

EDUKACYJNA ANALIZA TRANSAKCYJNA

NR 13/2024

EDUCATIONAL TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

NO 13/2024

Pismo Zespołu Badawczego Edukacyjnej Analizy Transakcyjnej
Katedra Badań Nad Edukacją
Uniwersytetu Jana Długosza w Częstochowie

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UNIWERSYTET JANA DŁUGOSZA W CZĘSTOCHOWIE

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Od redakcji

Z ogromną satysfakcją oddajemy w Państwa ręce trzynasty numer rocznika „Edukacyjna Analiza Transakcyjna”, w którym staraliśmy się połączyć teoretyczne refleksje, wyniki badań empirycznych oraz praktyczne spostrzeżenia z obszaru analizy transakcyjnej w edukacji i psychoterapii. To wydanie stanowi próbę odpowiedzi na wyzwania współczesnego świata, gdzie interdyscyplinarne podejście staje się niezbędnym narzędziem zarówno w pracy dydaktycznej, jak i terapeutycznej. Czasopismo uzyskało wsparcie w ramach ministerialnego programu Rozwój Czasopism Naukowych. Dzięki uzyskanemu wsparciu artykuły naukowe opublikowane są w języku angielskim, co, mamy nadzieję, przyczyni się do popularyzacji edukacyjnej analizy transakcyjnej.

Wśród publikacji znajdują Państwo między innymi artykuły dotyczące zastosowania analizy transakcyjnej w szeroko pojętej edukacji oraz refleksje nad grupową psychoterapią, które ukazują, jak szerokie spektrum narzędzi tej metodyki może wspierać rozwój osobisty i zawodowy. Autorzy, tacy jak Tony White czy Jarosław Jagieła, przybliżają specyfikę adaptacji osobowościowych u studentów oraz integracyjne podejście w psychoterapii, wskazując na bogactwo perspektyw, jakie oferuje analiza transakcyjna.

Nie zabrakło również publikacji dotyczących nowych wyzwań współczesności – od cyfrowej obecności seniorów, przez potencjał edukacyjnej analizy transakcyjnej w edukacji praw człowieka, po złożoną problematykę postrzegania sfery seksualnej osób starszych oraz wpływu uzależnienia od Internetu na zdrowie psychiczne młodych dorosłych. Szczególną uwagę poświęcamy raportom z badań, które wnoszą świeże spojrzenie na takie zagadnienia, jak profil ego, doświadczanie emocji w kontekście cyberzagrożeń czy edukacyjne potrzeby młodych pedagogów.

Część interdyscyplinarna numeru podejmuje problematykę integracji społecznej i edukacyjnej – od zagadnień związanych z rolą osób z niepełnosprawnościami, przez relacje między rodzicami a nauczycielami, aż po badania dotyczące inkluzyjnego podejścia w edukacji.

Wreszcie, sekcja „Varia” oraz recenzje najnowszych publikacji stanowią interesujące uzupełnienie, ukazując szeroki wachlarz zastosowań analizy transakcyjnej w praktyce.

Mamy nadzieję, że lektura tego numeru zainspiruje Państwa do refleksji i praktycznego zastosowania omawianych zagadnień. Życzymy owocnej lektury oraz wielu nowych odkryć, które będą wsparciem zarówno w codziennej pracy edukacyjnej, jak i w życiu osobistym.

Editorial

It is with great satisfaction that we present the thirteenth volume of our annual publication, *Educational Transactional Analysis*. This edition aims to synthesize theoretical reflections, empirical research findings, and practical insights related to transactional analysis in the fields of education and psychotherapy. Developed in response to contemporary challenges, this volume underscores the essential role of interdisciplinary approaches in both educational and therapeutic practices. The journal has received support under the ministerial program *Development of Scientific Journals*. Thanks to this support, scientific articles are published in English, which, we hope, will contribute to the popularization of educational transactional analysis.

This volume features a diverse array of contributions that examine the applications of transactional analysis in educational contexts and group psychotherapy. These articles highlight the methodology's versatility in fostering personal and professional development. Notably, authors such as Tony White and Jarosław Jagieła explore nuanced topics such as personality adaptations among students and integrative approaches to psychotherapy, thereby demonstrating the breadth of perspectives within transactional analysis.

Addressing pressing contemporary issues, this edition includes discussions on digital inclusion for senior citizens, the potential of transactional analysis in human rights education, perceptions of sexuality in the elderly, and the impact of internet addiction on young adults' mental health. Empirical research reports offer fresh insights into ego state profiles, emotional responses to cyber threats, and the pedagogical needs of trainee educators.

The interdisciplinary section further explores themes of social and educational integration, with particular attention to the role of individuals with disabilities, parent-teacher dynamics, and inclusive educational practices.

Finally, the *Varia* section and reviews of recent publications provide valuable supplementary perspectives, illustrating the diverse applications of transactional analysis.

We hope this volume serves as both a catalyst for reflective practice and a resource for the practical application of its concepts. May the insights contained within these pages enrich your professional endeavors and personal growth.

The Editorial Team

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS IN EDUCATION
ANALIZA TRANSAKCYJNA W EDUKACJI



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Reflections on Group Psychotherapy

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Abstract

Group therapy is one of the foundation forms of psychotherapy that has occurred over the years. It has been used in a multitude of ways and varies widely in how it is structured, how many clients are involved and so forth. Eric Berne's original practice of transactional analysis was a group therapy because this way he could see the transactions between the various group members. I have used the group approach to psychotherapy for over forty years and this paper looks at just a few of the reflections, observations and techniques that I have developed for group therapy in that time. This includes the three different types of permissions, use of the carom transaction in group therapy, the role of the immediate transactional relationship and the commonality between group therapy and family therapy.

Keywords: transactional analysis, group psychotherapy, ego states, permission, therapeutic relationship, family therapy, carom transaction, hypnosis.

Introduction

This paper is a series of reflections and observations on what group psychotherapy is and what happens in group psychotherapy. I have spent about forty years doing psychotherapy with a good deal of that being group psychotherapy. Indeed in the very beginning of my training in transactional analysis in the early 1980s there was no individual therapy done by trainees. All therapy was done in

groups and often the mentor system was used. A beginning trainee therapist would tend to join up with a more experienced therapist in the co therapy team leading the group. It was quite a good system for the inexperienced therapist to learn, it seemed to me. This paper is statement about some of my reflections on what I have seen and experienced in group psychotherapy over this time.

What is a therapy group

One of the difficulties in writing about the psychology of group psychotherapy is that groups can come in such a wide variety of forms. One can have a group that lasts for one day or perhaps two or three days long. Then the group is finished. Other groups may be conducted for two hours per week, one day a week for ten weeks and then that group is finished. For example Etemadi-Chardah, Martinpour and Heshmati (2017) report, "Group therapy using TA approach was executed on the experimental group for 10 sessions, each session for 2 hours (one session per week)." (p. 146). Some groups are ongoing and do not have an end point. Each week the therapy group is conducted for a few hours one day and people can come along or not. This tends to happen in organizations that have a drop in centre approach such as for the homeless of other marginalized groups. They can 'drop in' to the therapy group some weeks and not other weeks.

James (1977) also discusses the idea of homogenous and heterogeneous groups. A homogenous group is where membership to the group requires a particular diagnosis. For example the group maybe for the treatment of addictions, juvenile delinquents, depression or anxiety. All group members have a similar diagnosis to gain entry to the group. Whereas a heterogenous group takes anyone, so participants end up presenting a variety of different psychological conditions. A common example of the homogeneous group is when a therapist is working in an organization like a drug rehabilitation centre and uses group therapy in the treatment. Obviously, all the participants are going to have a drug abuse problem of some kind. Another example may be when a therapist is working in a homeless centre and all the participants would have recently experienced homelessness.

Therapy group size can vary from three or four clients to perhaps a maximum of twenty clients per group. I have conducted three-day therapy marathon groups with twenty clients in them. That's probably the maximum number one could have in a therapy group. If there was say forty clients, then that is not really a psychotherapy group in the usual sense of the word but is becoming more of a workshop style of group.

As the number of clients increases there is more likelihood of subgroups forming. With four clients in a group there is usually a sense of we all belong together in this one small group. With twenty clients people still have a sense of belonging to this one big group but as said before many will form small subgroups of perhaps three or four people or even 'coupling' in twos. In these subgroups people also have a sense of belonging to this special little subgroup that only involves a few members. So, they feel they belong to two groups, the over-all group and their little subgroup.

This can lead to some problems because games of exclusion can occur. People can be excluded from a subgroup. For some clients this can reflect their experiences as an adolescent. At high school often subgroups are formed by teenagers. At times the subgroups are quite fluid and changeable with new ones forming that includes some people and excludes others. As mentioned before this can lead to games of 'exclusion' occurring similar to what teenagers can do in high school. From a therapy point of view it can be informative to watch who is forming subgroups with whom.

