could, however, become the driver for other scientific research and expanded analyses in the area of the mentioned issues. Without a doubt, noticed must be the fact that the studied youths was educated in the segregated system, hence the closest peer groups were also persons with sensory disabilities, which could influence the mode of perception of the self by the analysed pupils both now as well as in the future. Analysing the social conditions of self-perception and its properties such as its level or the adequacy with respect to the present could permit a broader analysis and interpretation of the obtained results, and a verification of whether the image of the self and of the future of

the studied youths are the result of the applied defence mechanisms. One needs to keep in mind that a person may to one extent demand to have a characteristic, and to another – foresee possessing it. Nonetheless, the optimistic image of own future foreseen by the analysed blind and weak-sighted youths is certainly a cause for satisfaction. Indeed, each optimistic thought may improve the motivation to execute the goals set for oneself and aid in the overcoming of barriers on the way towards adult life.

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Space in the statements of blind children at early school age

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People with visual disabilities acquire knowledge about the surrounding space using other strategies than sighted people. The final stage of gathering this information is independent movement in space as well as the ability to describe it. The aim of the article is to present ways space is experienced by blind people and strategies of building mental maps, and to present knowledge about space by creating a description of it. The article also presents the results of research on the description of space by blind children at early school age.

KEY WORDS: space, spatial relations, spatial orientation, visual disability, description of space

Man is a being embedded in the space surrounding them. To get to know it, to explore it, is their innate experience, of which they are usually not consciously aware. Hence, the concept of “spatial experience” describes a mode of exploration and perception of space, and, as a consequence, a set of diverse spatial behaviour modes, such as: thinking about space, using, building spatial structures, etc.”¹ In the

¹ Z. K. Zuziak, *Język urbanistyki i architektoniczne myślenie*, „Czasopismo techniczne. Architektura”, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej im. T. Kościuszki, Kraków 2008, vol. 105, issue 6-A, p. 217.

experience of space, the basic role is played by: the perception of space (sensory reception), cognitive processes, the scope of available terms, the knowledge of one's body schema, spatial imagination, knowledge of one's surroundings, using relationships of distance and time². The best method to get to know the space around is moving about in it. Thanks to such an activity, one can experience it with their entire body, with all senses. In this manner, one collects information, storing it in one's memory to create a spatial structure for a particular environment. Hence, the most direct information about spatial relationships can be provided by our kinaesthetic senses, however, this process is time-consuming. It would be faster to evaluate space through its visual perception³, which lets us receive several pieces of information at a time. The data collected in this manner can be used to interpret distances and locations of items in space. Eyesight plays without a doubt a very important role in spatial orientation. Its lack hinders its exploration, but does not make this process impossible.

In persons who have lost the ability to see, spatial orientation is possible thanks to the other senses functioning well. Of key importance are here hearing, touch, the kinaesthetic sense, the sense of balance and the sense of smell⁴. A very important place in the process of spatial orientation is taken up by hearing, which is the first sense to provide important data on the presence of objects in it, and

² J. Kwapisz, J. Kuczyńska-Kwapisz, *Orientacja przestrzenna i poruszanie się niewidomych oraz słabo widzących*, WSiP, Warszawa 1990, p. 5.

³ Space perception, process through which humans and other organisms become aware of the relative positions of their own bodies and objects around them. Space perception provides cues, such as depth and distance, that are important for movement and orientation to the environment. Explanation of the term quoted from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/space-perception> [access: 23.01.2018].

⁴ K. Miler-Zdanowska, *Czynniki warunkujące nauczanie orientacji przestrzennej i samodzielnego poruszania się osób z dysfunkcją wzroku*, [in:] Czerwińska K., Paplińska M., Walkiewicz-Krutak M. (ed.), *Tyflopedagogika we współczesnej przestrzeni edukacyjno-rehabilitacyjnej*, Wyd. Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej w Warszawie, Warszawa 2015, p. 296.

permits the assertion, whether the item/ object listened to is stationary or dynamic. In terms of reception of stimuli through the tactile channel, in turn, direct touch by the upper and lower extremities has a lot of importance, as is indirect touch through a long, white cane. Stimuli received by the kinaesthetic sense, in turn, and the sense of balance, permit the blind person maintain a correct body posture and execution of conscious movements of the body, to remember the covered distance. Of slightly lesser importance for spatial orientation is the sense of smell due to the fast adaptation to specific smells occurring in the environment.

Beside the reception of sensory stimuli, the correct development of spatial orientation in persons with eyesight disabilities also includes cognitive processes, in particular attention, memory, thinking and spatial memory. Correctly-proceeding cognitive processes permit the blind person to improve their safety when moving about through the detection and adequate reactions to stimuli from the environment, and getting to know various locations. Correctly developed spatial imagination, understood as the 'ability to create in one's mind an image or geometrical object in accordance with its actual shape and placement'⁵ permits the understanding of spatial relations taking place in space between objects, and to utilise this knowledge when moving about. Persons with eyesight disabilities, based on the experience obtained during moving around, movement and multi-sensory observation, create a cognitive map⁶ of the

⁵ E. Sroka-Bizoń, M. Terczyńska, *Percepcja widzenia – jak kształtować wyobraźnię przestrzenną*. Lecture from the Proceedings of 19th Conference Geometry Graphics Computer. Ustroń, 25.-27. June 2012. Silesian University of Technology, Geometry and Engineering Graphics Centre.

⁶The concept of the cognitive map is used in many areas of modern science. It emerges as a result of complex mental operations (remembering, encoding information, recalling information and planning activities, anticipation of possible situations). It reflects the assumed strategies of execution of the planned objectives and needs in the environmental space. The cognitive map "is a relatively stable mental construct not susceptible to changes of the situation" A. Hauziński, *Ewolucja pojęcia mapy poznawczej w psychologii. Przegląd badań dotyczących hierarchii planów i celów działania*, *Czasopismo Psychologiczne*, vol. 16, No. 2, 2010, p. 285.

space surrounding them. Unequivocally important components in its creation are: pathways (typical components of space, corridors created by communication paths, streets, roads, etc.), nodes (characteristic points present primarily along paths, where behaviours are concentrated, e. g. intersections of pathways or points of interference with these), edges (objects creating spatial barriers, e. g. walls, borders, but also communications paths), districts (regions, larger areas of uniform properties, e. g. industrial zones, residential districts, retail zones) and landmarks (orientation points, characteristic objects permitting spatial orientation, e. g. monuments, buildings or structures noticeable to the person with their use, being in their field of interest)⁷. For blind persons, it is specifically orientation points that constitute a very important component of space that is fixed, ever-present, difficult to avoid. It is thanks to these that they are able to arrange in memory the image of space and verify their correctness of movement⁸.

All the factors named above, being of importance for movement in space by persons with eyesight disabilities, apply primarily to the cognition of space and the creation of mental maps. The external form signifying the correct course of these processes (perception of space and understanding of the spatial relations in it) is the ability to describe space and to freely move about in it. The description of surrounding space requires the use of sensations describing spatial relations. We gain these throughout our lives. Developmentally, first comes the understanding of spatial concepts, only later is their correct use mastered. Hence, one must always keep in mind that “good understanding of messages including descriptions of spatial

⁷ The basic elements of mental maps were suggested by K. Lynch (1960) [in:] K. Nieścioruk, *Kartograficzny obraz map mentalnych przestrzeni miejskiej i jego prezentacja oraz analiza z zastosowaniem narzędzi systemów informacji geograficznej*, Acta Scientiarum Polonorum Geodesia et Descriptio Terrarum, 2013, No. 12(4), p. 28.

⁸ In literature on movement by eyesight-disabled persons, one can find a subdivision of landmarks, orientation points, into two groups: primary landmarks and secondary landmarks. W. R. Wiener, R. L. Welsh, B. B. Blasch (ed.), *Foundations of Orientation and Mobility, Second Editions*. New York, AFB Press, 1997, p. 42.

relations does not go hand in hand with their correct use in own messages sent by the child”⁹.

When describing space through determination of one’s own location and the placement of other items, along with the relations between them, one uses foremost:

- adverbial descriptors of position that: “refer to a specific point described in space, where the speech act occurs, or a point known to the speakers”. Adverbial pronouns of location accompany gestures or replace them, help describe spatial relations of objects or the relations between several items, inform about the movement of an object (here, where to, from where, everywhere, from all around, from here, until here, over here, over there, etc.),
- adverbial locative and lative descriptors that directly indicate the direction and vicinity, e. g.: near: far, high: low, straight forward, topside, below, by the side, etc.,
- spatial adpositional phrases and prepositions. Prepositions describe distance, e. g.: by, beside, near, close by, ahead, opposite, above, below; indicate the state of being surrounded, e. g. around, about, as well as of linearity: along, across; and of laterality, e. g. to the right of, to the left of,
- wordbuilding location indicators that indicate closeness (attach, reach, impact, pour in, etc.), detachment (drive away, exit), movement (pass),
- adjectives using which one can describe complex spatial relations, dealing with locations, dimensions and shapes of objects, e. g. close, far, upper, lower, front, small, round, square¹⁰.

As the perception of spatial relations proceeds mainly in visual space (eyesight permits simultaneous perception of many structures

⁹M. Kielar-Turska, *Jak pomagać dziecku w poznawaniu świata*, Wyd. Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1992, p. 153.

¹⁰The list was taken from the doctoral dissertation of A. Guzy, *Kompetencja językowa uczniów a wyobraźnia i orientacja przestrzenna*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy, Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 2011.

in space, especially of distant objects), persons with disabilities usually have difficulty acquiring and correctly using words describing spatial terms, and usually experience difficulties understanding adjectives and adverbs referring to evaluation of distance, size and spatial relations (e. g. close-far, tall-short, etc.)¹¹ and adverbs¹² and adpositional phrases (below, above, to the left, to the right, behind, ahead of, between)¹³.

These difficulties most probably do not arise from interference in spatial orientation, but emerge as a result of the lack of ability of spatial location, or the possibility of tracing with the eye of changing distances, e. g. me-object due to the motion during movement, and in certain cases also due to lack of verbal training spanning the fusion of specific spatial relations with their names. One could indicate as the cause of such difficulties also the specifics of creation of images of space by persons with eyesight disabilities that occurs mainly through kinaesthetic and auditory stimuli. The linguistic component is an addition that amends this image but stems from sighted persons.

Concepts concerning the development of spatial orientation in persons with eyesight disabilities have for the past thirty years been the object of interest of various groups of scientists, psychologists, education specialists, medical doctors. As the scope of abilities making up competences in spatial orientation is broad, the individual researchers have focused on selected abilities from the area of spatial orientation in persons with eyesight disabilities, e. g. the devel-

¹¹ T. Gałkowski, *Trudności rozwojowe u dzieci niewidomych w okresie niemowlęcym*, *Przegląd Tyflogiczny*, 1975, 1/3, p. 8.

¹² Studies conducted by Andersen (1984); Dunlea & Andersen (1992) and Brambring (2006) had shown marked difficulties and differences in the time of mastering by blind children of pronouns of space, like in, on, or, under. For further information see M. Brambring, *Divergent Development of Verbal Skills in Children Who Are Blind or Sighted*. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 2007.

¹³ K. Klimasiński, *Rola wyobrażeń przestrzennych w rozwoju myślenia dzieci niewidomych*. Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1977, p. 80.

opment of awareness of the body schema¹⁴, spatial imagination¹⁵, spatial memory¹⁶, etc. Among the research available in subject literature, I have found no papers concerning descriptions of space in the form of verbal statements, hence I have made this issue the subject of my empirical research.

Research methodology

The purpose of the presented study is the presentation of modes of creation of descriptions of space by blind children at an early school age, and the determination of factors influencing the mastering by them of this ability. The study and analyses of the statements of blind children concerning the space in which they move about was part of a larger project conducted as part of preparation of the doctoral dissertation entitled "Space in the actions and statements of blind children at an early school age" under guidance by prof. dr hab. J. Kuczyńska-Kwapisz. This study was conducted in academic years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 at four education facilities for children with eyesight disabilities in Poland, where intellectually normative blind children are educated (Laski near Warsaw, Krakow, Bydgoszcz, Owińska near Poznań), as well as in public schools in the Masovian voivodeship (Płock, Radom). The research group was made up of fifty blind pupils, aged six to 12 years. When qualifying children to participate in the research, three criteria were taken into account: functional blindness (children blind from birth or those who have lost their eyesight before the age of three), age (between six and 12 years of age), and no further disabilities (intellectually normative pupils, without additional issues in terms mobility or sensory perception). Due to the object, purpose and character of the study, the choice of the analysed group was purposeful. In the group of fifty analysed

¹⁴ Study conducted by researchers from the United States: B. J. Cratty, C. Peterson, J. Harwis, R. Schoner (1960) and in Poland by Władysława Pilecka (1980).

¹⁵ Study conducted by Krzysztof Klimasiński (1977).

¹⁶ Studies of Susan Millar (1975) and Gordany Miletic (1995).

blind children at an early school age, there were 21 girls (42% of all analysed children) and 29 boys (58% of the analysed children).

As part of the conducted research, two leading research methods were used: the diagnostic survey and diagnostic experiments. As part of the first method, the technique of document inspection and the interview were used. Analysed were personal documents of the pupils located at the special education facilities for children with eyesight disabilities (analyses of medical, psychological and pedagogical documentation). The utilised technique permitted the collection of initial descriptive and quantitative data on the individual pupils. Interviews were conducted in turn with teachers/ caretakers of grades 1-6 of primary schools for blind and weak-sighted children; with boarding house caretakers or parents of blind children; with spatial orientation teachers working at the individual facilities. The utilised technique permitted the collection of detailed information concerning functioning in terms of spatial orientation of children at schools, boarding houses, homes. The second utilised method were diagnostic experiments¹⁷ (utilised technologies: diagnostic tasks, observation). Due to the fact that the theoretical considerations indicated the leading model of development of spatial orientation in children (Piaget's theory of development of spatial orientation and post-Piaget studies), the method of diagnostic experiments was chosen, maintained in the convention of tasks per J. Piaget. It permits the evaluation of abilities from the area of spatial orientation and the indication of causes and conditions of the state of affairs. The studies also user observation¹⁸ of children's behaviour during the execution of diagnostic tasks.

¹⁷ Diagnostic experiments were broadly used by the renowned psychologist J. Piaget when studying the child's mind. In Poland, this method was continued by A. Szemińska, Z. Semadeni but mostly, on a grand scale, by E. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska (studies on spatial orientation, mathematical skills, etc.). This method is based on the assumption that "an experiment is a kind of observation conducted under specially organised conditions" M. Łobocki, *Metody badań pedagogicznych*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2000, p. 146.