Group therapy and modes of therapeutic action

The amount of time that group members spend together is important because it allows for transference and counter transference feelings to develop between the various participants. If a therapist runs a series of therapy groups over time often some of the same participants will attend a number of groups so they get to know each other over time over a number of groups. This then allows for more transference reactions between them to occur. Other times friendships develop and group members may meet up with each other in-between group sessions for socialising. Obviously, relationships develop more depth when that happens with group members between sessions. However, in many groups most of the participants don't know each other at all or to any significant degree so transference reactions between them are less likely to occur.

Most groups do have a clearly defined beginning and end date. This means that group therapy is most often suited for a short-term solution focussed therapy. This is what Stark (1999) would call a one-person psychotherapy versus a two person psychology that is more common in individual longer term relationship based therapies.

In group therapy most often, time is limited so one is forced to use approaches that use hard contracts right from the beginning of therapy. One cannot let a therapeutic alliance develop first because there is simply not enough time. As White (2022) notes what is known as a soft contract allows for therapy to be more exploratory and less solution focussed. This takes time that is usually

not available in group therapy. If the group is being run over two full days or is a few hours once a week over six weeks one needs to use at times quite regressive therapeutic techniques to facilitate change based on hard contracts. The one person approach, with rededication therapy being a prime example of how this can be achieved.

The two person approach that uses the therapeutic relationship for change is much better suited to individual therapy as that can continue over many months and at times years. However sometimes clients enter a group with a therapist who they already have a long term individual therapy relationship with. In this case the transference reactions can be quite strong in the group because of the pre existing relationship. Also as mentioned above sometimes members get to know each other over a series of groups they attend together or with outside the group meeting times friendships may also develop thus creating stronger transference reactions to each other that can manifest in the group.

Using the relationship in group therapy

As stated above most often relationship based therapies cannot be used in group therapy as you don't have the time for the relationship to develop. Attachments take time to develop. Deep feelings and emotional contact between people takes time to develop. You cannot do relationship or transference based therapy in five or six weeks in a group setting. Paul (2023) in highlighting the key points in group therapy says, "The therapist-client relationship is not central in group therapy." (p. 542)

For example you cannot develop and work through what Little (2016) calls the feared relationship and the needed relationship in a group in half a dozen sessions. There is not the time. He states, "The therapeutic relationship involves engagement in the transference - countertransference matrix from the perspective of a two-person psychology (Stark, 1999), consisting of a focus on the relationship between therapist and client..... From this perspective the client and therapist are seen as participating defensively or adaptively in a co-constructed relationship... The therapeutic stance involves what I have described as the therapeutically required relationship (Little, 2011b), and entails working with and responding to both the repeated and needed relationships (Stern, 1994), and the old while co-creating the new." (p. 29).

You cannot work through the old relationship and co-create a new relationship in a group setting in a few weeks. A therapist needs many months if not years of work to do that. It is not possible to uncover and work through enactments and relationship ruptures in the transference relationship in a few weeks in a group setting where the person may only contribute in a few of the weeks.

A two person approach needs a considerable length of time to be workable. As a result group therapy usually involves a one person approach with a short term solution focused therapy such as redecision therapy in transactional analysis but also many other widely used therapies like CBT, EMDR, gestalt therapy, hypnosis, solution focused brief therapy and so on, Hanley and Winter (2023).

Effectiveness of group therapy

The research evidence for such a one person approach being effective is large indeed. Table 1 describes a very small summary of the evidence that supports the effectiveness of a group approach to psychotherapy that can facilitate change in a wide variety of different psychological disorders. This evidence for this has been consistent over a many decades of research.

Table 1

Summary of the evidence that supports the effectiveness of a group approach to psychotherapy:

Research showing the effectiveness of group psychotherapy				
Author	Year	Weekly sessions	Session duration	Conditions successfully treated
Etemadi-Chardah et al	2017	10	2 hours	Addiction
Forghani and Abadi	2016	12		Drug dependency
Wajda et al	2022	10	1.25 hours	Depression & somatoform disorder
Spiller et al	2023	8		PTSD
Ceylan and Akbiyik	2023	12	3 hours	Anxiety
Riedl et al	2023	10	1.5 hours	Anxiety, depression & somatisation disorder
Riedl et al	2023	20	1.5 hours	Anxiety, depression & somatisation disorder
Chida et al	2016	5	1.5 hours	Depression
McNeel	1975	3 day group	All day	Multiple conditions

Source: own materials

As discussed above, in group therapy there will not be much transference and counter transference existing unless the client and therapist have a pre existing relationship. Also there will be little transferential reactions between group members unless they also had a pre existing relationship before the group began. Significant attachments and deep emotional responses don't occur in

group therapy unless there are pre existing relationships, as there is not time for them to develop.

However this does not necessarily stop the therapist and group members from having profound emotional contact. Such relational contact can and does exist in some group therapy. This is discussed at length by White (1998) who begins by noting many authors who report the importance of such relational contact.

Yalom cited in Clarkson (1992) states, "It is the relationship that heals. Every therapist observes over and over in clinical work that the encounter itself is healing for the patient in a way that transcends the therapist's theoretical orientation" (p. 57).

When we consider group psychotherapy you have to identify two different types of relationships that unfortunately Yalom does not distinguish in his quote. The long term relationship that includes transference and attachments versus the immediate transactional relationship that does not include those relationship qualities. It is the immediate transactional relationship that mainly exists in group therapy. This is clarified by Carl Rogers in Rogers and Stevens (1967), "I hypothesize that personal growth is facilitated when the counselor is what he is, when in the relationship with his client he is genuine and without 'front' or facade, openly being the feelings and attitudes which at the moment are flowing in him." (p. 90).

This is clearer than Yalom as he is talking about the therapist being genuine, without facade and being open with his feelings. This concerns the immediate transactions that occur between client and therapist and between individual group members. This is not talking about the longer term transference relationship.

As White (1998) notes Berne is probably taking about the same quality of genuineness when he talks about game free intimacy. Both Rogers and Berne state that attaining true intimacy and true genuineness is difficult to do and rare. In transactional analysis this is probably referring to Free Child to Free Child transactions occurring between two people. When this is done, one is attaining a sense of genuine intimacy that can have significant curative powers for the parties involved in the transactions. Using Yalom's terminology, it is this that 'heals'.

In successful group therapy you don't need a well developed therapeutic relationship or alliance, indeed there isn't time to develop one. What you do need is a willingness of the therapist and group members to allow their own Child ego state to enter into the transactions with others in the group. It is this that brings in the genuineness, intimacy and connection to the therapy. As White (1998) notes gestalt therapy has discussed this idea for a long time. Shepard (1974) talks about the here and now relationship as the basic requisite of therapy. Polster and Polster (1973) say that a therapist must use his own feelings as the

therapeutic instrument. Perls cited in Clarkson (1992) talks of applying self to the therapeutic situation is what is needed.

We need to clarify the two levels of relating or interaction in psychotherapy. See figure 1.

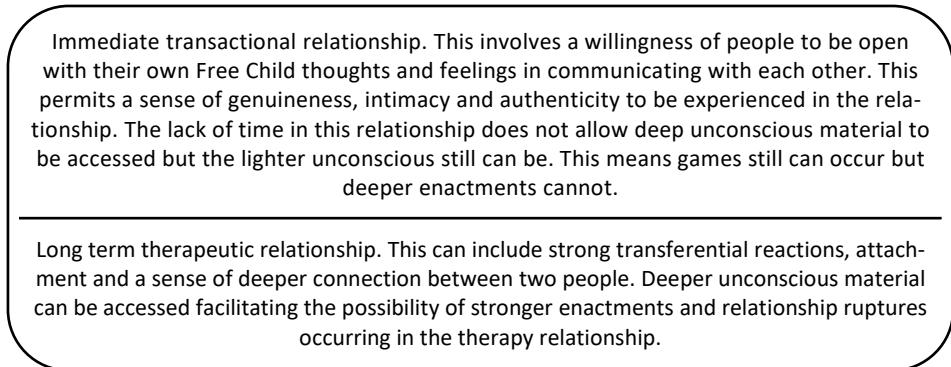


Figure 1

The immediate transactional relationship

Source: own materials

The longer-term therapy relationship is seen as being under the immediate transactional relationship. However often both are occurring at the same time in long term psychotherapy. In group therapy only the immediate transactional relationship exists unless there is a pre-existing relationship between the therapist and group members. If there is, then both relationships can exist between those two people.

It is proposed that in longer term relationships deeper unconscious material can arise increasing the likelihood of enactments occurring between the two people. In this case enactments are differentiated from games as games can occur between two people who are meeting for the very first time. You don't need any deeper sense of contact and connection between two people to have games occurring. Thus, games can occur when 'lighter' unconscious material is involved.

The role of the immediate transactional relationship

As cited above what gestaltists are talking about is the surface immediate transactional relationship, not the long-term therapeutic relationship. Operating in the here and now, using their own feelings and applying self in the therapeutic situation is about transactional level communication not deeper attach-

ment level communication. Of course, this is well suited for group therapy which is how a lot of gestalt therapy is conducted, in groups.