¹⁸ The technique of arranged observation was used, whereby "the studying arranges the observed events/ phenomena: they cause them, provoke their emer-

Proprietary research tools were used for the execution of the study¹⁹: a questionnaire to analyse documents, teacher, educator, spatial orientation teacher interview questionnaires; the package “Functional evaluation of selected abilities in terms of spatial orientation for visually-impaired children aged seven to 12”, containing diagnostic trials, observation sheets for child behaviour and a scale guide used for the interpretation of results. One of the parts of the mentioned diagnostic set was a diagnostic task named “Path”, the purpose of which was the inspection of abilities of description of space by blind children. The person conducting the study asked the same of every child “Describe the path you take from the entry door to the school to your class bench. List the places you pass along; tell about the turns and curves you take”. The time allotted for the child to complete the task was unlimited, it could start over if it believed it forgot something during the description of the path. The child’s statement was registered digitally using a voice recorder. Afterwards it was listened to and written down as text. The research material obtained in this way was analysed for the following items used by the children in the descriptions: spatial concepts, orientation hints and points, words describing temporal succession, other specific words.

Test result analysis and interpretation

In course of the conducted analyses, it was determined that blind children, describing space they know, name consequently the activities executed when moving about, using verbs: walk, descend, ascend, turn. Children also listed the orientation markers placed

gence, and then observe them” [in:] M. Guzik-Tkacz, *Badania diagnostyczne w pedagogice i psychopedagogice*. Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa 2011 p. 256.

¹⁹ Due to the fact that the Polish market lacks tools for diagnosing children’s competences in terms of spatial orientation foreseen for children with sight disabilities, constructed were tools taking into account the specifics of extravisual perception and stages of gaining abilities from the area of spatial orientation.

along the path. They indicated elements of their environment they perceived through touch of their feet and hands (elevation, heater, etc.), not indicating any auditory components of the environment (no description by any child included data conveyed through the auditory channel).

The analysis and properties of the individual components of space utilised by blind children to create mental maps of the described space was included in table 1.

Table 1. Properties of components of the mental map in blind children at an early school age

Mental map components per K. Lynch	Properties of individual components of the mental map	Examples of individual components of mental maps – blind children
Paths	typical components of space, corridors created by communication paths	corridor, hall
Nodes	characteristic points present primarily along paths, where behaviours are concentrated, e. g. intersections of pathways or points of interference with these	staircase, stairs, wall
Edges	objects creating spatial barriers, e. g. walls, borders, but also communications paths	wall niche, wall with wash basins, small wall
Districts	regions, larger areas of uniform properties, e. g. industrial zones, residential districts, retail zones	cloakroom, classroom, dining hall, teachers' room, doctor's office
Landmarks	orientation points, characteristic objects permitting spatial orientation, e. g. monuments, buildings or structures noticeable to the person with their use, being in their field of interest	bench, door, carpet, hill, heater, window, hand-rail, pillar, waste basket

Source: own work.

A further component that appeared in the descriptions of space by blind children were names of rooms that the children passed when moving along the described path (e. g.: class room, kitchenette), names of objects (e. g.: bench, heater, fire extinguisher), locations (e. g.: staircase, hall), as if they were placed along a single line. Blind children participating in the study used in such descriptions most frequently the words "then", "later". These words are used to describe relations of time, however, blind children used them to describe relations in space, meaning, they perceived the objects they passed along in a linear, and not a spatial perspective. This fact shows that children remembered the route they moved along more precisely, however, they were not able to convey the relations between the objects or locations they passed along side of. For example, I quote the statement of Kacper, aged nine.

„One needs to walk straight, then slightly left, then descend this small hill, then straight along the green, then until the pavement, then the first pair of small stairs, then the second pair of small stairs, you need to walk straight beside the primary school secretary office, or something like that, then pass through the door of the primary school and one needs to walk to the right, and there will be the second door on the right side.“

The analysed statements of blind children observed was also minor differentiation of the spatial concepts they used. These were mostly terms like 'to the right' and 'to the left', referring to the turns and curves they executed on their way. Terms like 'in front of me', 'opposite', 'beside' appeared less frequently. In some instances, the descriptions prepared by the children were composed mainly of turns and curves to the right or left, without indications of the specific point where such a turn was to be executed. Such situations can likely be explained by the use of the kinaesthetic sense and muscle memory by the blind persons during the movement. These let one remember, what activities need to be performed during the movement, without the need to verbally indicate the position of execution

of a specific motion in space. To visualise the above description, consider the statement by Julia, aged eight.

„I walk to the left, then to the right from the cloakroom, then to the left again, and the door to my class is to the left. I walk and turn to the left, then straight and to the door, and I turn to the main hall to the left.”

An analysis of the statements of blind children considering the spatial terms used was included in table 2.

Table 2. Properties of spatial terms in the statements of blind children at an early school age

Spatial terms	Sighted persons	Blind children
Place indications using pronouns, adverbial pronouns of location	here, to where, from where, everywhere, from here, until there, over here, over there	not observed
Adverbial locative and lative descriptors	near: far, high: low, straight forward, topside, below, by the side	sideways, straight ahead
Spatial adpositional phrases and prepositions.	by, beside, near, close by, ahead of, in front of, above, below, around, to the right, to the left	beside, ahead of me, by, opposite, to the right, to the left, in front of
Wordbuilding location indicators that indicate closeness, detachment, movement	attach, reach, impact, pour, drive away, exit, pass	reach, ascend, descend, enter, exit, pass
Adjectives to name complex spatial relations,	close, far, upper, lower, front, small, round, square	long, small

Source: own work.

In spatial descriptions by blind children observed was also the usage of words that indicate imprecise descriptions of the distances covered during the march, e. g.: “I walk a little bit”, “a bit of the hall”, “somewhat to the right”, “I walk a bit”, “I walk for a longer time”, etc. The usage of such descriptions shows that for a blind

child it is somewhat difficult to precisely describe the path they cover using measures of distance (metre, centimetre, etc.). This stems from the lack of visual control of their environment.

However, during the analysis of descriptions of space, surprising became the fact that blind children used names of colours concerning the points they passed or relevant structures, e. g.: "I reach the green stairs", "I enter the orange corridor", "I pass the green staircase". Despite the inability to verify colour data, blind pupils have acquired their names and use them to describe space so as to be better able to communicate with sighted persons.

Based on the analysis of the collected research material, due to the level of complexity of the ability to describe space, the statements of the analysed children were subdivided into three main levels: the basic level, the intermediate level and the advanced level. On each of these levels, in addition three types of descriptions were differentiated between. A detailed subdivision of the levels of abilities to describe space was indicated in diagram 1.

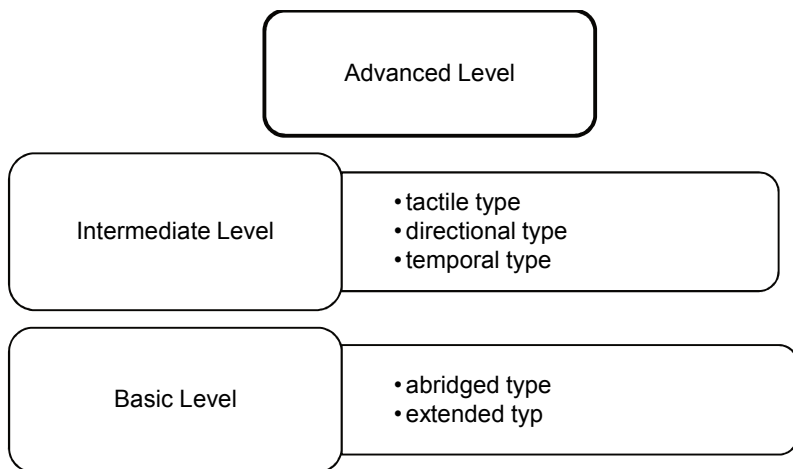


Diagram 1. Levels of mastery of the ability to describe space

Source: own work

Among the analysed children, 46% provided descriptions of space on the basic level. This description was chaotic, contained haphazard information, omitted important details. In this group the majority were seven-year-olds. More than half of them used the abridged description type, meaning, one lacking information on space. The description did not include spatial terms, however included information about turns, without indications of their direction. The remainder of seven-year-old children used extended type descriptions. These contained a lot of information on places, executed turns, information points, but these were not arranged into a logical whole. As an example of a basic description, of the abridged type, I quote the statement of Alan, aged 7.

I take the elevator I exit the elevator, well then I walk straight and I am in class. I walk straight I enter the elevator I go to the ground floor and that's it

However, as an example of a basic description of the extended type, here is the statement by Hati, aged seven.

We enter the cloakroom, I exit the cloakroom I go right, then straight, and then at the two barriers I go left. I exit and go straight, through the corridor

In the analysed group of children aged eight to 11, intermediate descriptions of space dominated (42% of the studied children). This description was characterised by a large volume of information referring to tactile data received by the hands and feet (tactile type), or was focused on the turns and curves executed during the movement (directional type), or referred to the objects passed along and the places with the use of temporal descriptions: then, later (temporal type). Examples of such description types, on the intermediate level, are provided below.

Patryk, aged eight, intermediate level, tactile type.

I exit to the left, and one walks and walks and one passes hall no. 1b, then one turns and makes this curve and descends 13 stairs down-

wards, there's a barrier to grab onto it, and then one turns and enters and that's it.

Hubert, aged nine, intermediate level, directional type.

I enter the school, I walk to the left, then to the left and right, a bit straight and then to the left and to the right, straight, to the left and straight and then I pass by two pairs of doors, and the fifth door to the right.

Anna, aged nine, intermediate level, temporal type.

From the group, I walk straight, straight, straight a little bit more and I pass the bathroom, then straight and to the left and then I walk straight and to the green staircase, and I pass the hall, and then there's mine.

Only 12% of all the studied blind children used advanced-level descriptions, and these were eleven-year-olds. This description type included phrases referring to spatial relations between persons, objects in space, locations. It also included verbs concerning the activities performed during the movement. The descriptions were coherent, material, exhaustive. To visualise the above characteristic of these descriptions, here is a statement by Wiktorina, aged ten.

My class is on the left side, I walk along the primary school corridor, I exit the corridor, I pass the stairs to the auditorium, then I turn left, descend the green stairs to the ground floor, on the left there will be a bench, and I have to turn right, and ahead of me there's the guard-house.

Summary and conclusions

Based on the above data, one may conclude that blind children develop their competences in terms of descriptions of space together with the acquisition of other abilities in the area of spatial orienta-

tion, and these are related to the age and experience collected by the children. Evaluating the levels of description of space by blind children, one needs to remember as well that beside the indicated factors, of material importance in this regard is the intermediary (teacher, parent, therapist, etc.). It is this person who teaches the child describing through their own statements, the words they use. The intermediary is a very important factor, which can be substantiated by the fact that among the studied blind children those that were unable to provide descriptions, or those whose descriptions were fragmentary, always referred to situations in which the teacher guides them without conveying information about the space surrounding them. For a little child, who is only learning to interpret space, gathering verbal information is of key importance, as it amends and explains the tactile sensations.

Persons with sight disabilities, despite difficulty in terms of cognition and interpretation of the space surrounding them, as a result of gathering of daily experiences, are able to understand space and use this knowledge during exploration. These activities demand much more effort from them, and much more time than is the case for sighted persons due to the fact that space is easiest explored through sight and the kinaesthetic experience – movement. Despite other strategies of gaining spatial knowledge, persons with eyesight disabilities are its active participants and are able to describe their surroundings, just like seeing persons. Such a description is in many respects similar to a description constructed by a sighted person. Blind persons have the same strategies of creating mental maps used to create sensory representations of the explored space, a fact substantiated by the presence in both groups of the same components of cognitive maps (paths, nodes, edges, districts and landmarks). The differentiating factor between the two groups is the volume of the individual components present. In sight-disabled persons, the usage of a higher volume of orientation points is clear, as is their qualitative differentiation (tactile, auditory, olfactory, thermal landmarks, etc.). Both blind as well as seeing persons use for the most part use the same words to describe space (adverbs,

adpositional phrases, pronouns, adjectives, etc.), even though their volume and scope of their use with eyesight-impaired persons is smaller.

The ability to create a description of the space surrounding one is a process perfected over the entire course of one's life. Both sighted as well as blind persons this process is related to one's age and the experience gained during movement. In addition, in sight-impaired persons, a very important role is played by intermediary persons (meaning – parents, teachers, etc.). For this reason, it is very important for this ability to be perfected in a correct manner, meaning, through the use of precise, detailed descriptions concerning spatial relations.

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Visual functioning of an individual with progressive vision loss – a case study

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The aim of the article is to present the subjective perspective of a person with congenital low vision who experienced gradual vision deterioration up to total loss. The case study method was used, in which the narrative biographic interview was the main technique of collecting data. In the analysed narratives, certain milestones were identified in the process of coping with the consequences of progressive impairment. Those were the situations when the subject was no longer able to perform a specific task, which she had earlier performed under visual control. They made the subject realise the progressive nature of the disease and inevitably confronted her with the acquisition of permanent severe impairment. Those situations caused temporary disruption of her psychological balance and increased her demand for emotional support. With time, however, they also motivated the subject to use previously rejected rehabilitation devices and techniques. Lack of knowledge of functional implications of eye conditions (including reduced acuity and contrast sensitivity, field defects, light/dark adaptation problems, etc.) among family members and other people hindered the process of providing optimal instrumental support to the subject.

KEY WORDS: vision loss, progressive vision loss, functional implications, case study, narrative interview

Foreword

Disability is considered to be a multidimensional, complex and internally diversified phenomenon. Thus, in order to describe and explain the life situation of disabled persons, it is necessary to take into consideration a number of different factors whose interconnections change dynamically. Apart from individual features, such as: age, sex, health condition, race, cognitive functions, personality and temperament, lifestyle, individual hierarchy of values and life goals, etc., the sociocultural context conditioning the quantity and type of resources that help cope with a dysfunction are crucial for this group of persons¹. One factor that to a large extent determines the direction of analyses is – alongside the type and degree of dysfunction – the nature of disability (congenital vs. acquired), which generates different educational and developmental needs and possibilities and at the same time differentiates the demand for support (habilitation vs. rehabilitation).

Congenital disability concerns a minor part of the discussed population. Although medical and legal criteria for classifying disabled persons differ significantly between countries, an analysis of statistical data clearly shows that appr. 97% develop a dysfunction as a result of injury, disease and/or age². According to domestic surveys, less than 20% of disabled persons suffer from congenital disability and the others developed disability mainly as a result of long illness, mostly in adult age and especially elderly age³. Thus, because of demographic changes taking place in contemporary societies, acquiring the disability status is a process that lasts a num-

¹ S. Rudnicki, *Niepełnosprawność i złożoność*, „Studia Socjologiczne” 2014, No. 2(213), pp. 49–50.

² D. Goodey, *Disability Studies. An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, MPG Books Group, Bodmin and King's Lynn, London 2011, p. 1.