A good transactional analysis example of this is provided by Erskine (2013) in his discussion of relational group process. The immediate transactional relationship is described well with this quote, "Confrontation from the group leader or from one group member to another is considered essential to the therapy process. Such bluntness is often regarded as an expression of the speaker's genuineness and the "reality of how I see you". In a feedback-oriented group, the focus is on each member's perception and interpretation of other group member's behaviour. The feedback may not accurately describe an individual's subjective and internal experience, but it reflects how another group member perceives him or her."(p. 266).

Put another way it is Free Child transactions from one person to another. The person speaking is willing to include their own Child ego state or the personal, vulnerable and intimate part of self in their transactions with another. When this happens, the listener will experience a sense of genuineness, intimacy and authenticity in the immediate transactional relationship.

He goes on to state, "When members are attuned to each others' affects and relational needs and are respectful in their transactions with each other, the quality of the feedback they provide becomes a valuable asset in promoting growth."(p. 268). This is what Rogers called genuineness and what I am calling Free Child contact and when this happens in the immediate transactional relationship often growth occurs in people.

In group therapy I use such a style of relating a lot. I provide many opportunities for people to state their responses and reactions to other group members and of course I will do the same myself to a group member when the opportunity arises. Again due to the time limited nature of group therapy members usually only have a short time when they can do such immediate transactional relating to other group members. In one way this is good as it helps maintain the genuineness of the relating, keeping it young and fresh one could say.

This can also be done over a much longer period of time in individual therapy between the client and therapist and if a person attends multiple therapy groups, then they also get to know this style of relating well. This is when we return to the comments by Rogers and Berne that such genuineness and intimacy are rare and difficult to do. Comments that I certainly agree with and address at length in White (1998).

The problem humans have, is if they repeat a piece of behaviour over and over then that behaviour will become habitual. This is a natural thing humans do and it is not possible to not do it. If one repeatedly reports their reflections to another on what they said and did in a piece of work, then that process of reflecting will become habitual for the person reporting it. This is inevitable and

you cannot stop that happening. The more habitual it becomes the less genuine it is, the less it is a statement of intimacy of the Free Child and the less the person will be attuned to the feelings and relational needs of the other. The person is reporting it in a habitual way and the authenticity is lost. The transaction is no longer coming from the Free Child so the listener will not feel it as genuine and it loses its growth producing powers.

Hence we get the observation that true genuineness and true intimacy are rare. Humans will inevitably and naturally move away from such genuineness when they repeat the same immediate transactional relating over and over. It will start to become habitual. If staying attuned and involved with a client is what a therapist does then quite quickly that way of relating becomes habitual and the less they will be attuned and involved. This is what a therapist has to constantly battle with and indeed other group members as well if they are repeatedly reporting their genuine and intimate reactions to other member's thought and feelings. The immediate transactional relationship shown in figure 1 begins to lose its curative effects on others such as Yalom reported.

The family secret and group therapy.

Family therapists for a long time have discussed how information creates boundaries in groups. In a group of three people if two of them have a piece of information that a third one does not then that creates a boundary around the first two people that keeps the third person external to that subgroup. As Haley (1978) says, "...revealing or concealing information at a boundary between groups creates a boundary between groups. To not reveal to parents what their child said is to draw a boundary between parents and child and define them as two separate groups. Information and boundary are synonymous"(p. 217).

Some families have a secret that each member agrees to keep. It can be due to embarrassment or in more serious instances it can be due to legal implications. A family decides it's better if they keep a piece of information secret from the public and each member agrees. Examples could be that mother is a hoarder, father his a drunk, son has a drug problem or the daughter is neurotically anxious and stays in her room constantly. It is kept secret because they are embarrassed if the information got out to the neighbours or relatives. Other families keep secrets for more serious reasons. Father may beat mother, there maybe some kind of child abuse going on, the family conditions are very strange or involve some kind of neglect. In these cases the secret is kept so as to avoid the police or child protection services becoming involved and potentially splitting up the family.

This has multiple effects on the group including increasing a sense of family cohesion. As was mentioned before, information and boundary are synonymous. The external boundary of the family is increased and hardened. A strong sense of us and them is exaggerated. See figure 2. Also there is an increased sense that you have to keep others out of the family because if you allow them in then they might find out the secret.

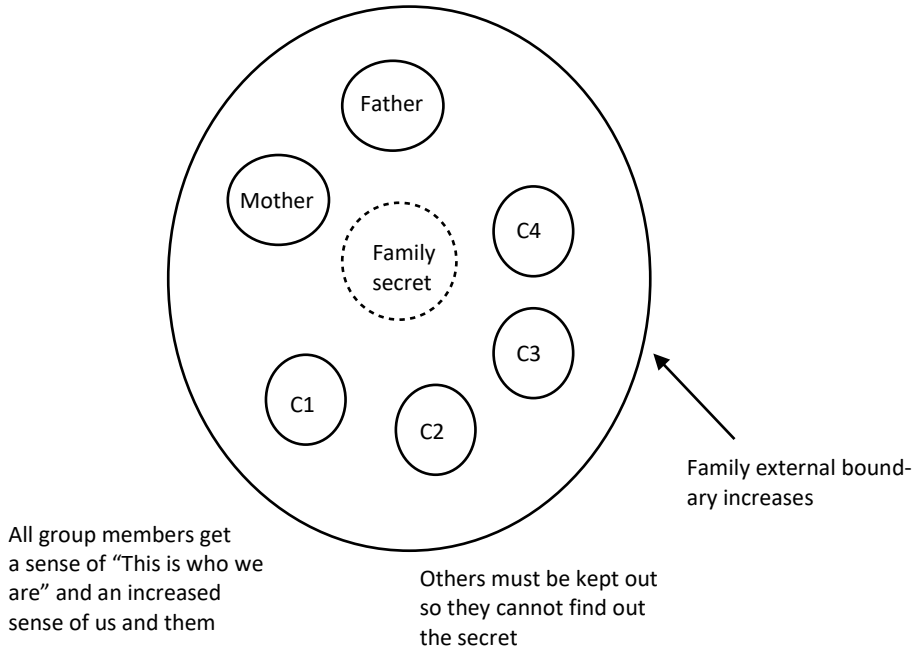


Figure 2

Increasing a sense of family cohesion

Source: own materials.

The family has mother, father and the four children. The family secret becomes like another member of the family that has to be understood and protected. Indeed protected vigilantly. This increases the external family boundary and increases a sense of 'Us and them'. Outsiders may be seen as dangerous as they can find out the secret and expose it so they are rarely allowed into the inner circle of the family. At times a sense of betrayal and loyalty becomes important in the family which can lead to problems for family members seeking psychotherapy. They can avoid therapy because they fear they might tell the secret which would then be seen as disloyal to the family and betraying it. This can lead to an enmeshed family structure.

Psychotherapy groups are full of secrets because of the confidentiality requirement. At the beginning of most groups the therapist will state the group rules and one of those is the confidentiality rule. As group members will talk about matters that are very private and intimate all group members agree to keep confidentially and not discuss or disclose any personal information to outsiders that was stated by other group members during the sessions.

To many group members this highlights the external boundary of the group and one gets a stronger sense of being in the group and a sense of others who aren't in the group who don't know the secrets. The group members get a sense of "This is who we are" which includes the secrets and also creates more of a sense of 'Us and Them'. The secrets must be managed and cared for like another group member.

Under other circumstances if a person goes to some kind of non therapy meeting with a group of people it would be common for them to talk about it later with family and friends after that group meeting is over. This of course happens when a person goes to a group therapy meeting as well. Afterwards family and friends most often would like to hear about it and the experiences they had, especially as it is a therapy group as they may be some what anxious if the person has changed and how that might impinge on them and the relationship.

As a result of the confidentiality requirement, reporting about what happened in the group needs to be done with caution which further highlights the external boundary of the group and the sense of belonging to the group. As mentioned before information and boundary are synonymous so family and friends may easily feel some kind of exclusion knowing that their partner or friend is withholding information that is secret only to members of the therapy group. My point being that the secrecy aspect of a therapy group is very real not only in the encouragement of belonging to the group but also with the exclusion of other close and intimate people from the group. In addition, if it is an ongoing group that meets once a week for ten weeks then these relationship boundaries become a very real factor in a person's life and the lives of their close and intimate others. With feelings of inclusion and exclusion over an extended period of time.

Group therapy as a family therapy

I have always recommended to trainees that if they are going to do group therapy then it is most wise to do some studies in family therapy. One does not need to get certified in that approach and I myself never have, but early on in my training and practice as a therapist, both group and individual, I did some readings and trainings in family therapy. This has been very useful over the years as family therapy has some good ideas and different ways of looking at psycho-

logical disorders. I am by no means a family therapist in my approach but at times I do use and think how a family therapist would think especially in group therapy. (Also if you work with children and adolescents it is most helpful, if not essential).

In my early trainings I particularly studied the work of the eminent family therapist Jay Haley (1973, 1978 & 1980) although this did happen somewhat by accident. I only read such books and did training seminars as my fellow students were interested in it and I kind of just went along with that. The motivation never came from me but what I learned about the family therapy approach by accident has been very useful for a very long time in my psychotherapist career. Most useful in my work as a therapist and group psychotherapist. Building on the work of Haley and others we now have approaches like functional family therapy, brief strategic family therapy and structural family therapy, Delghandi and Namini (2024), Hogue et al (2019) and Dallos (2023).