³ J. Bartkowski, *Położenie społeczno-ekonomiczne i jakość życia osób niepełnosprawnych w Polsce*, [in:] *Polscy niepełnosprawni. Od kompleksowej diagnozy do nowego modelu polityki społecznej*, ed. B. Gąciarz, S. Rudnicki, Wydawnictwa Akademii Górniczo-Hutniczej, Kraków 2014, pp. 51–52.

ber of years and in this process, the progress of the disease gradually leads to loss of ability in a given area.

As the number of chronic and deformity diseases that gradually lead to disability increases, special needs education and health sciences are more and more interested in subjective perception and evaluation by adults of their life situation. As dysfunction slowly progresses, former goals become irrelevant and the vision of future existence transforms, while a new system of values develops. The significance of a disease is determined by the consequences experienced and evaluated by a person in specific life circumstances⁴, thus research should provide for the natural context of experiences to make it possible to thoroughly describe and understand a given issue⁵. Analysis of personal experiences of individuals and groups described in autobiographical stories shows what the process of a disease and acquisition of disability means for respective individuals and reveals the subjective dimension of their difficulties, needs, expectations and coping strategies. The narratives of individuals who develop disability may have a different character and different objectives. Some self-narratives focus on the causes of a disease and its daily consequences, whereas others relate changes in personal and social identity, enabling a person to understand the changes taking place within their own self. Narratives may also show the relationship between what a person experiences and the cultural and social connotations of health and disease, ability and disability⁶.

Analysis of how a person gradually developing disability constructs the reality is of high cognitive value for special needs education, as the content and scope of the support provided in such situations are determined not only by the dynamics of the disease but even more importantly by the individual's needs and expectations,

⁴ M. Blaxter, *Zdrowie*, translated by M. Okła, Wydawnictwo Sic!, Warszawa 2009, pp. 88–89.

⁵ U. Flick, *Jakość w badaniach jakościowych*, translated by P. Tomanek, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, p. 14.

⁶ M. Bury, *Illness narratives: fact or fiction? "Sociology of Health and Illness"* 2001, No. 23, pp. 267–280.

which must be properly recognised and understood. Accordingly, the purpose of the article is to present narratives that express the subjective perspective of an individual experiencing gradual loss of vision, focusing in particular on the sense, significance and value associated with specific experiences in the context of acquiring the status of a person with permanent disability.

Specificity of gradual loss of vision

Functional consequences of developing visual disability depend on a number of factors, the most fundamental of which are considered to be the following: stage of life, how the vision loss happens (suddenly vs. gradually), degree of vision loss (total vs. partial), personal resources, including personality features, lifestyle and interests⁷. In the case of gradual vision loss, traumatisation of the process is affected by such factors as, for example: the diagnostic process, unfavourable prognoses, duration of the disease, sense of loneliness due to long periods of hospitalisation and repetitive surgeries or medical procedures, etc.⁸. Also the way in which a dysfunction deepens (continually or abruptly) has a direct effect on the degree of disorganisation of mental structures. Less emotional burden causing moderately negative emotional reactions is observed, if a disease progresses gradually and the effects are hard to notice in daily life. On the other hand, sudden and significant deterioration

⁷ T. Majewski, *Tyflopsychologia rozwojowa. Psychologia dzieci niewidomych i słabo widzących*, Polski Związek Niewidomych, Warszawa, 2002, pp. 18–19; I. Chrzanowska, *Pedagogika specjalna. Od tradycji do współczesności*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, Kraków 2015, p. 186; M. Zaorska, *Tyflopedagog wobec problemu aktywności życiowej – zawodowej i prozawodowej osób dorosłych z niepełnosprawnością wzrokową*, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit, Toruń 2015, pp. 24–26.

⁸ See K. Devine, B. Reed-Knight, K. Loiselle, N. Fenton, R. Blount, *Posttraumatic growth in young adults who experienced serious childhood illness: A mixed-methods approach*, "Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings" 2010, No. 17, pp. 340–348.

of vision, making the existing difficulties much more acute or producing new symptoms of the disease, are associated with a condition of strong distress. The predictability of things is shaken, the sense of control and agency is lowered, decisional autonomy is reduced, the fear of total blindness intensifies, former life goals seem to become unattainable, and these factors combined may lead to a strong emotional crisis undermining the sense of one's existence.

The difficulties experienced by a person suffering from progressive vision loss in all aspects of daily life, especially spatial cognition and mobility, living on one's own, doing things that require precision or maintaining interpersonal contacts increase anxiety, fear, uncertainty and a feeling of helplessness and dependence⁹. Non-acceptance of the changes as well as lack of help and social support may lead to depression¹⁰. It should be noted that social support may effectively protect persons suffering from vision impairment from becoming radically dissatisfied with their own life as well as reduce their typical daily problems¹¹. The effectiveness of support strongly depends on whether its scope and content are relevant to the specific situation and satisfy the person with visual impairment. Too much or insufficient help or help focusing on the wrong area of a person's functioning is not only ineffective in coping with difficulties but, even more importantly, has negative consequences that may affect the mental condition of a person in a crisis situation¹². In the case of gradually progressing visual disability, typical social reactions are based on being sympathetic and showing

⁹ E. Stanikowska, *Psychologiczne aspekty słabowzroczności*, „Kontaktologia i Optyka Okulistyczna” 2008, No. 3(19), p. 20.

¹⁰ Por. R. Casten, B. Rovner, *Depression in age-related macular degeneration*, “Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness” 2008, vol. 102, No. 10, pp. 591-599.

¹¹ See S. Steuden, *Z psychologicznej problematyki zdrowia i choroby*, [in:] *Jak świata mniej widzę: zaburzenia widzenia a jakość życia*, ed. P. Oleś, S. Steuden, J. Toczolowski, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2002b, pp. 35-36.

¹² C. B. Wortman, *Posttraumatic growth: Progress and problems*, “Psychological Inquiry” 2004, No. 15, pp. 81-90.

pity, which leads to overprotectiveness. This type of reaction, the same as avoiding contact and distancing oneself from the problem, may be caused by lack of competencies to assist a person who loses vision. Also, the visual possibilities of a person suffering from progressive vision loss change dynamically, which means that the assistance provided must be modified accordingly. Thus, of key importance is the ability of a visually impaired person to accurately define their current visual competence and clearly communicate their individual needs and expectations. On the other hand, the society and in particular the family must constantly develop their ability to provide appropriate assistance. The basis to identify the current possibilities and needs of a person gradually developing visual disability is updated functional assessment of vision and knowledge of the consequences of a given visual disorder in daily life.

Among the most typical functional consequences of eye diseases are: reduced visual acuity, contrast sensitivity disorders, vision field loss, light sensitivity disorders, problems with adapting to changing light, twilight vision disorders, colour perception disorders, nystagmus, etc.¹³ Reduced visual acuity is one of the basic medical and legal criteria to classify vision disorders. Visual acuity is understood as the ability to see items and their internal elements, and reduced acuity has serious consequences for the ability to perform activities that require precision, such as reading, writing, drawing, measuring or other activities associated with learning processes based on watching, imitating or working with visual materials¹⁴. In advanced stages of a disease, visual acuity is usually reduced so seriously that it negatively affects not only the ability to correctly identify and

¹³ The abovementioned consequences are discussed in detail e.g. in M. Walkiewicz-Krutak, *Stabowzroczność w aspekcie klinicznym i funkcjonalnym*, [in:] *Tyflopedagogika wobec współczesnej przestrzeni edukacyjno-rehabilitacyjnej*, ed. K. Czerwińska, M. Paplińska, M. Walkiewicz-Krutak, Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej, Warszawa 2015, pp. 198–219. This article briefly describes only those functional consequences that are relevant to the case study presented here.

¹⁴ R. Walthes, *Einführung in die Blinden- und Sehbehindertepädagogik*, Reinhardt Verlag, München 2005, pp. 50–54.

distinguish small items and their properties (e. g. distinguish letters or faces) but also hinders all the aspects of a person's functioning, making spatial cognition and independent mobility difficult and causing problems in effective performance of daily tasks and social contacts. The importance of visual acuity for a person's functioning is proven by the results of research conducted among cataract patients, according to which persons with objectively better acuity esteem more highly the quality of life in general as well as the quality of life with the illness¹⁵. Similar research conducted among glaucoma patients proves that improving visual acuity corresponds to a higher esteem of the quality of life in general, better realistic self-assessment and a desire for interpersonal contacts. Moreover, improved visual acuity in subjects was accompanied by alleviation of such clinical dimensions of the disease as: sense of hopelessness, sense of loneliness and fear perceived as a condition¹⁶.

Deteriorating visual acuity is often accompanied by contrast sensitivity disorders, causing numerous difficulties in distinguishing adjacent items that differ only slightly in terms of illumination and colour intensity, also in distinguishing items from their background. Contrast sensitivity, the same as visual acuity, strongly affects the quality of vision.

Another serious functional consequence of eye diseases and damages that hinders the planning, executing and controlling the precision of numerous activities is reduced visual field (scotoma). Its direct effects depend on the size and area of the disorder. If the central part of the visual field is damaged, a visually impaired person mainly experiences reduced visual acuity and finds it hard to

¹⁵ P. Oleś, M. Oleś, *Poczucie jakości życia u pacjentów chorych na zaćmę*, [in:] *Jak świata mniej widzę: zaburzenia widzenia a jakość życia*, ed. P. Oleś, S. Steuden, J. Toczolowski, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2002, pp. 104–105.

¹⁶ S. Steuden, *Poczucie jakości życia u pacjentów chorych na jaskrę*, [in:] *Jak świata mniej widzę: zaburzenia widzenia a jakość życia*, ed. P. Oleś, S. Steuden, J. Toczolowski, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2002, pp. 128–129.

distinguish colours, and if the disorder concerns the peripheral parts of the visual field, the basic problem is spatial cognition, especially in unfamiliar surroundings, noticing obstacles and perceiving large objects. Multiple scotomas, i.e. defects in multiple areas of the visual field, are typical of some diseases¹⁷.

The numerous functional consequences experienced by visually impaired persons in daily routines include light sensitivity disorders, typically hypersensitivity to light (photophobia, glare) or increased demand for light. In the case of hypersensitivity, inability to control the intensity of light may cause major discomfort or pain, or may even make it impossible to see altogether. Similar problems are associated with glare, which means sudden and relatively short reduction of visual acuity caused by light reflected by a smooth surface or coming directly from its source¹⁸. Both hypersensitivity to and increased demand for light mean that the quality of vision depends to a large extent on the current conditions in physical surroundings, which may change frequently and abruptly, making it difficult to control them, especially in open space. Changing light is also problematic for those visually impaired persons who have difficulty adapting to light and darkness, which usually means that more time is needed to get used to new conditions or, in extreme cases, causes functional blindness.

These and other consequences of eye diseases are one group of factors determining the use of vision by visually impaired persons in education, work, entertainment and daily routines. Being aware of them and understanding their specificity enables the person gradually losing vision and other people to select the right coping strategies, this way reducing the sense of helplessness and lack of control. If the family of a person suffering from progressive visual

¹⁷ B. Golemba, *Dostosowanie otoczenia do potrzeb dziecka słabo widzącego*, „Niepełnosprawność i Rehabilitacja” 2007, No. 2, pp. 72–73.

¹⁸ M. Walkiewicz-Krutak, *Słabowzroczność w aspekcie klinicznym i funkcjonalnym*, [in:] *Tyflopedagogika wobec współczesnej przestrzeni edukacyjno-rehabilitacyjnej*, ed. K. Czerwińska, M. Paplińska, M. Walkiewicz-Krutak, Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej, Warszawa 2015, pp. 213–214.

impairment know the person's visual possibilities and potential problems associated with a given activity and specific external circumstances, the risk of either overprotectiveness or insufficient support is minimised.

Functioning of an individual with progressive vision loss – a case study

The main purpose of the research was to study the subjective perception of progressive vision loss in the course of life. The research uses the case study method. The method is recommended for analysing the life cycle of individuals, especially if the explored area is multidimensional and complex, and insight into a given phenomenon requires direct reference to specific contextual factors¹⁹.

The basic data collection technique was biographic narrative interview conducted according to the model proposed by F. Schütze, i.e. it consisted of three stages: main story, internal questions and external questions²⁰. It should be noted that the main part of the interview was very elaborate – the narrator related in detail her life experiences associated with progressive vision loss, she described the events that were the most important in her opinion, trying to account them in chronological order, and she presented the socio-cultural context, including political and economic situations, in which the events took place. Most probably the reason why the narrator remained very open throughout the procedure was the comfort associated with certain familiarity with the researcher; she seemed to feel safe and confident, because she frequently repeated the statement: “I can confide in you”. The narrator's positive atti-

¹⁹ R. K. Yin, *Studium przypadku w badaniach naukowych. Projektowanie i metody*, translated by J. Gilewicz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2015, pp. 36–49.

²⁰ E. Kos, *Wywiad narracyjny jako metoda badań empirycznych*, [in:] *Badania jakościowe w pedagogice. Wywiad narracyjny i obiektywna hermeneutyka*, ed. D. Urbaniak-Zajac, E. Kos, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2013, pp. 91–116.

tude towards the researcher helped reduce the preliminary procedure associated with establishing a positive relationship and encouraged the narrator: "Tell me about your life, because I want to understand the experience of vision loss you have gone through".

Analysis of data obtained through a biographic narrative may focus either on the biography itself and its structure or on selected content of the narrative²¹. When interpreting the narrative material from a transcript of the interview, it was not the researcher's intention to reconstruct the entire biography of the person suffering from progressive vision loss, but rather to analyse the factors²² that explained the specificity of the process of becoming a visually disabled person. One of the directions of the analysis was determined by those parts of the narrative that answered the following research questions:

- What is the role of trajectory experience (developing visual disability) in the narrator's overall biography?
- Which events were the milestones in the trajectory of progressive vision loss?

The interview took 4 hours. The narrator was a 46-year-old woman suffering from the Marfan syndrome, i.e. a genetic disorder of the connective tissue characterised by considerable phenotypic variation. The disorder affects all the organs, especially the eye, causing short-sightedness, astigmatism, lens dislocation, corneal flatness, iris hypoplasia, increased length along an axis of the globe, retinal detachment, glaucoma or cataract²³. The subject has suffered

²¹ E. Soroko, *Wywoływanie autonarracji w badaniach psychologicznych. Ocena (auto)narracyjności wypowiedzi*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2009, pp. 50-51.

²² One of the most interesting thematic categories was emancipation, which in this case involved developing a strategy to cope with oppressive forces linked with disability. This issue was discussed in greater detail in another article: K. Czerwińska, *Wątki emancypacyjne w biegu życia osoby stopniowo tracącej wzrok*, „Interdyscyplinarne Konteksty Pedagogiki Specjalnej” 2015, No. 10, pp. 127-153.

²³ For more information on the etiology, clinical symptoms and progress of the Marfan syndrome, see, for example: B.T. Tinkle, H.M. Saal, the Committee on Ge-

from health problems since birth, including eye problems, and she became completely blind in early adult life. She has a university degree in economics. At the time when the research was conducted, she worked in open market, on expert position, had been married for many years and childless and lived with her husband in a large urban agglomeration.

Biographical accounts of early childhood and adolescence are full of theoretical commentaries in which the subject expresses her own opinion concerning her ways of acting at that time, and which are highly reflective. She perceived her progressive vision loss, which was one of the consequences of the serious systemic disorder, as, to some extent, the pivot of her life path: it significantly affected her performance of school roles, determined her contacts with peers and in a way determined her relationships with family members and, last but not least, influenced her life plans and goals. At the same time, the subject notes that daily life was not dominated by her condition or constant fear of progression of her disease. Progressive vision loss was a slow and quite inexplicit process that spanned over many years. The issue of potential vision loss in the future returned during medical check-ups, numerous periods of hospitalisation and medical procedures. According to the subject, the milestones in the trajectory were the moments when she was suddenly confronted with the fact of reduced visual possibilities and inability to quickly, safely and effectively perform tasks that did not use to be problematic before.

I do not remember exactly how my vision changed, but I used to see differently even as a child. When I read or looked at pictures, I literally did it with my nose touching the paper. I looked at items from a very short distance. Later, after a few eye surgeries, I got glasses – a different kind than before, because those were plus-corrective, then I could look at things from a longer distance, but of course I could not see them well. It went on like that for a number of years, I did not see or register

any changes in my vision. Until the moment when, in secondary school, I got retinal detachment in one eye, but it did not cause any major deterioration in vision, only as if a "fringe". Later, I had surgical retinal repair and a long break from school, and when I returned to school a few months later, it turned out that event though I did not notice much difference in my vision, it was no longer the same. It suddenly turned out that although before I could see the board quite well from the first desk, now, even though I was sitting right under the board, if I did not follow the teacher's hand and was not listening to what she was saying, I could not read what she wrote. I attended normal school. In secondary school, it was the most evident at Maths lessons. The Maths teacher wrote a lot and very fast, so fast that I could not check what she was writing in my friend's notebook, but had to go on copying from the board all the time. It was a great shock for me after returning from the hospital. It made me understand that there was a difference, that my vision got worse.

In the narrator's retrospective evaluation, situations like the one described above played a major role in the process of getting used to the fact of developing disability. These events were immediately followed by periods of emotional imbalance of varying intensity, from short lowering of mood to a depressive episode in early adult life, which resulted in a year-long stay at the parents' house and total isolation from peers. However, in a longer perspective, having overcome emotional problems, the events stimulated the narrator into action and motivated her to learn useful rehabilitation techniques, which she had previously rejected as good for persons with less visual potential than her. The narrator mentioned around ten such situations, which in her opinion were milestones in the process of adapting to gradual vision loss.

These events are described in the narratives in a detailed, or even punctilious way, and the subject gives much room to describe them and explain her emotional experiences. She received kind support from her family in overcoming emotional crises and actively joining the rehabilitation process, and understanding of the problems she experienced in daily life due to her disorder. The narrator stressed the fact that she had received a lot of help and support

from others in the periods when her vision acuity deteriorated and she could not see the details she needed to be able to do things that required precision. Her parents and friends, using mainly popular and intuitive knowledge, tried to predict which activities could be problematic or even unattainable to her, and applied simple preventive or supportive measures, such as, for example, reading information on drug leaflets or using enlarged print on food products, or reducing physical distance during conversations, etc. Other functional consequences of the disorder that developed or intensified as the disease progressed turned out to be difficult to explain to others, which is why the assistance provided was usually insufficient or inadequate. Such functional consequences included: problems adapting to changing light conditions, twilight blindness and multiple scotomas.

Scotoma is not at all a dark spot. You do not register scotoma at all. The image around that gap in the visual field, around that scotoma, spreads to that scotoma, as if melting together. As a result, what I see is as if the surrounding background, I do not see the scotoma. I did not even know I had one until a small light spot from a candle positioned itself on the level of that gap and then I noticed that when I looked at it, it disappeared. Completely. It was probably because of this reason that sometimes I hit or bumped into something, but I did not associate it with scotoma, I did not notice it. Maybe because it was just one scotoma, a specific, small spot in the visual field, with time I got used to it and I realised that when I was looking for something, I automatically set my eyes to look below or above that scotoma, and that this is automatic and I no longer control it. I tried to explain it to my parents, but it is difficult to imagine for a seeing person.

(...) I was in a religious community where we read the Bible, we all took turns reading fragments, and luckily our leader knew I could not read such small letters in a poorly lit place, so she just skipped me. Nobody could understand why, because nobody explained that... It did not occur to me that I could explain it... It was embarrassing for me... For example, one time, when we had to move from one room to another, which was very dark, at least for me, because the others could see well, but for me it was completely dark, and I stopped and could not

walk, so they were surprised: "What is wrong with you?" and I told them I could not see anything. "What do you mean you cannot see", "I cannot, because it is dark in here", "But it is not dark in here". That was a problem for me. Once, I was on a trip and I kept close to my two friends, who knew that when we moved from sunlight to a room, I was completely helpless in that moment and needed to hold on to them to walk. but... the others did not know that. The rest of the group did not know that and they made fun of us, calling us, for example, lovebirds or the like. They did not notice that they were simply helping me because no one could tell I had this kind of problem. In general, I had mixed feelings, on the one hand, I did not want them to know but on the other hand, I was very stressed in situations when it became evident.

The above account shows the narrator's strategy to conceal her eye problems in adolescence and early adult life, which she applied in many public situations, even if it exposed her to danger (e. g. walking on her own after dusk without the white cane) or prevented her from performing a given task effectively (e. g. not reading certain written texts because of her unwillingness to use the magnifying glass). From today's perspective, the subject interprets her behaviour as a manifestation of helpless resistance to the progress of the disease and denial caused by strong emotional barriers against accepting the status of a person with permanent and serious disability. She thinks that those problems were specifically manifested by her actively avoiding for a number of years movement techniques based on the sense of touch and hearing.

To think that I could take out a cane, well, that was a problem. I had a cane. I had got it a long time before, when I joined the Polish Association of the Blind. There was a trend back then that when you became a member of the PAB, you automatically received a cane. I remember that it was a shock for me, but even more for my mother, who was terrified, because back then, I could still see quite well, it was the beginning of my secondary school only. I joined the Association in order to join a library and borrow books, because longer reading was already a problem, and someone told me that they had tapes in that library,

so I thought it would make things easier for me. So I got that cane and put it deep inside a wardrobe, and my mother found it when she was cleaning the room and said: “Oh my God, hide it away”. The Association gave me the cane but there was no training in spatial cognition... I even went to two summer camps with the Association, and at one of them they taught me how to hold the cane... But back then, it did not seem like serious.

The problem mentioned by the narrator was discussed at greater length in Swedish interpretive research concerning learning processes and changes associated with acquired vision loss. It was concluded that the white cane, due to its identifying function, plays an active role in social interactions, because of which learning to use it in the context of spatial cognition and mobility should not be considered only in terms of technical support. It should be taken into consideration that learning to use the cane also involves certain changes in terms of personal identity, as in public space, a person with the white cane is a priori categorised in a specific stereotypical group rather than regarded as an autonomous individual²⁴.

Interpretation of the interview reveals at least two kinds of attitude to practical work on the trajectory and attempts to control it²⁵. The narrator tried to “tame” the trajectory in daily activities, although it took her a long time to accept the inability to remove the trajectory potential, and it was not a linear process. Objective difficulties caused by the advancement and type of the disorder were intensified by lack of professional informative support from vision therapists or other specialists that could help understand the consequences of the disease and assume a positive attitude towards the encountered problems. The narrator also tried to liberate herself from the trajectory mainly through rehabilitation that helped her reorganise and improve her living conditions. For example, she travelled abroad on her own in order to acquire new competencies.

²⁴ I. Berndtsson, *Förskjutna horisonter. Livsförändring och lärande i samband med synnedsättning eller blindhet*, University of Gothenburg, Göteborg 2001, pp. 498–499.

²⁵ See M. Górecki, *Trajektorja*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Pedagogiczna XXI wieku*. Tom VI, ed. T. Pilch, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, Warszawa 2007, p. 779.

Summary

The narrator's accounts of the progress of the disease were elaborate and they focused mainly on the functional consequences of the disorder. The subject explained their character and gave examples of the difficulties they generated, and analysed their understanding by other people. Her focus on issues closely linked with visual abilities seems to obscure the process of identity transformation that must have taken place during subsequent stages of adapting to blindness. Developing and interpreting identity within the framework of the trajectory and beyond it remains in the background of stories about changing visual possibilities.

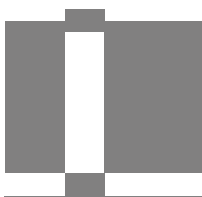
Progressive vision loss had numerous negative consequences that periodically reduced the narrator's subjective perception of the quality of life. Although the progress of the disease sometimes overburdened psychological control mechanisms and made it difficult to perform important social roles, and required prolonged treatment and rehabilitation, from today's perspective, the narrator notices the pro-developmental potential of the trajectory experience. In her opinion, her effort associated with the trajectory made her more resistant to difficult situations and more reflexive, and enabled her to appreciate the value of interpersonal relationships.

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The level of situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment at the time of the educational start

ABSTRACT: Magdalena Olempska-Wysocka, *The level of situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment at the time of the educational start*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 297–310. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

Situational educational sensitivity is one of the components of the educational sensitivity model, which is the child's vulnerability to the implementation of tasks related to the role of the student. There are situational sensitivity of instrumental processes and situational educational sensitivity of directional processes. The study involved 74 children with hearing impairment in a profound and significant degree, beginning their studies in the first grade in primary school. The research was carried out in the first semester, in central Poland, in integration and special schools. The aim of the research was to determine the situational level of sensitivity of deaf pupils starting school education. The conducted research allows to determine which of the ranges are the best and the least developed, which enables orientation towards the rehabilitation and therapeutic interactions of this group of students.

KEY WORDS: school maturity, child with hearing impairment, educational sensitivity, preparing the child to start school

Introduction

The concept of educational sensitivity is a theoretical model that explains certain behaviors and activities of the child. It is a cognitive construct, but also a prognostic, defining the potential of a child to undertake school tasks. Therefore, educational sensitivity is expressed in the effectiveness of learning, which is strengthened by the willingness to participate in these activities. Based on the concept of hierarchical structure of abilities, Joanna Głodkowska developed a model of educational sensitivity in which she identified: task-oriented educational sensitivity, situational educational sensitivity and general educational sensitivity. As the author of the model emphasizes, the above ranges of educational sensitivity occur in mutual relationships, which allows to define the overall picture of the child's school functioning¹. The subject of consideration in this article is situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment².

Situational educational sensitivity refers to didactic and educational situations that are encountered and in which the student participates. A collective work has been separated in it – that it is an organizational form, movement fun (a frequent method of working with a student in an early school age), as well as two individual organizational forms: independent mental work and manual work. The individual categories of methods and organizational forms allow to determine the level of student participation, including the student with hearing impairments in these forms and methods of work (instrumental processes) and determine the level of motiva-

¹ J. Głodkowska (1998), *Wrażliwość edukacyjna w kształtowaniu doświadczeń matematycznych u dzieci upośledzonych umysłowo w stopniu lekkim*, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiki Specjalnej, Warszawa.

² This article is part of a study on the educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment. The tests were carried out in the school year 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 and there are part of the research carried out as part of the doctoral thesis. In Poland, since then, no research has been undertaken to address the educational sensitivity of people with auditory disabilities.

tion and willingness (directional processes) to take action in collective work, physical play, independent mental work and independent manual work³. According to the author's concept, situational educational sensitivity has been divided into two ranges:

- Situational sensitivity of instrumental processes – refers to psychophysical abilities of the student during participation in didactic and educational situations such as collective work, movement fun, independent mental work and independent manual work.
- Situational sensitivity of directional processes – defining the student's motivation to participate in collective work, physical activity, independent mental work and independent manual work.

As Anna Brzezińska and co. emphasized⁴, changing the environment from pre-school to school sets for the child new requirements, related not only to the acquisition of new knowledge but also to the need of entering into various interactions both in the classroom and at school with peers and adults as well as with oneself as a learner. This is why it is very important to provide during the implementation of new tasks support to the children and prepare them well in advance. The situation of a hearing-impaired child who starts school seems to be particularly difficult. As it is shown in own research⁵, the lowest results in terms of educational sensitivity cover the scope of speech development, memorization and reproduction are two of the five most important areas of school readiness, which were identified by Sharon Kagan, Evelin Moore and Sue Bredekamp⁶.

³ J. Głodkowska, *Poznanie ucznia szkoły specjalnej*, WSiP, Warszawa 1999.

⁴ A. Brzezińska, A. Matejczuk J., Nowotnik, *Wspomaganie rozwoju dzieci z wieku od 5 do 7 lat a ich gotowość do radzenia sobie z wyzwaniami szkoły*, Edukacja 1(117), 2012, s. 7–22.

⁵ M. Olempska-Wysocka, *Zadaniowa wrażliwość edukacyjna uczniów z uszkodzonym słuchem*, Szkoła specjalna nr 4, 2017.

⁶ S. Kagan, E. Moore, Bredekamp S. (red.), *Reconsidering children's early learning and development: Toward shared beliefs and vocabulary*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Goals Panel, 1995.

Own research

The research was carried out on a group of 74 deaf pupils⁷, with intellectual development at the standard level, who started their studies in the first grade in primary school. The research covered children from central Poland, from integration and special schools. The aim of the research was to determine the situational level of sensitivity of students with hearing impairment, starting school education. The following research questions were formulated and verified using the appropriate measurement tool:

1. What is the level of situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment at the time of their school start?
2. If so, what are the differences in the level of situational educational sensitivity conditioned by the form of student education with hearing impairment?
3. If so, what are the differences in the level of situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment, conditioned by the gender of the respondents?

A Sheet of the Student's Special Cognition of the Special School of J. Głodkowska (1999) was used in the research. Through observation of the behavior of children in natural situations, the teacher monitors, participates in the child's activities, recording their effects. The questionnaire is designed to test the educational sensitivity of children with intellectual disabilities, but according to the assumptions of the author of the Sheet, it can also be used in inclusive and generally accessible forms of education. Relevance and reliability of the Sheet are at a high level ($r = 0.98$, $p < 0.001$) in diagnosing the school readiness of a student with a slight intellectual disability. It is also worth emphasizing the prognostic role of the tool as to the further school achievements of students (Głodkowska, 1999).

⁷ With significant and deep hearing loss.

Situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment in the light of their own research

The results of the research on the situational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment at the time of school leaving were collected in Table 1 below.

As can be seen from the data in Table 1, the average value in the category of educational sensitivity – for collective work, obtained by students with hearing impairment is 205.23 points, which is 53.30% of the maximum score, which is just over half. Standard deviation value is 81.68 points, and created in this way, the range of average results is (123.55, 286.91).