In the transactional analysis literature Clarkson (1992) discusses hypnotic transactions in a very similar fashion to how Haley (1973) talked of Milton Erickson's use of them in family therapy many years before. Hypnosis does not necessarily need to be a specific formal procedure that a therapist uses instead hypnotic transactions can become part of normal discussion and talking between two people. This can be especially so in group psychotherapy with the use of things like the carom transaction that will be discussed at length later. This illustrates that the line between family therapy and group therapy can be a fine one indeed.

When a person enters a therapy group often they are unconsciously reminded of their family of origin. You have a group of people meeting together where there is a two level hierarchy like most families have. The group members and the therapist hierarchy. It does not take much for the Child ego state to be unconsciously reminded of the similarities this has to their original family with the two level hierarchy of children and parents. Especially if there is a male and female co therapy team leading the group. As Napier and Whitaker (1978) say, "The group therapist must continually keep in mind that reactions between group members are likely to be displacements for their family experience." (p. 279). This makes group therapy very useful diagnostically.

One problem with individual therapy is you only ever get to see the client's transactions with family, friends, work associates, etc through the eyes of the client. As we know we all distort our perceptions of reality based on what our life script makes us see and feel so the individual therapist can only ever get these distorted perceptions from the client. Group therapy avoids this as you get to see clients transact first hand with others in the group. The therapist's Adult gets to see the transacting directly and their Child ego state gets to have a feeling reaction to seeing the way the client is relating to others. Large amounts of diagnostic information are being provided to the therapist. Also

knowing that the person has been placed in a situation that will remind them of their family of origin.

This is especially the case when the therapy group is like a marathon group that runs over two or three consecutive days. The therapist not only works with the clients but also lives with them, eats with them and socialises with them over that time. This can provide invaluable diagnostic insights into the client that you can never get in individual therapy. The out of therapy group transactions become part of the work as well for the therapist, in this way.

If the group is organised to meet for a few hours, once a week for a set number of weeks it is a good idea to organise a break into the structure of the group. For example half way through or perhaps a time to socialise before or after the group in a coffee break. This provides the therapist with similar first hand observations of the clients transactions and relationships they start to form.

The carom transaction

Woollams and Brown (1978) discuss the carom transaction. A carom transaction involves at least three people. This is where two people talk about a third person who is in front of them and can hear the conversation. A mother and her friend are talking about her daughter when the daughter is listening on and the mother says to the friend, "Jenny is a very good swimmer and wins most of her races." Jenny hears this and may hear the messages from her mother: "Jenny is the sporty one (child) in the family".

Mother is communicating to two people at the one time, her friend and her daughter. The daughter is learning that mother is structuring the family (the children) in particular way by assigning certain roles to the various children. This is not an uncommon thing to occur in families and is called attribution. For example in this case Jenny could be the sporty one, her sister may be the academic one, her older brother may be the funny one and the younger brother is the problem one. This is what family systems theory particularly focusses on and all families develop a structure like this where various people take on various roles. The carom transaction is one way a mother can communicate the roles to the various children and provide the attribution of their role to them.

The carom transactions in group therapy

The carom transaction can be particularly useful in group therapy. When there are at least two clients in the therapy room then the therapist can use the carom transaction. See figure 3.

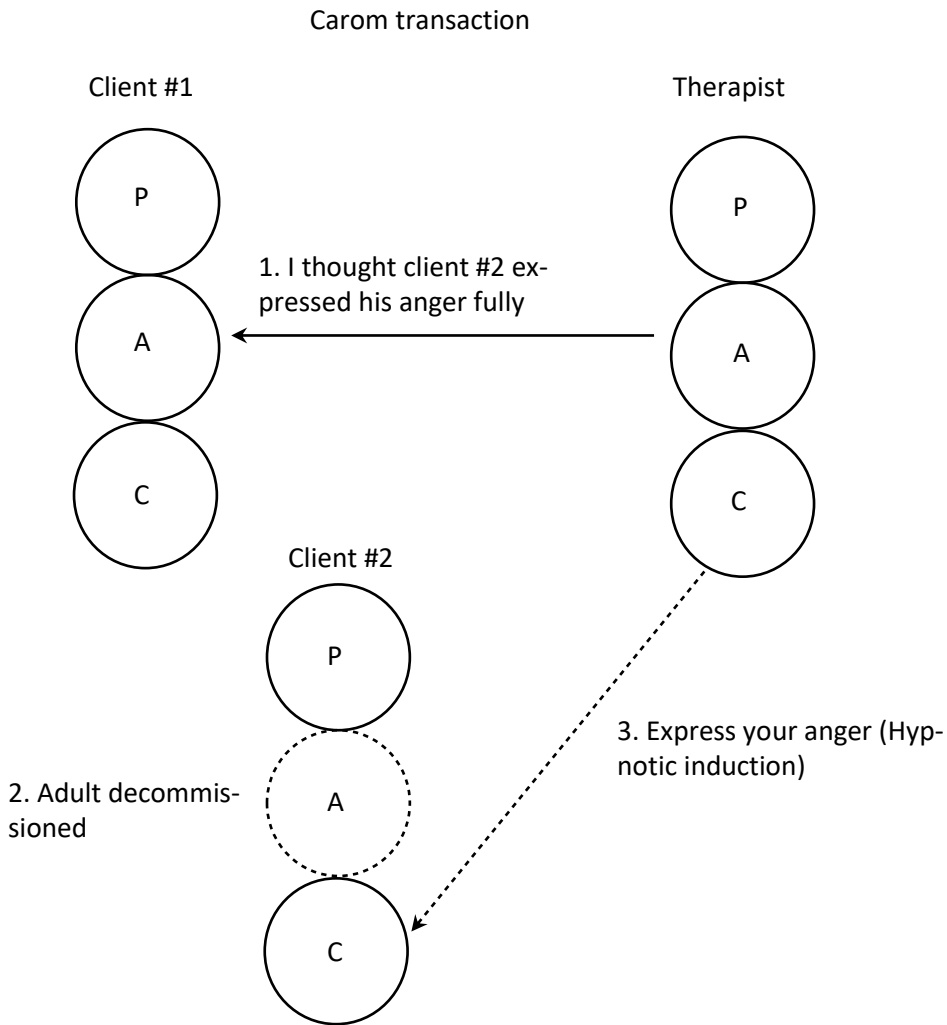


Figure 3

The carom transactions in group therapy

Source: own materials.

The therapist begins by talking to client #1 about client #2 in front of them. In transaction 1, the therapist makes a comment about what client #2 did. As client #2 is listening on and not being directly addressed the Adult ego state is likely to be decommissioned to some degree.

At the same time the therapist is sending an ulterior transaction to client #2 as a hypnotic transaction. This makes the carom transaction more powerful because it is also a hypnotic suggestion. As Haley (1973) would say, with hypnotic communications like this the client is directed to do involuntary or spontaneous

behaviour, in this case the expression of feelings. This direction takes place whilst the client's Adult is otherwise distracted.

Two decades later Clarkson(1992) explains the same from a transactional analysis point of view. She talks about hypnotic transactions occurring when the receiver has their Adult decommissioned in some way. The therapist delivers information to person #2 whilst they have a poorly functioning Adult. This means instead of the information going through the Adult first which would normally happen, the information tends to go directly to the person's Child ego state. Thus it is more directly impacted and therefore the transactions develop the quality of a hypnotic suggestion. As we know a hypnotic induction or suggestion can be a powerful form of communication from one person to another where the other tends to take the new information on fully as correct and accurate. Client #2 in Figure 3 in essence is being given a hypnotic suggestion by the therapist which can make the transaction more potent.

Subsequently White (2024a) further explains this process. When one enters into a conversation their Adult ego state must be functioning quite well. They must be able to hear and comprehend what the other is saying, then often they have to also formulate some kind of response and then produce that response. This takes up quite a lot of energy in the Adult ego state. A third person listening on does not have to do any of that. As they are not being addressed directly their Adult is under no pressure to be functioning at a competent level in comprehending what is being said and they have no pressure on them to formulate and provide a response to what is being said. This allows the person's Child ego state to be more involved and 'hear' more of what is being said than if they were being addressed directly. Thus the Child is impacted more by the information. In figure 3 one can see the transaction to client #1 is directed at the Adult whereas the transaction to client #2 is directed at the Child ego state. The information does not need to go through the Adult first and then to the Child.

In a redecision therapy group it is commonplace for 'board work' to take place after a client has done a piece of work. The therapist asks the client if it is OK for other members to provide feedback to the client and for the therapist to explain what transpired in the work. The theory behind the work. The therapist will often use the white board or flip chart to draw diagrams and explanations of the work that occurred. These days this process would be called bibliotherapy. The use of Adult information to assist the treatment process.

I often use this type of bibliotherapy or board work after the client has finished their work in the group. Most clients are keen to have this done as they realise they will get lots of information about themselves, their change process and their desire for self interest is satisfied. This is where many carom transactions can occur as the explanations are often directed at specific members (other than the client) who may have asked a question or the comments are

directed at the group in general. Many carom transaction hypnotic suggestions can be made to others in the group, about what the client could do, as they listen on.