The lower limit corresponds to 32.09% of the maximum result, and the upper limit is 74.52% possible to obtain. Thus, the average results in the situational educational sensitivity to collective work fall within the percentage range (32.09%, 74.52%). The value of the skewness coefficient for results in the situational educational sensitivity category to collective work is positive (0.082). The distribution is therefore minimally asymmetrical and extends slightly towards the lower results. The focus factor (kurtosis) is negative, the distribution is therefore platykurtic. Platykurtic of the distribution suggests the lack of hearing-impaired students in the examined group who achieve higher scores in this category than the others. Among them, there is a group that obtained results on a similar level, and slightly above the level obtained by the whole group.

The results obtained by students with hearing impairment at the time of their educational start in the category of educational sensitivity – for movement fun, show that the average value is 46.46 points, which is 68.32% of the maximum possible score and it is just over half, it is although higher comparing to the situational sensitivity of the surveyed students to the collective work. The value of the standard deviation is 11.63 points, and the range of average results is (34.53; 58.09). The lower limit corresponds to 51.22% of the maximum result, while the upper limit corresponds to 85.42% result that is possible to achieve in this educational sensitivity situational cate-

Table 1. Results of situational assessment of educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment

Categories of situation of educational sensitivity	N	W.M	\bar{x}	δ	$\bar{x} : \bar{x}$ max w %	P \bar{x}	w. min.	w. maks	X_{typ} ($\bar{x} \pm \delta$)	k	g.
1. For collective work	74	385	205,23	81,68	53,30	0,53	63	350	(123,55-286,91)	-1,171	0,082
2. Sensitivity of instrumental processes	74	343	175,40	77,98	51,14	0,51	41	313	(97,42-253,38)	-1,168	0,123
3. Sensitivity of directional processes	74	42	29,82	7,38	71,00	0,71	8	42	(22,44-37,2)	0,071	-0,574
4. For movement fun	74	68	46,46	11,63	68,32	0,68	24	67	(34,83-58,09)	-0,894	-0,011
5. Sensitivity of instrumental processes	74	59	38,61	10,86	65,44	0,65	16	58	(27,75-49,47)	-0,869	0,024
6. Sensitivity of directional processes	74	9	7,85	1,76	87,22	0,87	1	9	(6,09-9,61)	3,622	-1,885
7. For independent mental work	74	50	28,65	10,15	57,30	0,57	6	50	(18,50-38,80)	-0,404	-0,225
8. Sensitivity of instrumental processes	74	35	16,93	8,42	48,37	0,48	0	35	(8,51-25,35)	-0,597	-0,151
9. Sensitivity of directional processes	74	15	11,71	3,00	78,06	0,78	4	15	(8,71-14,71)	-0,451	-0,694
10. For manual work	74	96	68,59	20,68	71,44	0,71	26	96	(47,91-89,27)	-0,912	-0,250
11. Sensitivity of instrumental processes	74	80	55,94	18,63	69,92	0,69	17	80	(37,31-74,57)	-0,911	-0,251
12. Sensitivity of directional processes	74	16	12,65	3,25	79,06	0,79	4	16	(9,4-15,90)	0,233	-0,919

Explanations for the table:

\bar{x} - arithmetic average

δ - standard deviation

$P \bar{x}$ - coefficient of easiness

W.M. - maximum result possible to obtain for a given category

w.min. - the smallest result obtained in a given category

w.maks. - the highest score obtained in a given category

X_{тип} - the boundaries of the typical area

k - kurtosis

g - skewness (distribution asymmetry coefficient)

gory. It is also worth noting the fact that over half of the examined students with hearing impairment (51.22%) achieved low results in this category. Analysis of the asymmetry coefficient allows to conclude that we are dealing with a minimally left-sided distribution. However, the focus factor is negative and informs us, as in situational educational sensitivity to collective work, about the pliability of distribution. The analysis of the research material also revealed the high sensitivity of the directional processes of children with hearing impairment to participate in movement games (87.22%), with a relatively lower level of instrumental processes (65.44%). These data confirm the value of fun, including movement fun, emphasized by the pedagogues and psychologists many times.

Looking at the results in the situational category of educational sensitivity - for independent mental work, it can be noticed that the average value is 28.65 points, which is 57.30% of the maximum result. In turn, the standard deviation value is 10.15 points, and the resulting range of average results is (18.5, 38.80). The lower limit corresponds to 37% of the maximum result and the upper limit is 37.6% of the maximum possible. Thus, the average results in the situational category of educational sensitivity to independent mental work fall within the percentage range (37%, 77.6%). The coefficient of concentration around the average is negative and informs about the platykurtic distribution, which proves the diversity of results obtained by the surveyed students. Also the value of the asymmetry of the distribution of results has a negative value, which speaks for left-hand asymmetry. It is important that one of the least beneficial of the student's psychological abilities is his participation in independent mental work (57.3% of the maximal result), and in this aspect the low value of instrumental processes (48.37% of the maximum result) and relatively higher sensitivity of directional processes (78.06% of the maximum result). These results are a confirmation of the educational sensitivity noted in the area of general analysis, low level of maturity of students with hearing impairment, beginning school education to meet tasks that require operational reasoning. It is worth remembering that the knowledge about the

low level of pupils' educational sensitivity to meet tasks that require operational reasoning should be reflected in constructed didactic situations including capabilities of students with hearing impairment

Noteworthy are relatively higher scores in the situational category of educational sensitivity – for manual work. Average obtained by students with hearing loss is 68.59 points, which is 71.44% of the maximum result. The value of the standard deviation is 20.68 points, and the range of average results created in this way is (47.91, 89.27). The lower limit corresponds to 49.9% of the maximum result and the upper limit is 92.9%. Thus, the average results in the situational category of educational sensitivity to independent mental work fall within the percentage range (37%, 77.6%). The difference between students with an average of the weakest situational educational sensitivity to independent mental work and students with the highest situational educational sensitivity to independent mental work is 43.6%. Asymmetry of the distribution of results as well as the coefficient of concentration around the average reach negative values, which allows us to state that we are dealing here with a platykurtic distribution and left-hand asymmetry, where larger numbers are concentrated in the scope of a larger variable. It is worth noting that, as in previous categories of situational educational sensitivity, also in the case of manual work, the predominance of directional over instrumental processes stands out. It is necessary to emphasize the children's willingness and their involvement in didactic situations (79.06%), that involve students manually and seem to bring pleasure, satisfaction with the activities performed and tasks fulfilled.

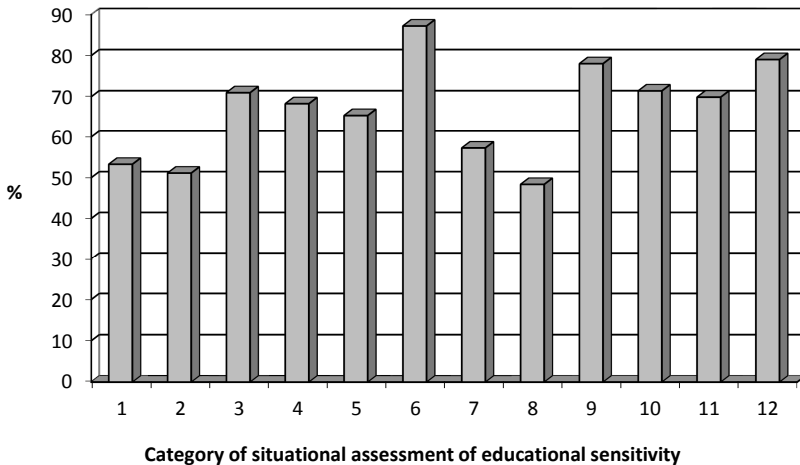
Moreover, the analysis of the results obtained during the research process allows to conclude that at a relatively high level (above 0.70 of the easiness coefficient) are:

- sensitivity of directional processes for movement fun (87% of the maximum result);
- sensitivity of directional processes to independent individual work (79% of the maximum result);

- sensitivity of directional processes to independent mental work (78% of the maximum result);
- sensitivity of directional processes to collective work (71% of the maximum result).

Therefore, it can be stated that the studied group of hearing impaired students who start their education in the first grade of primary school shows a fairly high level of motivation, willingness and involvement in didactic situations including: collective work, movement games, independent mental work and independent individual work. Relatively lower results in individual categories of situational educational sensitivity, and concerning instrumental processes may indicate the need to more favorable adaptation of forms and methods of work with a student with hearing impairment, starting learning in the first class. J. Głodkowska (1998), draws attention to the fact that the child at the time of the educational start manifests a greater need for action than his ability to face tasks indicates. This applies in particular to: collective work, movement fun, independent

Chart 1. Percentage of results of situational assessment of educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment



mental work, or manual manual work. This conclusion leads to the following pedagogical indication – the teacher should, using skilful pedagogical and psychological procedures, use the desire of the child, make the engagement dynamize the psychic forces, let the desire not expire, but mobilize to the effort.

A graphical presentation of the results obtained, on the basis of the percentage maximum results, is presented in Chart 1.

Comparative analysis of the situational level of girls' educational sensitivity and boys with hearing impairments

The conducted research also analyzed differences in the situational sensitivity of the tested students with hearing impairment at the moment of educational start taking into account the variable gender. A comparison of results obtained by both groups (girls and boys) is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. List of results obtained by girls and boys with hearing impairments in terms of situational educational sensitivity

Categories of situation of educational sensitivity	sex	N	Average rank	Sum of rank	Statystyki testu		
					U Manna-Whitneya	Z	Asymptotic significance (two-sided)
1. for collective work	K	31	37,34	1 157,50	661,500	-0,055	0,956
	M	43	37,62	1 617,50			
2. for movement fun	K	31	39,42	1 222,00	607,000	-0,652	0,514
	M	43	36,12	1 553,00			
3. for independent mental work	K	31	38,21	1 184,50	644,500	-0,241	0,809
	M	43	36,99	1 590,50			
4. for independent manual work	K	31	37,76	1 170,50	658,500	-0,088	0,930
	M	43	37,31	1 604,50			

Explanations as to Table 1.

Comparing the level of situational educational sensitivity of girls and boys with hearing impairment in relation to didactic and educational situations, there are no significant differences between the studied groups. The results of the research indicate at the same time that girls with hearing impairments present a higher level in the field of situational educational sensitivity to:

- movement fun,
- independent mental work,
- independent manual work.

Boys however, obtained a result showing a higher level of sensitivity to collective work. As already mentioned, discrepancies in the results obtained are not statistically significant. Therefore, it can not be concluded that sex is a differentiating factor in the four categories of situational educational sensitivity.

The conducted research also included statistical analysis between the level of situational educational sensitivity and the type of school the child attends. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. The level of situational educational sensitivity of students with hearing impairment at the time of the educational start including the type of school the child is attending

Categories of situational educational sensitivity	type of school	N	Average rank	Sum of rank	U Manna-Whitneya	Z	Asymptotic significance (two-sided)
1. For collective work	integration	28	54,11	1 515,00	179,000	-5,183	0,000
	special	46	27,39	1 260,00			
2. For movement fun	integration	28	52,16	1 460,50	233,500	-4,578	0,000
	special	46	28,58	1 314,50			
3. For independent mental work	integration	28	51,88	1 452,50	241,500	-4,491	0,000
	special	46	28,75	1 322,50			
4. For independent manual work	integration	28	50,75	1 421,00	273,000	-4,138	0,000
	special	46	29,43	1 354,00			

Explanations as to Table 1.

The collected empirical material allows to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the 4 categories of situational educational sensitivity (for collective work, movement fun, independent mental and manual work) and the type of school (integration, special) to which the child attends. Asymptotic significance for each category is the same and amounts to $\alpha = 0.000$. The analysis of averages allows to notice that the higher level in all four categories of situational educational sensitivity is achieved by students from integration schools.

Summary

Analysis of the research material concerning the determination of the situational level of educational sensitivity of students with hearing problems allowed to formulate the following conclusions:

- In the area of educational sensitivity, students with hearing problems present the lowest level of sensitivity in collective work (53.30%). It is worth mentioning that the results regarding all four didactic and educational situations (collective work, movement fun, independent mental work, manual work) are above 50% of the maximum result.
- Sex of students with hearing problems is not a factor significantly differentiating the level of situational educational sensitivity in collective work, physical play, independent mental or manual work.
- The conducted research indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the level of situational educational sensitivity and the type of school the child with hearing impairment attends. It is worth mentioning that the higher level of situational educational sensitivity is achieved by students attending integration schools. Presented research results also show that despite the fact that students from special schools obtain lower results, they are characterized by a higher level of motivation and school achievements (although the re-

sult is not statistically significant). The reason for this result may be the fact that students from special schools experience less stress, are more protected, feel more confident in the peer environment, are not exposed to ridicule. Their emotional state is more stable, suitable for modeling in the desired direction.

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Parental involvement in school-ways of communications between teachers and parents

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In the course of my research at PHD at the AMU University in Poland, I was exposed to patterns of communication between the school and the parents of the students. It turns out that these patterns change frequently: if in the past it was customary to write to parents in a contact notebook about the student's behavior at school, or make a call through Telephone line. Now we are exposed to new patterns of communication that may improve the relationship between the school and the parents, but on the other hand there are dangers and challenges that, if not considered, may harm the parents' involvement or contact with them. In recent years, with digital technological developments (Internet, smartphones, social networks), there has been a significant change in communication patterns between parents and teachers. The communication is immediate, the parents are connected to the school Site, and they are updated online by email, the WA messages, groups, etc. In this article I will examine the changes in communication between the school and parents and the significance of these changes. I will also relate to the gaps created between populations that can't afford some of these technologies and the intergenerational gap that is growing as a result of technological changes and their impact on students, parents and teachers.

KEY WORDS: Parent involvement, teachers, school, students, ways of communication, digital gaps, social network

The Involvement of the Parents in the School: Introduction

The research literature presents different models for the description of the reciprocal relations between the school and the parents¹. In the present work, I based on the research of Bauch and Goldring² for the examination of the contribution of the discourse on the new way of communication for the increase of the parents' involvement and relationship in the school activity. Information and communication technologies develop tremendously fast. They penetrate into every field, change our lifestyles, and become an important part of our culture and a main element in every field of existence. This model includes the following types:

1. Bureaucratic, characterized by little involvement of parents and teachers. This is the traditional model, in which parents have a passive role while the teachers maintain their autonomous place in the classroom.
2. Teachers' professionalism, characterized by great involvement of the teachers and low involvement of the parents. In this model the teachers are perceived as experts and as knowing what is good for their students.
3. Parent empowerment, characterized by high involvement of the parents, as opposed to low involvement of the teachers. In this model, the parents can constitute a threat to the professional prestige of teachers and in actuality weaken them. In this model, the relations between teachers and parents are characterized by tension and the teachers' aspiration is to distance the parents as much as possible.

¹ C. Olmstead, Using technology to increase parent involvement in schools, *TechTrends*, 57(6), 2013, pp. 28-38. A. Addi-Raccah & R. Ainhoren, School governance and teachers' attitudes to parents' involvement in schools, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(6), 2009, pp. 805-813.

² P. A. Bauch & E. B. Goldring, Parent-teacher participation in the context of school governance, *Peabody Journal of Education*, 73(1), 2000, pp. 15-35.

4. Partnership, characterized by a high level of involvement of both the teachers and the parents. This model aspires to the optimal involvement of the parents.

The Involvement of the Family in the Education of Our Time

For many, the acquisition of an education is a key to success in life. There is a tendency to see education to be a means of social mobility and thus according to research studies there is a direct relationship between the children's achievements in the school and their chances of social advancement, happiness, self-fulfillment, and a better life.³ There are many reasons for the relationship between the school and the parents: partnership between the child's family and the school improves the school's programs and climate, helps the teachers in their work, empowers the school staff, provides support services for the parents, improves the parents' skills and their leadership, and links between the families. However, beyond all these, one topic may connect between all the parents - the concern about the children's achievements in the school.

Recently evidence is growing stronger that the cooperation between teachers and parents indeed improves the children's achievements and their success in the school. The partnership contributes to the improvement in additional variables, such as self-esteem, behavior at home and in the school, strengthening of interpersonal skills and decision making skills. Moreover, it was found that when the student experiences a strong relationship between the school and the parents the child tends to take part in fewer risky behaviors. It should be noted that these findings were obtained in a series of research studies performed in the United States, and there are not,

³ D. Givton (2011), About What Student Is the Law Concerned? The Law of Student's Rights - Its Contribution and Role in the View of Legal Rulings, *Law and Business*, 14, pp. 767-768. (Hebrew)

as far as I know t any unequivocal findings on the influence of the parents' involvement on these variables in Israeli society⁴. It appears that the question on the agenda is not whether the partnership between home and school has a place and value but rather how and in what ways this partnership should be fulfilled and developed. Much has been written about the unique contribution of the home system and school system to the child's development. The partnership creates continuity and continuation⁵.

Parents and teachers have an important place in the students' developmental and educational process. Parents and teachers are partners in the process in which the adolescents acquire values, education, and behavior norms. The educational system in Israel encourages in different ways the parents' involvement in established education. It was found that the parents' involvement contributes both to the students' social adjustment and to their academic achievements (Neal, 2012). A main part of the parents' involvement (of any type) is the existence of a system of reciprocal communication between parents and teachers – two-way communication that has the goal to create a system of relations based on trust, to give information about the curriculum and its goals, to give information about problems at home, to hold a discussion, to exchange opinions, to increase the teachers' accessibility to the parents' requests, and to update the students' situation in the studies.

New Channels of Communication between Parents and Teachers

This section focuses on a number of issues relevant to the examination of new channels of communication between teachers and

⁴ Z. Greenbaum & D. Fried (2008), *Family relations in the framework of early childhood education: Picture of the Situation and recommendations*, Israel National Academy for Sciences. (Hebrew)

⁵ N. Bilha (2014), *Whose Child Is It? On the Parents' Relations with Their Children's Schools*, Tel Aviv, Mofet Institute. (Hebrew)

parents and their implications on their involvement in the educational process of their children and students. The involvement of the parents, including the communication with the staff in the school, has influences on the student's wellbeing, cognitive development, and consequently achievements⁶.

A direct, personal, and quality relationship between the parents and the teaching staff is an essential condition for the optimal parental involvement in the life of the school⁷. Effective communication between parents and teachers and an open channel of communication are very important and have a positive influence on the problem solving, which may improve the quality of education, sense of belonging, and success of children. The researchers further found that the parents' involvement will increase as they feel that the school trusts them and as they feel identity with the school values. In reality, in contrast, the process of parental involvement encounters difficulties. For instance, the Committee for Family Relations in Early Childhood Education and Connection to the Child's Development and the Success in the Educational System expressed frustration regarding the parents' involvement in the school because of the fact that the school turns to the parents only in the case of a conflict or a problem. The committee members' evaluation is very important to the involvement of the parents in the successes and positive messages⁸.

⁶ A. Plotkin & T. Shapira, *Contribution of the cooperation between the school and the parents in the construction of educational authority*, Trends in the Administration of Education 2103 Conference, Book of Abstracts, Gordon Academic College, 2013. S. G. Kosaretskii & D. Chernyshova, Electronic communication between the school and the home, *Russian Education and Society*, 55(10), 2013, 81-89. C. Olmstead, Using technology to increase parent involvement in schools, *TechTrends*, 57(6), 2013, pp. 28-38.

⁷ Y. Friedman, *Relations between School and Parents in Israel: Background Material for the Work*, 2010. Y. Fisher & Y. Friedman, Parents and the school – Reciprocal relations and involvement, Pages, 47, pp. 11-37, 2002. A. Mor, To speak with the parents even when 'everything is alright', *Echo of Education*, 90, 2012.

⁸ Greenbaum & Fried, 2008. *Family Relations in the framework of early childhood education: Picture of the Situation and recommendations*, Israel National Academy for Sciences.

Information and communication technologies develop tremendously fast. They penetrate into every field, change our lifestyles, and become an important part of our culture and a main element in every field of existence⁹. The same is true for the channels of digital communication between the school and the parents. The availability of new channels of media, for example, email, social networks (such as Facebook, WhatsApp), systems of institutional communication (as in the example of Mashov¹⁰ and Smart School) and smartphones offer synchronous and asynchronous, interpersonal, intergroup, dynamic communication that did not exist beforehand.

Research studies show that electronic mail (email), an old digital implementation from the period of Web 1.0, is one of the most common means for communication between parents and teachers. According to teachers, the evaluation of the parents through the email facilitates with the adoption of the steps required for the assistance of students who need help¹¹.

Electronic mail is found to be effective in the management of the students by the teachers, in that the messages are conveyed immediately to the parents. However, the main communication between the two groups occurs around negative issues, both in terms of the

⁹ G. Salomon, *Technology and education in the information era*, Haifa and Tel Aviv: Haifa University and Zmora Beitan, 2000.

¹⁰ Mashov is a Hebrew acronym for Immediacy, Transparency, and Supervision. The word means feedback. It is an Internet-based system of school management developed in the year 2006. As of the year 2014, it has been deployed in 549 schools and educational systems in Israel. The use of this software by the school staff, the students, and the parents contributes to the transparency of school activity through regular updates, for the improvement of the relationship between the school staff and the student and his parents and the improvement of the efficiency of the daily work in the educational staff.

¹¹ S. G. Kosaretskii & D. Chernyshova, Electronic communication between the school and the home, *Russian Education and Society*, 55(10), 2013, pp. 81-89. B. Thompson, Parent-teacher e-mail strategies at the elementary and secondary school. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*. 10(1), 2008, pp. 17-25. B. Thompson, Characteristics of parent-teacher e-mail communication. *Communication Education*, 57(2), 2009, pp. 201-223.

scholastic achievements and in terms of the behavior in the school. However, it was found that the parents and the teachers attempted to phrase the negative information in a positive vein¹². Thompson¹³ in another research study found failures and fears in the use of this channel of communication: (1) erroneous interpretation of the message, (2) fears of the use of asynchronous media, (2) fear of crossing the boundaries between teachers and parents, and (4) fear of shifting the responsibility for learning from the students to the parents.

Comparison between communication through the school website and email indicated that the institutional systems for pedagogical and administrative management, such as the examples of Mashov, MNBST¹⁴, and Smart School, are another channel of communication. Through these systems it is possible to obtain a daily report about what occurs in the lessons in the school and a report on the scores and scholastic achievements. The systems enable intra-organizational communication between staff members and communication with the students and their parents¹⁵. It should be noted that the educational system in Israel set for itself as an objective the incorporation of institutional systems as a main communication channel. The national computerized communication program that commenced in the year 2010 explicitly declared that one of the goals of the encouragement of communication between teachers, parents, and students is through information systems for pedagogical management¹⁶.

¹² B. Thompson, Parent-teacher e-mail strategies at the elementary and secondary school. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*. 10(1), 2008, pp. 17-25.

¹³ B. Thompson, Characteristics of parent-teacher e-mail communication. *Communication Education*, 57(2), 2009, pp. 201-223.

¹⁴ MNBST stands in Hebrew for Internet School Management System. It is a system open for use by all schools and is a work tool that enables the management of the school schedule and the report and follow-up after student attendance, behavior, and evaluation.

¹⁵ Binns, Y. (2008). *The use of the Mashov [Immediacy, Transparency, Supervision] program in the dialogue between the parents and the school: The Kafr Kaana middle school*. M. A. Thesis, The Open University. C. Olmstead, Using technology to increase parent involvement in schools, *TechTrends*, 57(6), 2013, pp. 28-38.

¹⁶ Ministry of Education, Adjustment of the educational system to the 21st century: Masterplan, 12th edition, <http://goog.gl/6oKIJb>, 2012.

Research studies found that the pace of the adoption of the institutional systems has increased and that these systems have a main place in the management of the school and in the communication between teachers, students, and parents. For instance, Blau and Hameiri¹⁷ measured the number of entries into the Mashov system in seven secondary schools in the first three years of the system. The research findings indicate that as the teaching workers entered data into the Mashov system, the pace of entries of the parents (primarily mothers) and of the students increased and consequently the frequency of the interaction between the teachers and the parents also increased (the nature of the interaction was not examined). However, teachers (with the exception of beginning teachers) reported mental pressure and fear of criticism on the part of experienced teachers, management, and parents following the public documentation of their reports. One of the results was that in some of the cases the report was 'softened' and not fully faithful to the reality¹⁸.

Additional new channels of communication are the social networks, like Facebook, WhatsApp (used to send immediate messages, photographs, and video and sound clips), Twitter, Google Plus, and so on. Social networks are the name of environments that include a variety of online tools and means that enable the creation and preservation of relations between users 24:7. The networks are a part of the variety of Web 2.0 applications, which are characterized by creation and collaboration of contents between users with

¹⁷ A. Blau & M. Hameiri, Smartphone in the school – Is the next generation really here? Pedagogical management of the mobile phone in the educational staff and in the families. In: Y. Ashet Alkaly, A. Kaspi, N. Gary, Y. Kellman, V. Silver-Varod, & Y. Yair (eds.) *The learning person the technological era* (pp. 17–24), 2011. A. Blau & M. Hameiri, *A new way to realize the right to know: Increase of the involvement of students and parents in what is done in the educational institutions through an online system for pedagogical management – Mashov [Immediacy, Transparency, Supervision]*, 2012, <http://goog.gl/BO1pxt>

¹⁸ M. Perlman, What are the reciprocal relations between the teachers' use of systems for information management and their sense of accountability? In: Y. Ashet Alkaly, A. Kaspi, N. Gary, Y. Kellman, V. Silver-Varod, & Y. Yair (eds.) *The learning person the technological era* (pp. 74–79).

shared interest. The world on the social networks is a world of 'here and now', when users look, respond, and are present¹⁹. Facebook is the largest and most known social network in the world. As its founders state, "Connect with friends and the world around you on Facebook²⁰". The use of the environment is free and allows the user (from the age of thirteen up) to join a group or groups of users and to communicate with the other members of the group. The users can create for themselves a personal profile and a list of people to whom it is possible to send messages and with whom it is possible to share information, pictures, and films. The research indicates that this social channel still is in its infancy as a channel of communication between teachers and parents but teachers express a willingness in principle to use it²¹.

Brooks and Boskilla²², who examined the incorporation of the Facebook social network as a means of communication between teachers and parents, found that most of the parents (81%) who participated in the research study maintained that Facebook is an effective tool for the improvement of the rapid communication between them and the class teachers, in contrast to traditional means, which are not rapid and accessible immediately for performance, such as contact notebooks and telephone calls. In addition, most saw Facebook to be a way that makes it easier for them to receive daily information from the teachers in the class, both through general messages and through personal messages and personal requests. The research study further shows that the relation between the parents and the teachers changed for the better as a result of the experience of communication between them using Facebook. They

¹⁹ G. Kortz & D. Chen, *Intentional online learning – A digital toolkit for the teacher*, Or Yehuda, Center for Academic Studies, 2012.

²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/>

²¹ C. Olmstead, Using technology to increase parent involvement in schools, *TechTrends*, 57(6), 2013, pp. 28–38.

²² S. Brooks & D. Boskilla, *Incorporation of Facebook as a means of communication between teachers and parents: Action research*, M. A. Thesis, The Center for Academic Studies, 2013.

maintain that the communication through Facebook contributed to the extension of the trust and cooperation between the teachers and the parents. During the school year in which the research study was performed, the relationship between the teachers and the parents was extended from the contact notebook and weekly telephone calls to daily contact, which is independent of time and place. Many parents responded via their mobile phone immediately after the message was sent. The parents felt that the communication was strengthened and led to mutual relations of trust. Another finding of their research study showed that the transfer of information and the exposure of the parents to different contents contributed greatly to the feeling of partnership.

The accelerated development of wireless technologies infrastructures contributed to the appearance of mobile means a, including smartphones that have internet access and allow a variety of actions of communication and browsing. Smartphones provide possibilities of communication in a variety of visual, text, and audiovisual representations. In addition, they increase the frequency of the use of communication applications such as email, Facebook, WhatsApp, Webtop (a Smart School application for the mobile phone), and so on.

Blau and Hameiri²³ examined the use of smartphones for work with the Mashov system among teaching workers, students, and parents in 429 schools. The data were based on system data (not self-reporting). They found that the number of entries of teaching workers into the system from the smartphone influenced the number of entries of students and parents. In their opinion, the possibility of entering data from the smartphone in real-time during the lessons can reduce the load assigned to the teaching workers in the entry of continuous data into the system and in freeing their time in

²³ A. Blau & M. Hameiri, *A new way to realize the right to know: Increase of the involvement of students and parents in what is done in the educational institutions through an online system for pedagogical management – Mashov [Immediacy, Transparency, Supervision]*, 2012, <http://goog.gl/BO1pxt>

the recesses, stay hours, and after the work day for additional educational activity. Moreover, the use of the Mashov system creates a new culture of online interaction between the school and the students and their parents.

To conclude, the limited review of research studies presented in this section shows that the appearance of digital channels of communication and communication means such as smartphones offer a variety of communication processes that had not existed beforehand both in their visual design and in the access to them. One of the main questions addresses the degree to which the technological setting changes and may change even more so in the future the nature of the relationship between the teachers, students, and parents.