For example

Client: Listening on and not involved directly in the conversation

Other group member: Can you explain why you focussed on the grief and loss when the client was wanting to work on his depression?

Therapist to the other group member: By doing the grief work and saying goodbye to mother then the depression will lift.

This is what Haley would call hypnotic communication. The client is told to do something voluntary (grief work) and then told to do something involuntary (reduce the depression). The client has been given a hypnotic suggestion to reduce the feelings of depression and this is further encouraged because the instruction is been given to the client by a carom transaction. It could be said directly to the client but by doing it with a carom it is further strengthened. Many of these types of transactions happen during the bibliotherapy or board work part of rededcision therapy.

This engenders what what Haley (1973) and other family therapists would call a trance state, when the Adult is decommissioned and the Child ego state is taking in the information. People can do this with varying degrees of success. Hypnotisability has been shown to be a stable trait over time. As Malloggi and Santarcangelo's (2023) work demonstrates hypnotisability scales show people can be grouped into high hypnotisability, medium hypnotisability and low hypnotisability. These tend to remain consistent in people over time. In transactional analysis terms this means that some clients are more able to decommission their Adult and allow their unconscious Child to be responsive to transactions coming in from the therapist (and other group members for that matter). They are more able to attain the "trance" state and this is a stable personality trait over time.

Conway and Clarkson (1987) also join in Haley's view that this trance like state is a naturally occurring event in human communication and that formal hypnosis is simply a refinement of this naturally occurring event in communication. They provide a list of situations where people are likely to move into a such trance state beside the carom transaction just described.

1. In highly emotional states such as traumatic situations. If someone is experiencing high stress such as in an accident, in war or in psychotherapy then they are likely to be in a hypnotic trance state. The Adult is decommissioned and the unconscious Child is particularly receptive to suggestions at that time.
2. When one experiences deliriousness in a fever. If someone is quite ill then they can be in a trance like state as the Adult will be less effective at that time.

3. Close physical contact can induce a trance state. This encourages the cathexis of the Child and if the Adult is decommissioned then they are receptive to suggestions. This can also occur in some cases of massage.

A fourth one I would add is when a person is regressed as this is particularly relevant to psychotherapy. Any of these can of course be combined with the carom transaction.

Redecision and hypnotic suggestion

A core part of rededecision therapy is when the client does two chair work and goes into the early scene where they originally made the decision to accept the injunction. As White (2023a) notes when a client goes into an early scene it is in essence a flashback where they relive the early trauma. In such a flashback state the person is likely to be highly regressed at that time. White (2023b) also says that “chair work for many people is an effective way to assist them to regress. The chair work helps them regress and for the chair work to be successful they must be regressed. That small group of people who refuse and say they can’t do chair work usually refuse for this reason. It is too scary for them to regress into their Child ego state feelings at that time, so they refuse or make up an excuse like they would feel too embarrassed talking to an empty chair.” (p. 21).

Figure 4 shows the change in ego states between a person who has all three ego states functioning when they enter the group meeting. Many psychotherapies use regression in some way to assist in the change process. For example formal hypnosis as described by Berne (1957) invites the client into a deep regression at times. Transference reactions in therapy are a regression as are instances where games and enactments are played out in therapy.

Empty chair work, the three conditions cited above by Conway and Clarkson (1987) and a carom transaction all describe a person who is likely to be regressed and have the ego state structure that you can see in figure 4b. The Adult is decommissioned and the Child is highly receptive. Such an individual at that time is in a trance state and receptive to some kind of hypnotic suggestion. As mentioned before in the research above, some find this easier to do than others making them highly suggestible, and some are only mildly suggestible.

Indeed this could describe rededecision therapy in a different light. How much of the empty chair regressive part of rededecision is about a rededecision being made and how much of it is about hypnotic suggestibility? In the actual rededecision part of the therapy the client may be more effected by suggestions given by the therapist and indeed by themselves than by the actual rededecision by the client. Possibly it is a combination of both.

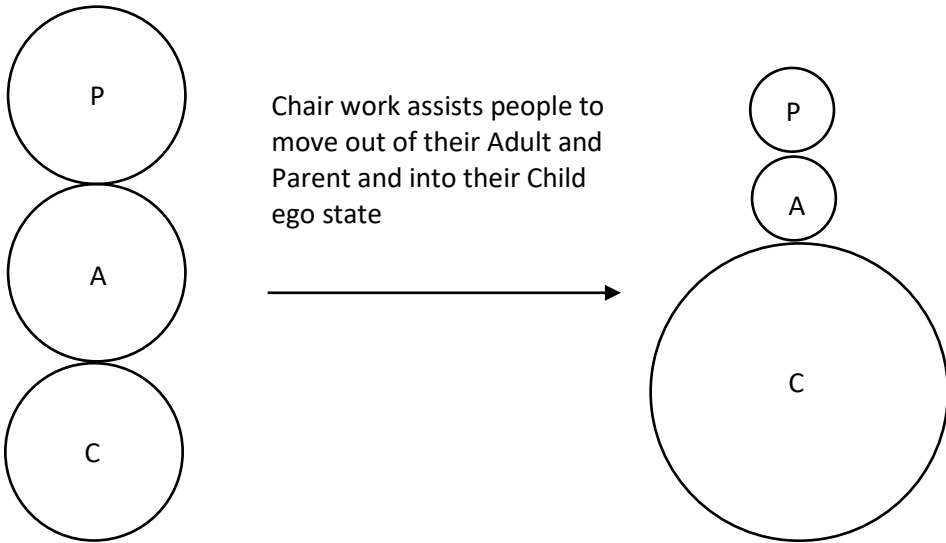


Figure 4a
Normal psychological functioning

Figure 4b
Regression

Regression in empty chair work

Figure 4
The change in ego states

Source: own materials.

Three types of permission in group therapy

Three different types of permission can occur in group therapy and these are:
 Instructional permission. This is what Berne (1972) originally proposed as the permission transaction. With potency and protection the therapist delivers the permission verbally to the client. Such as a permission to be close, to exist or to express your feelings. This can be done in group therapy and individual therapy.

Observational permission. The act of observing another person do a behaviour or express a feeling provides permission to the observer to do that themselves. When the client observes another group member expressing their feelings that can be taken as a permission for them to express their feelings. This is a more potent type of permission because it is proposed that by watching an-

other person do the behaviour then this is stronger than a simple verbal instruction to do the behaviour (instructional permission). In addition as proposed by White (2024b) we all have an instinctual mimicry. When we observe another person act a certain way there is a natural instinctual urge to copy that behaviour. This is seen to increase the power of this type of permission.

Obviously this cannot happen in individual therapy but it can and does happen a lot in group therapy. Group members are constantly watching other group members express feelings, do behaviours and relate to others in a wide variety of ways. Inevitably they are going to observe things which they want permission to do themselves and this is shown in figure 5.

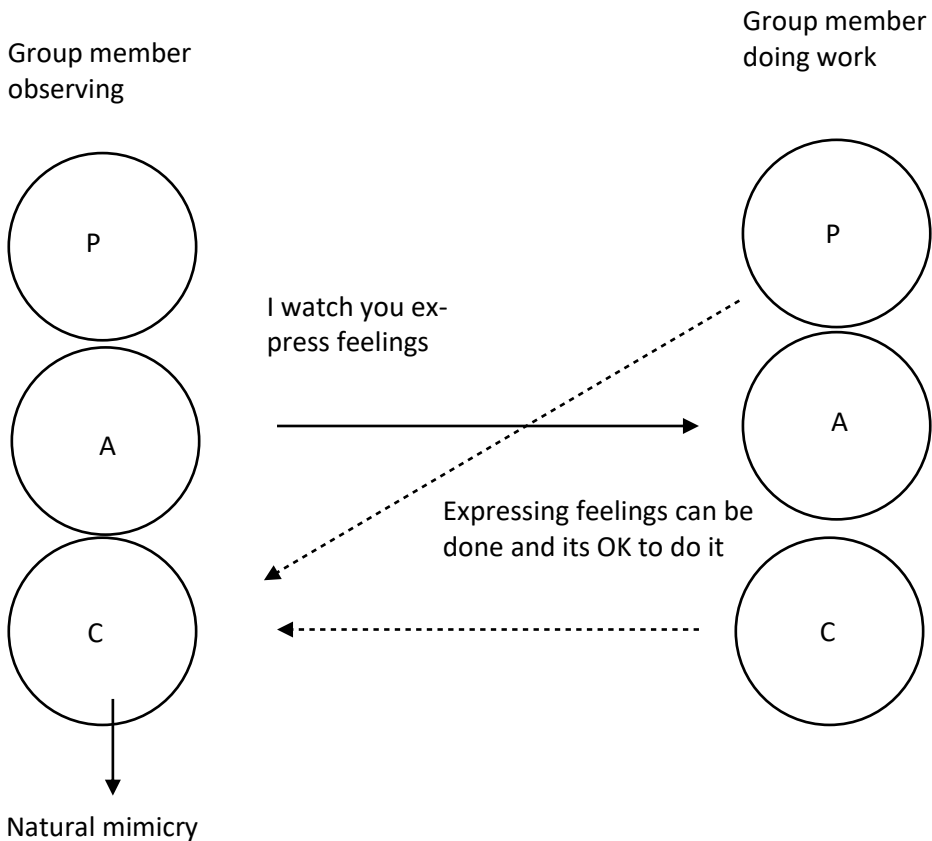


Figure 5
Observation of what others feel

Source: own materials

The group member observing watches from their Adult the other group member express their feelings as shown in the transaction. By seeing this there

is an automatic permission coming from the person being observed to express their feelings. Most people will think, "If they can do it that means I can also do it". As mentioned before there is also a natural mimicry that occurs as well, to copy the behaviour. Observational permissions happen a lot in group therapy especially in homogenous groups where group members often have a lot of the same psychological issues. They watch other group members break injunctions which they also have and hence get the permission to do the same by observing that.