The Meaning of the Changes that Occurred in the Relationship between Parents and Teachers

Parents and teachers have an important place in the developmental and educational process of the students. Parents and teachers are partners in the process in which the adolescents acquire values, education, and norms of behavior. The educational systems in Israel encourage in different ways the involvement of the parents in institutionalized education. It was found that the parents' involvement contributes both to the students' social adjustment and to their scholastic achievements²⁴. A main part of parental involvement (of any type) is the existence of a system of reciprocal communication between parents and teachers, two-way communication with the goal of creating a system of relations based on trust, providing information on the curriculum and its goals, providing information on problems at home, holding a discussion, changing opinions, increasing the access of the teachers to the parents requests, and receiving updates on the situation of the students' studies.

²⁴ R. B. Neal, Checking in or checking out? Investigation the parent involvement reactive hypothesis, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 15, 2012, pp. 79–89.

The parents' involvement occurs in the best way when there is ongoing and effective communication between them and the teachers²⁵. In recent years, with the extension of the use of new technologies of communication and information, the use of these channels of communication between the parents and the teachers has increased.

The concept of 'new communication technologies' refers to communication such as computers or smartphones, which are based on the Internet. In the context of Internet-supported communication channels, we discuss the use of a school communication system supported by the school website (such as Mashov), email and social networks, technologies supported by mobile phones that primarily address messaging (SMS) and WhatsApp messages. Since the new communication channels enable the direct transfer of messages, without the mediation of the students, at any time and at any place, the use increases significantly the mutual availability existing between the parents and the teacher.

This part focuses on the characteristics of communication between parents and teachers in the era of an information society and the types of communication that exist today in the schools. The main goal is to present a number of conclusions regarding the adjustment of every channel to the different types of relationship between teachers and parents. The fundamental assumption is that communication between parents and teachers is a process of the exchange of information, formation of conventions, involvement in the educational processes, coordination of actions, fulfilment of needs of the different sides, and effective emphasis of educational goals. The literature notes that to create effective communication between teachers and parents, the teachers' initiative is important. They must create a high frequency of contact with the parents and

²⁵ K. V. Hoover-Dempsey, M. C. Whitaker, & C. L. Ice, Motivation and commitment to family-school partnerships, [in:] S. L. Christenson & A. L. Reschly (eds.) *handbook of school-family partnerships*, New York, Routledge, 2010, pp. 30–60.

encourage the parents to be involved both in the school activity and in their children's learning process²⁶.

In this sense, the communication between teachers and parents needs to be positive and supportive, so that it can create opportunities for cooperation and for the encouragement of the continuation of the mutual communication. It is important to state that despite the feeling that exists in the public, according to which access to the Internet and use of smartphones are universal, the data indicate significant differences between different groups in the population, both in accessibility to the Internet and in the use of smart devices. The knowledge about these gaps is important, since it defines the target population that can benefit from this communication as opposed to a population that can benefit only from face-to-face communication or communication by regular means (letters or class notebook).

Digital Gaps. In the discussion of technology-supported communication, it is necessary to take into account that in Israel there are 'digital gaps'. A first order digital gap is the difference between the ability of groups in society to use information and communication technologies such as the Internet and smartphones. A second order digital gap is the gaps that exist in the computer use skills between groups that have the possibility of using these technologies. Regarding digital gaps of the first order, in Israel the data are relatively current. It becomes clear that 80% of households in Israel have a home computer but only 71% have an Internet connection. In the division by the decile according to average net income per person, there are large gaps in ownership of a computer and Internet connection: 95.5% of the households in the top decile have a computer in comparison to only 60% of households in the bottom decile, while 93.2% of the households in the top decile have an Internet subscription as opposed to only 38.1% in the bottom decile²⁷.

²⁶ L. Ho, C. Hung, H. Chen, Using theoretical models to examine the acceptance behavior of mobile phone messaging to enhance parent teacher interactions, *Computers and Education*, 61, 2013, pp. 105–114.

²⁷ Central Bureau of Statistics, Findings from a Survey of Household Expenses, 2012, 2013.

A clear conclusion that derives from the data presented in the previous paragraph is that the use of new technology channels in the school obligates the examination in every class and in every school of the level of accessibility of these means to parents and the degree of use of computers and smartphones. Especial attention is required in making intelligent decision on the level of the use of technology, so as to prevent a situation that the parents remain disconnected from this relationship with the teachers.

Technological availability. The research study differentiates between reliance on stationary technology (such as the home computer) and reliance on mobile technology (such as smartphones). The use of mobile devices significantly changes the frequency of the communication between parents and teachers²⁸. The possibility of carrying the device everywhere at all times causes the contacts of parents with teachers and teachers with parents to be held very frequently and at all hours of the day, even after the end of the studies in the school. It appears that the fundamental assumption of the contacts is that the very use of mobile devices dictates a norm of availability, which primarily obligates the teachers to be available for the parents at all times and places. This creates a load of communication and the blurring of the boundaries between the private life, both of the teachers and of the parents, and the educational obligations of the teachers and the reciprocal expectations of immediate availability. The accessibility and availability that develop may harm the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication and the teachers' ability to meet the parents' expectations. The teachers report overload and possible harm in their private lives because of the difficulty with setting a boundary between work and private life²⁹.

'Digital immigrants' and 'digital natives'. Aside from the gaps that exist in the accessibility and availability of technology between groups

²⁸ G. Kortz, *Uses of new media: Collection of data from interested parties – Teachers and parents: A review of the literature*, National Academy of Sciences, 2014.

²⁹ G. Kortz, *Uses of new media: Collection of data from interested parties – Teachers and parents: A review of the literature*, National Academy of Sciences, 2014.

in the population, there is a significant intergenerational gap in the attitude of parents and adolescents to technology. The name 'digital natives' is the name given to the generation of people born in the middle of the 1980s and later, who grew up in a world of information and digital communication. The name 'digital immigrants' is the name given to the generation born before the year 1964, who grew up in a world before the personal computer³⁰. The practical meaning is the perception that 'digital natives' live the language and culture of the Internet, alongside which they grew up. The terms express essential differences between the generations in the understanding and use of technology, with the recognition that beyond the regular generation gap there are also many other differences between the generations, both in the technological ability and in the interest and desire to understand and use the technology.

This generational gap in relation to the technology is perceived as influencing the adolescent's system of relations with his parents and with his teachers. The main argument on the matter of the intergenerational differentiation is that the generation of 'digital natives' addresses learning in a manner different from the previous generation. They are accustomed to learn through the simultaneous use of many channels of information (such as photographs, films, and digital information search using a search engine) and can hold social relations through the simultaneous use of a large number of channels. This may constitute a focus of conflict between teachers and students and between parents and adolescents³¹. In addition, parents find it difficult to achieve mastery of the channels of communication that the youths prefer and therefore problems in communication frequently arise between parents and children. The reason is that the communication of youths is based primarily on sparse channels of communication and on the young people's use of

³⁰ M. Prensky, 2001. Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9.

³¹ L. M. Padilla-Walker, S. M. Coyne, A. M. Fraser, Getting a high-speed family connection: Associations between family media use and family connection, *Family Relations*, 61, 2012, pp. 426–440.

the language of abbreviations typical of their peer group, a language that frequently is not understood by their parents³². In contrast to the parents and the teachers, the youths are less troubled by the need to maintain privacy, a situation that weakens the borders of privacy, both of the school and of the family. Moreover, in the scholastic realm the children frequently prepare homework during conversations on new channels of communication with peers, while watching clips and writing on Twitter. These facts awaken concerns in the parents about their children's ability to focus on the scholastic tasks and the feeling that the children are becoming addicted to technology. It is possible that the intergenerational gap will disappear over time, but at this stage the awareness of it is very important to the understanding of the communication between parents and children. Hence, this understanding is also important to the understanding of the implications of the new means of communication on the beneficial relations between parents and teachers.

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³² L. Rosen, 2010. *Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the way they learn*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

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REPORT



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**Report from the 3rd Doctoral Conference
“Education in the modern world – a theoretical
and empirical perspective”, Faculty of Educational Studies
of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan,
5 December, 2017**

On December 5, 2017 a scientific event was organized at the Faculty of Educational Studies of the Adam Mickiewicz University by the Department of Multicultural Education and Research on Social Inequalities at the AMU. The conference was held under the patronage of the Committee of Education Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The chairman of the Scientific Committee of the conference was prof. zw. dr hab. Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik. The Conference Organizing Committee co-created the Doctoral Study Council of FES AMU. The purpose of the meeting was to present various research projects carried out primarily by third degree PhD students at the Faculty of Educational Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University.

The guests were welcomed by the chairman of the Scientific Committee of prof. zw. dr hab. Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik. She pointed out the presence of the Faculty authorities and other people with recognized scientific achievements in the field of pedagogy, which significantly strengthened the importance of the conference.

The conference was then officially opened by the Dean of the Faculty of Educational Studies, prof. zw. dr hab. Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska. She noticed that the event is a part of a regular cycle, and carries a lot of scientific value and the prestige of the Faculty of Educational Studies, holding a high position in many national rankings. At the same time, she concluded

how important discussions on current pedagogical and humanistic problems are.

Professor zw. dr hab. Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska, was then invited to present a reflection in the introduction of "Pedagogical thinking in the contemporary image of the world". She proposed to listeners to consider pedagogical reflection from the perspective of two dimensions – time and space. Man co-creates culture, as well as various "worlds of images" resulting from it. According to the lecturer, contemporary social and cultural reality is difficult to describe, subject to many fluctuations. In everyday life there are many styles of life, values are pluralized. The pedagogical imagination that, in the opinion of the lecturer, is able to capture the essence of the multiple transformations affecting upbringing in the modern world can come with help in these challenges.

The second lecturer in the first part was prof. dr hab. Marek Konopczyński from the University of Białystok. He presented the speech entitled "Resocialization, re-adaptation, reintegration. Myths and reality". According to the guest, the correct rehabilitation process cannot proceed without re-adaptation, that is rooted in social conditions and without reintegration, meaning the increase of interpersonal contacts. The professor proposed rethinking these three components in one dimension in which it is possible to improve the human identity. This involves being ready to take on a different role in society and taking up work on oneself. The impulse for such a resolution may be a certain "flash" or extraordinary circumstances, giving rise to a resocialized person to change their thinking about themselves. These causes may be external or may result from within the person with life difficulties. Apart from presenting social rehabilitation reflections, the guest also presented to the listeners films about helping prisoners with convictions for serious crimes, such as murders. He also presented the material in which it was shown how the prisoners were given support in the form of artistic modification of their tattoos to ones that could be accepted by the society and potential employers. In the opinion of the guest, there are also numerous stereotypes, for example, in terms of appearance, a person dressed in a smart suit will receive help much more quickly, and a person who looks like a homeless person can expect a much smaller chance of resuscitation.

The last lecture in the first part was presented by prof. zw. dr hab. Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik with the subject "Feminization of the teaching profession. Pink collars "and paradoxes of the labor market". The

speaker analyzed the social fact that the teaching profession is dominated by women in almost all countries of the world. More and more women perform professions that were previously attributed to men. The author discussed selected transformations on the labor market, taking place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from the perspective of gender emancipation. You cannot analyze this issue without using the category of feminization and gender segregation. The lower remuneration paid to women was and still is a problem. In addition, women were excluded from many administrative positions, e. g. in Great Britain. The liberal doctrine and its application could also have resulted in lowering the attractiveness of work in education, which resulted in the lawful departure of many men from this sector, which implied the feminization of the teaching profession. On the other hand, women's desire is to become independent and economically independent so that they do not have to be dependent on men. The injustice is also the fact that although women dominate in elementary and secondary education in the United States, the majority of managerial positions in educational institutions are occupied by men.

After the break the deliberations in the second part began.

The first to start was Agnieszka Nymś-Górna, MA, with the subject "Educational possibilities in the conditions of penitentiary isolation". The speaker drew attention to the consequences of the fact that prison schools are subject to the Ministry of National Education in Poland, also discussed the problem of qualifications of prisoners for teaching, as well as the lacking possibilities for some prisoners to learn. A positive aspect of rehabilitation processes is the increase in the number of people obtaining a high school diploma in prisoner communities in Poland.

The second speaker was Agnieszka Bojarczuk-Tüncer, MA, who presented the subject "Differences between the aspects of linguistic knowledge of Polish and English and the acquisition of linguistic competence by children with special educational needs". She referred to the presented problem by presenting linguistic tools in the field of syntax, semantics, phonology and pragmatics.

Another participant with the report "Hip-hop as an independent culture. The impact of hip-hop culture on the process of shaping the identity of youth" was presented by Monika Bieńkowska MA. She presented audiovisual material illustrating the behavior of contemporary young people who spend a lot of time on perfect processing of images, placed in social media, promoting their lifestyle.

As the fourth took the floor mgr Katarzyna Bogucka with the problem "Happy luck?" Education in the process of adaptation of migrant children from Poland in the UK". According to the researcher, the school is a lens for observing adaptive struggles in British children's and their families' facilities. It is important to prepare teachers to support effective, non-segregational education.

The fifth speaker with the subject "In search of understanding social perception of childhood. Old and new myths" was Paulina Głowacka. She presented four main myths about a child: the myth of a child as an adult, the myth of a happy childhood, the myth of child's innocence and the myth of a child's cunning.

The last person in this part was Beata Iwanicka MA with the paper "Theoretical-empirical perspective of language education of people with hearing impairments". The author presented the concerns of parents and educators in teaching a foreign language to children with hearing impairments, which turned out to be an unwarranted and harmful stereotype for the pupils. According to the researcher, there are no obstacles to teaching HOH children foreign languages on condition of overcoming difficulties in language education, using appropriate forms of support, such as: dedicated language courses, computer technologies, or lengthening language classes.

After the break, the deliberations were continued.

Małgorzata Klimorowska, MA, who presented the paper "Model FRIS - communication in a research team". FRIS is a Polish model that serves as a tool to describe the diversity of ways of thinking and acting. It is based on 4 cognitive perspectives: facts-relations-ideas-structures. They explain what information you give the highest priority, especially in new situations. The benefits of using this model show human resources, natural talents and human predispositions.

The next speaker was Dr. Magdalena Szafran, she talked about "National research programs". She presented programs at the National Science Center, listing and describing examples of competitions such as: Opus, Preludium, Sonata, Maestro, Miniatura and Etiuda (this last module is dedicated to PhD students).

The next guest was Wojciech Andraszczyk MA with the paper "Women's crime in selected criminological theories. Social and pedagogical contexts." He characterized the penitentiary system in Poland, calculating that there are 9 prisons in Poland for women (for a total of 87 prisons in the

country). He described the most common crimes committed by women and the conditions they face in Polish prisons.

The fourth participant of the section was MA Justyna Mrozek, presenting the subject of "Socializing function of subcultures". She told about two types of socialization, primary and secondary, while presenting the types of subcultures. According to her, young people want to be everything that they are culturally discouraged from, citing the idea of prof. Lech Witkowski.

The fifth one was Michałina Kasprzak with the subject of "Non-formal education in local forms of support and care. Considerations based on own research". She discussed the problem of children coming from dysfunctional environments who are disadvantaged, reducing the person's chances of exercising their rights. Cooperation between the educator-teacher-educator results in the preparation and willingness to work with another person, communication, security, being with each other and bonding.

Then, Ms. Maria Kaźmierska, MA, was invited to speak, with the paper "The role in creating and developing social competences of students in their education". She sketched attempts to include terms such as "social competence" and a model of a student who does not develop social skills, which results in lower academic achievement, remaining socially maladjusted and showing less self-confidence.

After the discussion, the deliberations continued.

A paper entitled "Family life appropriated by the virtual space of Sharenting as a new form of Internet addiction" was presented by MA Joanna Sikorska. The term "sharenting" is a combination of the words "parenting" and "share". She spoke about the dangerous phenomenon of grooming, which from the English "grooming of the child", means actions taken to make friends and establish emotional ties with the child, to reduce its resistance, and then abuse sexually.

Then, Anna Michniuk presented the problem of "Student as a user of (new) media in the school space - a report on my own research". The new media student according to literature is immersed in the media world and knows technology well. The author presented positive effects of the use of media at school, such as awareness of copyright, the ability to create media messages, distinguishing truth from fiction, reflection and distance.

The next speaker was Ms. Elwira Litaszewska MA, with the lecture "Development of novice entrepreneurship - educational exemplifications".

She spoke about the step by step character of introducing entrepreneurial activities to the market (pre-incubation), followed by the incubation and acceleration phases. The incubation process involves a company managed by an entrepreneur. Next, the Academic Entrepreneurship Incubator was presented. The main idea of this project is to provide space suitable for the needs of companies, providing business support services, as well as shaping the climate to take on the development of new ventures.

Ms.Daria Szykowna, MA presented the issue of "Peer tutoring as a promising perspective of education involving children with autism". Tutoring occurs when more skilled children begin to give advice and instructions to their peers to introduce them to a similar level of competence. It showed benefits for the student, which result from it, such as: the source of positive experience, different from those gained in the interaction with adults, the chance to confront positions and exchange arguments and increase motivation to learn and the level of involvement, as well as the impact on changing position in peer group.

Later, Mr.Tomasz Herman gave a lecture on "Sociotherapy in the activities of the day care facility". He presented the goals and tasks of sociotherapy, which form part of the statutory activities of day support centers. He also talked about methods and forms of work in sociotherapy, such as group work, brainstorming, playing, art classes, music therapy, fairytale therapy and the like. He also referred to the qualities a sociotherapist should possess, such as observing the rules, flexibility, patience and consistency.

The next participant was Ms.Anna Schmidt MA with the report "Cooperation as an important element in building a support network for the development of a child at pre-school age". She presented the project "preschoolers at the university" as an example of activities promoting the subject of cooperation between communities to support the development of a child at pre-school age. She also discussed the benefits that result from cooperation with the local community from the perspective of parents and teachers.

Ms. Natalia Ulaniecka, MA presented the topic "Between reflection and action - action learning method in pedagogical practice". The focus of her considerations were the main principles of this method, such as: participation and activity of all people in the group, leading as a moderator, permanent team composition as an important element of a sense of security and working on real problems based on real experiences. The discussed method

is used in business and coaching. The PhD student also presented the pedagogical and social application of this tool, also being able to develop in a social intervention project.

The next speaker, Ms. Aleksandra Rożek talked about "Using music and movement in working with students in the integration class". From the moment of birth, the preference to listen to the mother's voice is revealed in a child. A newborn prefers to listen to the voice of the mother rather than to a strange woman, as well as to the female voice rather than the male voice, and shows a greater interest in the human voice than other sounds. Recognized by newborns in their prenatal life rhythmic cartoons and poems read to them in their prenatal life, testify to their auditory memory. Subsequently, the method of active listening to music by Batia Strauss was also discussed. The main purpose of this method is to introduce children to classical music.

Then, Mr. Maciej Zychowicz, MA, spoke about the issue of "Seniors and the media - opportunities and threats to social functioning". He presented the image of seniors, which is shaped in the media and the figure of a senior in social media. He discussed the barriers to entry of older people into the virtual world, such as: financial, health, technical and psychological. He emphasized that along with the popularization of social networks, activity after 55 and 65 years of age also increases.

The next participant of the section was Ms. Anna Wojewoda with the speech "Immersion method in teaching foreign language to children - innovation or return to the past?". She presented the concept of immersion and its immersion in a language where one or more subjects as well as other activities included in the projects, are held in a foreign language continuously, for many years. She compared modern methods of teaching, in foreign language learning in the nineteenth-century cognition.

The last speaker of the conference was Ms. Ewelina Szczechowiak. She spoke about the topic of "Professional counselor in the modern educational system". She discussed educational inspirations and the importance of vocational counselors in schools. She also stressed that young people in their choice of high school are guided by the parents 'and acquaintances' opinion. Junior high school students show a negative attitude towards the school career counselor. An important aspect is also the insufficient number of hours with a vocational counselor and a change in the model of linear education into a modular model in Polish gymnasiums. The course of vocational counseling classes in the space of three years allowed young

people to learn about their weaknesses and strengths, which in turn, will allow them to choose the right career path.

The conference was closed by a discussion and a short summary delivered by the Vice Dean for PhD studies and international cooperation, prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik. At the same time, she invited all participants to participate in the social and artistic part of the meeting.



REVIEW



AGATA TRĘBACZ, KARINA MAŃKOWSKA

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

**Review of a book edited by Justyna Wojciechowska
and Beata Kazek “Senses in Communication.
Speech and Its’ Determinants”
(„Zmysły w komunikacji. Mowa i jej uwarunkowania”)**

The publication entitled “Senses in Communication. Speech and Its’ Determinants” („Zmysły w komunikacji. Mowa i jej uwarunkowania”) edited by Justyna Wojciechowska and Beata Kazek is a continuation of the first part entitled “Senses in Communication. All Senses Lead to the Brain” („Zmysły w komunikacji. Wszystkie zmysły prowadzą do mózgu”) and is a priceless source of theoretical knowledge with the respect to the linguistic competence correlated with sensory perception. Comprehensive papers collected in three chapters transparently lead the reader through the roles of senses in the process of communication, indicate the determinants and factors and subsequently focus on the possibilities of offering support to people with communication skill disorders. The plethora of specialist terminology and scientific nature of the language result in the fact that the publication is intended for a narrow circle of recipients, including experts who are involved in studying speech and language. The authors of the papers include well-known and experienced specialists, including Danuta Pluta-Wojciechowska, PhD, Marta Korendo, PhD and Karina Szafrńska, PhD in humanities, who are authorities for the younger generation of learning therapists. In spite of the fact that individual papers define various elements of the phenomenon of communication, yet they comprehensively present a holistic approach to the process and encourage scientific reflection in this area.

The first part of "Senses in Communication" contains two chapters devoted to the sensual aspect of people's communication, with a special emphasis on the sense of touch and metaphor which, in a cognitive approach, is classified as one of the senses. The issues of the first chapter are introduced by the paper entitled "The Sense of Touch in Communication and Language of Children and Adults" („O zmysle dotyku w komunikacji i w języku dzieci i dorosłych"), written by Professor Bernadeta Niesporek-Szamburska, who pays attention to the role of touch as the primary sense in experiencing the reality and emphasises its' impact on the man's cognitive and intellectual development. The author says: "Touch offers a possibility of tactile comprehension of the world", which means that without the ability of experiencing the world by touch, man is not capable of full participation in the social life, as in the light of Ackerman's studies (1994), tactile contact has a ten times higher impact on communication than verbal speech. In the sub-chapter "Touch in Language" („Dotyk w języku"), the author refers to a number of verbs which are used to characterise tactile perception in the system of the Polish language.

In the next chapter, "Metaphor: Man's Unique Sense" („Metafora - niezwykły zmysł człowieka"), Danuta Pluta-Wojciechowska, PhD, undertakes thorough scientific reflection on the concept of metaphor, adopting the viewpoint of representatives of cognitive linguistics and thus considering metaphor as one of the senses, used to interpret the surrounding world and, subsequently, formation of the linguistic terms. The author points out to the significance of metaphor as one of the elements for creating referents of terms, which allows for extending the knowledge in order to understand new meanings in language. Furthermore, the author describes the possibilities of using metaphor as a tool for assessing the linguistic system and allowing one to express things that cannot be expressed with the use of normative terms. The paper ends with a brief summary from a study on understanding and creation of metaphors among children suffering from cleft lip and cleft palate in a post-surgery state and children without cleft palate and lip aged 6-7 and 9-10 in both groups, which has clearly shown that decoding and building of metaphors by children with incorrect structure of facial skeleton took place on a lower level than in the case of children without such disorder.

The core of the next chapters in the second part of the publication is description of the factors of the communication process that condition its' course and efficiency. The chapter that introduces the reader to the subsequent areas of scientific discussions on the concept of communication is the

text by Joanna Soboń entitled "Review of the Theories of Origin of Stammering in the Light of Logopaedic Practice" („Przegląd teorii pochodzenia jąkania w świetle praktyki logopedycznej”), where the author discusses psychogenic, audiologic, sociological and organic concept of the disorder. In the light of scientific studies, only a compilation of all types of linguistic skills allows for being a competent participant of social interactions. Along with aggravation of speech disfluency, readiness to communicate decreases. The author delves into the functional description of a person struggling with speech disfluency, putting special emphasis on intensification of symptoms in social situations. Joanna Soboń's decade-long professional practice is a proof for the fact that it is impossible to indicate a direct cause of stammering, in spite of the dominant view that stress is the most frequent cause of this speech disorder.

The objective of the article entitled "Senses in Communication: Significance of Development, Visual and Audio Perception and Multi-Sensory Cognition for Correct Construction of Linguistic System" („Zmysły w komunikacji - znaczenie rozwoju, percepcji wzrokowej, słuchowej oraz poznania wielozmysłowego dla prawidłowego budowania systemu językowego”) written by Marta Korendo, a Krakow Method therapist, is to indicate the superiority of cognitive development in relation to the development of speech with simultaneous emphasis on the fundamental significance of modelling the conceptual system for sensory and intellectual development. Furthermore, the author refers to a description of skills which should appear in a normatively developing child at the age between 0 and 3, both with respect to visual and audio perception. Marta Korendo is in favour of conducting linguistic therapy according to the premises of the Krakow Method, where language programming is one of the elements.

In the text of Karina Szafrńska, PhD, entitled "Linguistic and Communication Competence: Determinants of the Communication Process" („Kompetencje językowe i komunikacyjne - umwarunkowania procesu komunikacji”), the readers may find a theoretical description of determinants for development of communication skills. In the first part of the article, the author defines the term communication, emphasising, together with other authors, i.e. Roman Jakobson and Harold Lasswell, that communication is an intentional process, the purpose of which is conscious impact on the recipient of communication. The continuation of scientific reflection on this issue are subsequent sub-chapters that describe linguistic competence and linguistic proficiency expressed in four sub-categories:

systemic linguistic competence, social linguistic competence, situational linguistic competence and pragmatic linguistic competence, which allow for efficient coding of statements and transfer of non-verbal signals. According to the author, stimulation of the above-listed areas of linguistic and communication development from the moment of the child's birth is a key element of efficient communication among people.

The third area of the authors' scientific interest is the possibility of offering support in the process of communication, with special attention given to the development of speech and its' internal determinants. In the first chapter entitled "Multi-Aspect Nature of Diagnosis from the Perspective of Hitherto Scientific Findings" („Wieloaspektowość diagnozy z perspektywy dotychczasowych ustaleń naukowych”), Ewa Małachowska emphasises the salience of diagnosis as a basis for efficiency and selection of the direction of changes in a therapeutic procedure. The author refers to various approaches to the term "diagnosis" describing, *inter alia*, diagnosis in medicine, psychology, pedagogy and speech therapy and briefly discussing its' purposes, features, tasks, as well as methods of diagnosing. In the next chapters, the readers become acquainted with the standards of logopaedic treatment which should encompass therapeutic activities individually adjusted to the "potential of a person undergoing therapy and the degree of intensity of undesired behaviour". Furthermore, the author of the article delves into the procedure of logopaedic diagnosis, pointing out to the areas that should be thoroughly investigated by a diagnostician with the aim of systematising the knowledge about a given disorder and a holistic outlook on the individual in the evaluation of his/her comprehensive functioning.

The chapter entitled "Correct Sensory Processes as Bases of the So-Called School Skills and Good Linguistic Capacity" („Prawidłowe procesy przetwarzania sensorycznego jako podwaliny tak zwanych umiejętności szkolnych i dobrej sprawności językowej”) written by Magdalena Szczepa-Fabian emphasises the significance of the sensory integration processes for a child's correct development. Processing the sensory stimuli is a multi-dimensional process consisting in constant recording, explaining and adapting of information that derives from sensory receptors in the central nervous system. The correct course of this process is not only of primary significance for motor skills, but it also conditions the efficiency of reading, writing and speaking. Sensory processing disorders occur when information from the senses is not fully used in the course of day-to-day harmonious functioning and, in the course of time, becomes the cause of

disruptions in the child's natural development. This chapter allows for becoming acquainted with a list of symptoms which, as noted by Violet Maas, accompany children who display difficulties in learning to read, write and communicate efficiently and are, therefore, related to the disorders of sensory integration activities. The readers' attention is drawn to the brief discussion of potential causes of such disorders, including the impact of toxic pre-natal factors or post-natal factors.

Scientific discussion on the issue of support in communication ends with the text of Joanna Marta-Olejasz entitled "Discussion of Studies on Development and Support for Communication Skills" („Omówienie badań nad rozwojem i wspomaganiem umiejętności komunikacyjnych”), where the author presents a bibliographic list on development and support for communication competence and offers practical advice on how to develop the child's ability to conduct dialogue. Description of the profile of a child developing normatively – as a competent partner in dialogue – is presented in opposition to a child suffering from a disability, who is looking for substitute modes of understanding the surrounding reality, often reaching to the resources of alternative and assisting communication, in order to improve the efficiency of own linguistic exploration.

“Senses in Communication. Speech and Its' Determinants” („Zmysły w komunikacji. Mowa i jej uwarunkowania”) is a publication that holistically presents the impact of sensual perception on the formation of the communication process. The approach to this phenomenon shown in the book allows for perceiving its' multiple aspects, as well as induces the readers to undertake a thorough reflection on the role of senses in the course of man's development. An additional advantage of the publication is the fact that every chapter ends with a comprehensive description of bibliographic items used to form a thorough outlook on the concept of communication and sensory cognition. Furthermore, every author offers a brief summary of his/ her article, referring to key terms that form the essence of the scientific discussion. It is worth noting that the final recapitulation is written both in Polish and English and thanks to this, the knowledge described in the papers is at least partially available also to non-native speakers. The scientific nature of the publication, the wealth of specialist terminology and the factors of practical application of theoretical knowledge result in the fact that it is intended, in particular, for experts involved in speech disorder therapy, as well as for all people who want to expand their knowledge in this respect.

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