Experiential permission. This is the most potent type of the three permissions. This happens when another person expresses something or behaves in a way directly to the individual. A child can hear its parents tell it that it's OK to punch other children at school and that provides that child with the permission to hit others. A child can watch father hit mother and that provides a stronger permission to hit. Finally a child can be directly hit by a parent and this is the strongest permission for the child that its OK to hit others. See figure 6.

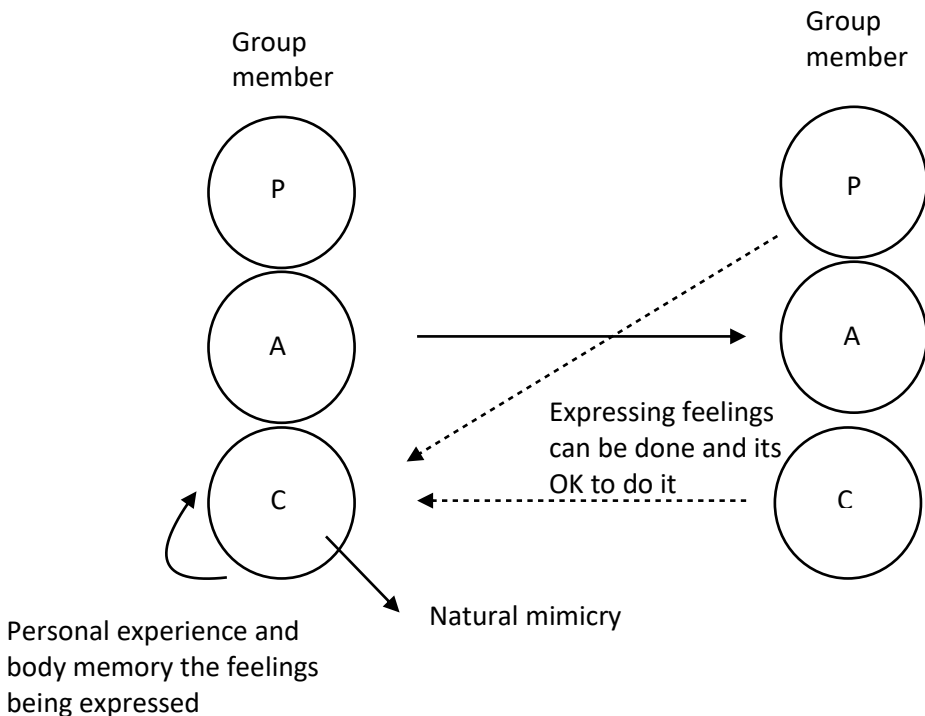


Figure 6
Experiential permission

Source: own materials.

The child who is hit not only gets the observational permission and natural mimicry to hit but it also gets the personal experience and body memory of what it is like to be hit. There is an intellectual memory part to the permission and a body memory experiential part to the permission. The permission has now become personal. This can happen in individual therapy if a therapist expresses nurturing to a client then the client receives an experiential permission that it's OK to nurture. However it is much more likely to happen in group therapy as there are many more people involved. This is one reason why after a person has done their work, other group members are invited to say to the client their responses to that work they just observed. These group member comments can often become experiential permissions for the person who just did the work. They will express feelings, display behaviours and ways of relating to the person that end up being experiential permissions for the original client who just worked.

Observational and experiential permissions can and do happen a lot in group therapy. Much more than happens in individual therapy. Especially if the therapist creates specific opportunities for them to happen such as by having feedback to the group member who just worked. As mentioned above these are the most potent types of the three permissions. Earlier in this paper it was reported that Yalom said, 'It is the relationship that heals'. In group therapy versus individual therapy there are a lot more potential healing relationships and perhaps the occurrence of observational and experiential permissions go part way to explaining why that is so.

Conclusion

Humans naturally form groups. It feels comfortable and is easy for most. Therefore group psychotherapy would seem like a natural and normal thing to do. At the same time it opens up a whole variety of therapeutic opportunities that individual therapy does not have. I have endeavoured to explain some of those opportunities, especially the idea of permissions and the nature of hypnotic transactions. Both of these deserve more consideration and work on understanding how and why they impact the psyche of people. Whilst we all use transactions as a way of communicating it seems that we also often use them in a therapeutic sense as well. Humans can't help themselves in this way in their desire to repair self.

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Kilka refleksji na temat psychoterapii grupowej

Streszczenie

Terapia grupowa jest jedną z podstawowych form psychoterapii, która rozwijała się na przestrzeni lat. Była stosowana na wiele sposobów i różni się znacznie pod względem struktury, liczby uczestniczących klientów i tak dalej. Pierwotna praktyka analizy transakcyjnej Erica Berne'a była terapią grupową, ponieważ w ten sposób mógł obserwować transakcje między różnymi członkami grupy. Stosuję podejście grupowe w psychoterapii od ponad czterdziestu lat, a niniejszy artykuł przedstawia tylko kilka refleksji, obserwacji i technik, które opracowałem w tym czasie dla terapii grupowej. Obejmuje to trzy różne rodzaje pozwoleń, zastosowanie transakcji karambolowej w terapii grupowej, rolę bezpośredniej relacji transakcyjnej oraz podobieństwa między terapią grupową a terapią rodzinną.

Słowa kluczowe: analiza transakcyjna, psychoterapia grupowa, stany ego, pozwolenie, relacja terapeutyczna, terapia rodzinna, transakcja karambolowa, hipnoza.



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Student Personality Adaptations, Part II*

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Abstract

Three subsequent articles presented the examples of student personality adaptations. Referring to the concept of transactional analysis and knowledge on personality disorders, they presented numerous typical traits and behaviours, dominating needs and selected TA parameters, as well as offered practical advice that can help teachers and educators understand their relations with students causing trouble deriving from character problems. Moreover, the publications presented ways of compensation measures and interventions in the shape of affirmations for the prevention of manifestations of dysfunctional personality development.

Keywords: student, personality adaptations, symbiogenicity, anxiety, masochism, passive-aggressiveness, narcissism, psychopathy.

This article from the series presents next examples of dysfunctional personality adaptations that can be noticed in some students.

1. Do not leave me

Symbiosis and dependency on parents in an early stage of a child's life is an indispensable developmental stage. Its disturbance usually leads to adapta-

* The article is partially an extract from one chapter of the book by Jagieła, J. (2023). *Psychope-dagogika relacji. Analiza transakcyjna dla nauczycieli i wychowawców*, Wydawnictwo Difin.

tion problems, which were described in the previous article. However, this symbiosis and a strong bond must be constructively untied in further stages of the child's maturation process. If that does not happen, we deal with something which is sometimes called entanglement, when real boundaries between people are violated, or embroilment, which is manifested by one's desire for unauthorized participation in the lives of others. "If developmental dependency needs are not satisfied in one's childhood, thinking of a mature person is tainted by the inner child's way of thinking," writes J. Bradshaw and adds, "Many adult children flitter between fear of abandonment and fear of being absorbed. Some of us isolate ourselves out of fear of being dominated by another person. Others, on the other hand, do not want to abandon destructive relationships out of fear of being alone. The majority oscillates between one extreme and the other" (J. Bradshaw, 2008, pp. 42-43, 51). Characteristic ambivalence of this adaptation is expressed in the statement, "I will do everything to be close to you – but in fact I am afraid of it, so as not to be abandoned."

The subject matter of symbiosis constitutes, as it is known, a separate and very important issue in the concept of transactional analysis, having a significant impact on shaping interpersonal relations.

Table 1
Symbiotic adaptation

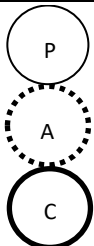
Appropriated child	Symbiotic adaptation
Central problem	Relation and bond
Basic unmet need	Separation – individualisation
Dominating feelings	Fear of abandonment and loneliness. Anxiety. Fear. Suppressing all kinds of feelings of dissatisfaction, anger, or resentment toward others. Helplessness. Fear of self-disclosure. Sadness.
Parents' behaviours towards their child	The parents expect their child not to leave and not to be independent. Its attempts of separation and autonomy are blocked or punished by the parents due to their own anxiety and fear of losing any contact with their child.
Attachment pattern (White, 2019)	Avoidant and ambivalent
Some prohibitions and script drivers	Be strong. Do not grow up. Do not play. Let you fail in relations with other people.
Possible ego states	

Table 1
Symbiotic adaptation (cont.)

Appropriated child	Symbiotic adaptation
Selected traits and behaviours	Excessive attachment to others. Particularly understood “interpersonal stickiness”. Not recognizing interpersonal distance. Not setting any requirements or boundaries in fear of being abandoned. Excessively sought attention and care. Difficulty in expressing one’s dissatisfaction in fear of losing support or rejection. Lack of self-assurance. Difficulty in expressing one’s opposition and rebellion. They are sometimes overbearing “persecutors” (in the sense of imposing their person) towards anyone who shows them a modicum of interest, attention or kindness. Low expressiveness compared to others. Lack of one’s own preferences and independence. An excessive feeling of responsibility for the lives and well-being of their nearest and taking over various loads or obligations for them. Very clear troubles with own preferences and identity. They become more alike the persons they stay with very fast. They simulate various kinds of problems, ailments or disorders in order to attract other’s attention and interest. Demonstrating one’s helplessness. Frequent attributing success to others, not to one’s own person. A belief that others do something much better than them. Giving up one’s own needs when they are in conflict with the environment’s needs. The loss of initiative not due to lack of one’s own motivation but due to the fact that they anticipate the failure of their ventures or rejection. Strong emotions accompanying various types of separation. Experiencing separation and loss in a dramatic way (e.g. divorce, mourning, loss of one’s job, etc.). Looking for other relationships and intimate relations the moment the old ones are finished. Excessive tolerance of physical and psychological violence against oneself. Difficulty in taking many crucial decisions.
Typical beliefs	“Me and you, we’re the one,” “I am nobody without you,” “I won’t be happy if you’re not happy,” “I do not tolerate any differences between us,” “I cannot live without you,” “When you leave me – I’ll end up with myself,” “I am safe as long as I am with you,” “I am weak and helpless,” “I do not cope as well as other people,” “Only next to someone stronger can I feel safe,” “Role models make me shy.”
Life position	I am not OK. – You are OK. (I-, Y+)
Favourite interpersonal games	“Take care of me,” “Had it not been for you,” “See how hard I try,” “Do something to me,” “Look what I have done because of you.”
Some real, film, literary and fairy tale characters	Film drama “Kramer vs. Kramer” (1979), directed by R. Benton. “Terms of Endearment” (1983), directed by J. L. Brooks. “My Son” (2006), directed by M. Fougerson. “The Gult Trip” (2012), directed by A. Fletcher. “Gone Girl” (2014), directed by D. Fincher. “Close-ups” (2014), directed by M. Piekorz and several other feature films tackling this subject matter. Donkey in an American animation “Shrek” (2001), directed by A. Adamson, V. Jenson. The relationship between Christopher and Winnie The Pooh, as on the basis of the book it is sometimes impossible to clearly deduce whether it was Christopher who had a teddy bear or it was Winnie The Pooh who Christopher took care of. The fox in the tale “The Little Prince” by A. Saint-Exupéry that wanted to be “tamed” and became “the only one until death”. It is worth looking for one’s own examples.

Table 1
Symbiotic adaptation (cont.)

Appropriated child	Symbiotic adaptation
Positive traits	High sensitivity. Ability to sympathise with others. Friendliness. Readiness to help. Persons with symbiotic features might have a tendency to choose professions consisting in high dependence on others (e.g. employee, secretary, spokesperson, etc.) or sacrifice for others (e.g. nurse, paramedic, social worker, etc.). Perhaps the term best suited to the characteristic is a: <p style="text-align: center;">“Buddy”</p>
Desired signs of recognition	Positive unconditional.
Teacher’s affirmations	“You can choose yourself what is best for you,” “You always have the right to leave and stay yourself,” “You are alone and take responsibility for your own life,” “You can solve your problems on your own,” “Loneliness is sometimes as good as being close to someone.”

Source: own materials

Teachers and educators in various contexts of their work can experience symbiotic features in their students or their parents. One of them is the issue of overprotective parents that try to take full control over their child. Teachers and educators may sometimes hear a sentence that is supposed to prove the parents’ close relationship with their child and their engagement but in fact unveils very disturbing issues, “My daughter and I have no secrets.” It proves blurred boundaries between subsystems in the family. Both the mother should protect some areas of her intimacy and the daughter should have the right to her own affairs and intimacy. A maxim once heard, though it sounds brutal, expresses a very important truth, “A good mother gives freedom to her child at the moment of its birth, a bad ones does it at the moment of her death.”

Guidelines for teachers and educators

Pedagogical conduct should therefore be expressed through:

- Inducing students to make their own choices not based on others’ opinions (“Let us put aside what your friend thinks about it – try to make the right decision on your own. I am convinced it will be a good choice”).
- Refusing to participate in various so-called auxiliary games (“Professor, please tell me exactly how I should deal with my son”).
- Teaching to maintain a balanced relation between expected support and one’s own engagement (“Let’s agree that when the need arises, you can have a talk with me provided that you tell me beforehand and no more that three times per semester”)

-
- Noticing fear in parents showing the signs of overprotection (“I would like to assure you that your son is very safe at school and all of us here make sure that the children are not hurt”).
 - Teaching and strengthening social behaviours that regulate both proximity and distance (“This exercise consists in working in pairs and talking about the subject matter we are currently discussing in the lesson. Then, everyone should choose a different person and talk about the same topic again”).
 - Accepting behaviours manifesting self-expression (“Everyone in the class has the right to express their own views and not to repeat someone else’s opinions”).
 - Showing normal situations of separation resulting from the inevitable turns of fate (“In a few months you’ll finish your education in this school so let everyone talk about their plans for the future”).
 - Showing realistic obligations towards others (“What you should feel responsible for with regard to your classmates and what does not concern you any more”).
 - Abstaining from any behaviour serving to please the teacher (“I will like you even if you don’t pay me these compliments, and above all exactly then”).
 - Giving the child “a free hand” in taking its own initiative, being curious and active (“Choose what, how and when you want to do something”).
 - Supporting the child’s self-identification (working to discover “Who am I?”).
 - Assuring that the end of a certain stage of school life (e.g. the end of the school year, graduating, etc.) does not mean cutting off any contact with school as it can take new forms (e.g. a graduates’ club, visiting at the time of school celebrations, etc.).

It is worth keeping in mind that persons with symbiotic features often feel lost not only in relationships with others, but also in their own preferences and experiences. As a therapist I have heard more than once (as symbiotic persons are quite frequent visitors of various psychological help centres) such a statement, “And what do you think I should feel in this situation?” In the situation of divorce, mourning, experienced violence, etc. It is me, the therapist who is to know and is obliged to know these feelings (sic!). They also demand simple advice and instruction. Advice that (which is also very characteristic!) they will mostly not follow anyway as a consequence. A teacher may also sometimes hear such surprising statements and expectations. Another good example was presented to me by a student doing an internship in one of the schools. Having talked to a pupil, she declared that if the girl had any more problems, she could talk to her any time. As a result, the student did not have any free break till the end of her internship, and even after it was finished the pupil sought to find her to continue their contact. A group of professional psychotherapists remarked, “Our professional experience shows that people with this disorder more than

others admit to falling in love with their psychotherapist” (A.T. Beck et al., 2005, p. 307). They suggest limiting physical contact (e.g. shaking hands, patting one’s back or a simple hug) to the minimum. I think that both teachers and educators should also take this remark into account.

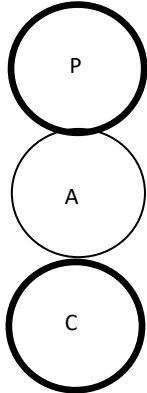
2. I do not feel safe

Symbiotic and avoidant adaptations that should be discussed below are located on the same axis of relations towards others. While a symbiotic personality is characterized with the approach “**to** people”, avoidant persons are located on the opposite side of this continuum, manifesting emotions, beliefs and behaviours that can be reduced to conduct “**from** people”. In dependent adaptation there is a belief that others are strong and can take care of other people. Characteristic ambivalence reads “I am afraid of others – but I also really need them.” In case of avoidant personality, it is believed that others are threatening, potentially criticizing and may reject that person. Avoidant adaptation that we should discuss now, was described in a concise and apt way by James Morrison, “(...) in social situations they keep themselves to themselves, in fear of saying something stupid, and usually they avoid professions linked with some societal expectations. Apart from their siblings, parents or children, they usually have few friends. Feeling good in routine situations, they can go to a lot of trouble not to abandon established ways of doing things” (J. Morrison, 2016, p. 610). Avoidant adaptation, due to a strong anxiety component, has also a lot in common with other personality types, where anxiety is present.

Table 2
Avoidant adaptation

Withdrawn child	Avoidant adaptation
Central problem	Anxiety
Basic unmet need	To be safe and not to be humiliated, ridiculed and mocked
Dominating feelings	General fear in public situations. Shame and anxiety. Fear of humiliation. Uncertainty and the feeling of inferiority. Restraint in the presence of others. Suppression, rejection and reversal of negative emotional sensations, e.g. sadness or anger. Fear of being overwhelmed by these emotions.
Parents’ behaviours towards their child	Parents expect their child to reach a high social status equal to theirs. The child is expected to meet high standards and requirements. They are too critical, judgemental, strict and demanding towards their child.

Table 2
Avoidant adaptation (cont.)

Withdrawn child	Avoidant adaptation
Attachment pattern (White, 2019)	Avoidant and ambivalent
Some prohibitions and script drivers	Do not be important. Do not be noticeable. Do not feel anger. Do not belong. Let you fail. Do not be yourself. Be perfect. Be strong.
Possible ego states	

Selected traits and behaviours

Social distancing with manifestation of severe anxiety in interpersonal situations. Desire for acceptance and recognition from those around you. Excessive self-criticism and low self-esteem. Fear of disappointing other people, e.g. parents, teachers, relatives, etc. High level of sensitivity to criticism. Traces of magical thinking that something will just happen itself, without their active participation. Exaggerating the potential threat. Avoiding situations that put one in the limelight. At the time of unavoidable “social exposure” there might be somatic reactions: blushing, a sudden need to go to the bathroom, voice wavering, etc. Rejecting and denying the facts that prove others’ acceptance or sympathy. The belief that some people might not care about them. Relations developed with a small number of people. Most frequently, closer relations with only one friend. Family life limited to contacts with the closest relatives. Restraint and excessive vigilance in expressing oneself or one’s views. Low life dynamics. Lack of some social skills, e.g. decisiveness, confronting others, assertiveness or making new friends. Reluctance to undertake new or risky challenges or activities in fear of failure. Frequent fear of criticism, disapproval or rejection. Excessive tendency to analyse other people’s behaviour. Tendency to doubt and hesitate. Constant fear of public humiliation or shaming. The belief that others are focused on them and judge them all the time. The fear developed in one’s childhood might lead to several psychosomatic illnesses in one’s adulthood (the circulatory, digestive and respiratory system, etc.) as well as manifestations of hypochondria or panic attacks.

Table 2
Avoidant adaptation (cont.)

Typical beliefs	"I am stupid," "I don't fit in," "If someone knew what I am really like, they would certainly reject me," "I am a non-adapted person," "Others are better than me," "Everyone will laugh at me," "I know I am stressed now and I'm blushing," "Why did he say that? What did he mean?," "I don't fit in with the others here."
Life position	I am not OK. – You are OK. (I-, Y+)
Favourite interpersonal games	"A wooden leg," "A Defect," "Do something to me."
Some real, film, literary and fairy tale characters	Films "Lost in Translation" (2003), directed by S. Coppola, "Into the Wild" (2007), directed by S. Penn, or "Leave No Trace" (2018), directed by D. Granik. The film's title character from "Fúsi" (2015), directed by D. Kári. Stories for children: "I am scared..." ("Boję się...") (1984) by M. Musierowicz or "I am not afraid of you" (2002) by J. Patience. Charlie Brown from a popular comic book "Peanuts". Anxious Piglet in the story "Winnie the Pooh" by A. A. Milne, who had only one friend, a bear named Winnie the Pooh. It is worth looking for one's own examples.
Positive traits	Sensitivity. Being able to live and act in isolation. Independence in undertaking various challenges. Varied intellectual and esthetic interests. A tendency to choose professions similarly "solitary" like schizoid persons (e.g. an archivist, a museum worker, an accountant, night watchman, lorry driver, etc.). However, paradoxically it turns out that many actors in their memoirs quote facts proving that in their childhood they used to be very shy and anxious. Choosing the profession of an actor or a presenter, linked with strong societal exposure, was the way to "treat" this and cope with their timidity. A person with this type of adaptation is undoubtedly a <p style="text-align: center;">"Sensitive Observer"</p>
Desired signs of recognition	Positive unconditional (many!)
Teacher's affirmations	"Being among others is as good as being solitary," "I value your mindfulness," "Being scared sometimes helps us but sometimes may be detrimental to us," "Be yourself. Others do not have to like or accept you, and you do not have to worry about it," "It is worth learning how to be assertive, e.g. what the meaning of your YES is when sometimes you cannot say NO to others."

Source: own materials.

Teachers and educators undoubtedly quite often meet students showing such strong anxiety traits. A drama of a person avoiding interpersonal relationships is often manifested by the sentiment of lack of happiness in life and an inability to act to one's own advantage. On the one hand, they cannot realise themselves in the conviction of their inadequacy and frailty. On the other hand, they are accompanied by the conviction that they cannot count on others.

Guidelines for teachers and educators

Early manifested traits of children's anxious interpersonal relations, which is not rare like in case of some other adaptations described here, should induce teachers and educators to take different kinds of measures. These are some of them:

- Non-overbearing attention directed at the student ("I can see that you take notes carefully on what I discuss in the lesson.").
- The student should know that in a situation difficult for them they will be able to say, without any consequences and with their teacher's acceptance, a sacramental statement, "You demand too much from me."
- Permission to reveal certain feelings ("Tell me what makes you angry.").
- Making clear demands on the student in social situations ("I expect from you only to tell me briefly what you think about it.").
- Before gradual engagement of the withdrawn and avoidant student into class life, it is advisable to devote, under some pretext, some attention to them ("I would like you to stay after class and explain how you cope with this computer programme you've mentioned. I've got no idea about it.").
- Noticing even the smallest success ("Only Marcin has paid attention to this issue in his essay.").
- Critical remarks should refer to specific behaviours that do not allow for unjustified generalisations such as "I'm so hopeless." Thus, the teacher should be precise: "This time your essay was not the best, you've made a few spelling and punctuation mistakes, and your style was not the best. I hope that next time I'll be able to give you a better mark."
- Reducing exaggerated perfectionism ("Even if something does not go right sometimes, it does not immediately mean that we are hopeless," "It's impossible to learn how to forge one's own path if we don't accept the possibility of erring.").
- It is worth arousing in all students, due to the frequency of such problems, self-reflection ("Why are we sometimes afraid to be afraid?" "Have you ever been worried about something that never happened?" "Everyone is sometimes afraid of something – and it is natural.").
- Teaching mindfulness and short forms of relaxation ("After such an intensive exercise, now choose a place in the classroom and silently focus on it.").
- Keeping in touch with parents and offering them advice and help with regard to various emerging issues ("Together, we have to help David cope with his shyness.").
- Saying sometimes directly: "Do what you are so afraid of and then the fear will pass."
- In case of increased anxiety symptoms, a student, in consultation with their parents, should be provided with sociotherapeutic activities ("In our school there is an active sociotherapeutic group teaching social behaviours. What do you think about it?").

- Patience is the best recommendation for teachers in relations with students manifesting avoidant adaptation traits.

The subject matter of anxiety therapy occupies a special place in transactional analysis (Jagięła, 2011). However, it does not mean only therapeutic issues and that this subject matter should be overlooked by teachers and educators. Especially that children with anxiety symptoms do not often receive effective help as they are usually calm, quiet and do not cause any trouble with their behaviour.

3. I will never give up

Between masochistic adaptation and symbiotic issues described above, there is a great convergence expressed, on the one hand, by subordination and bonding, and on the other hand, by references to the questions of autonomy and inner freedom. In both cases, desire for freedom, either in the form of distancing or protesting and yielding to pressure, becomes a key issue about the age of two. The ambivalent belief of people with this type of personality is, “I am defeated but I will never give up.”

Table 3
Masochistic adaptation

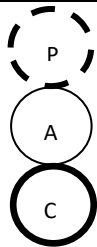
Defeated child	Masochistic adaptation*
Central problem	Freedom
Basic unmet need	Deciding about oneself, one's goals, needs and one's own body.
Dominating feelings	Rebellious anger. It is also a whole range of emotions that resemble feelings that subjects have towards their oppressor and tyrant, e.g. willingness to retaliate, seeking revenge and humiliating the tormentor. Life pessimism.
Parents' behaviours towards their child	Parents expect the child's submissiveness to various types of pressure exerted on it, or intrusive pressure (e.g. strict timing of meals, bowel movements or sleep, as well as undergoing unpleasant and invasive medical procedures such as enemas, injections, etc.)
Attachment pattern	Ambivalent
Some prohibitions	Do not be important. Do not grow up. Do not be healthy.
Script drivers	Try. Please .
Possible ego states	

Table 3
Masochistic adaptation (cont.)

Defeated child	Masochistic adaptation*
Selected traits and behaviours	Ambivalence between subordination and submissiveness, and hidden rebellion and objection. Blocked self-expression. Self-sacrifice for others. Willingness to please others. Constant complaining and dissatisfaction. Perceiving one's surroundings (e.g. workplace, class, school) as a compelling and overwhelming place. Frequent complaining about many things. The belief that one has to experience discomfort and suffering in relations with others. Rejecting positive feelings or the feeling of satisfaction (anhedonia). Depriving yourself of pleasure in order to deprive others of pleasure at the same time. Undertaking unpleasant tasks that others are reluctant to face as bothersome or aversive. Diminishing one's value. Making others feel guilt or sympathy. Sacrificing too much for others that sometimes do not need it at all. A desire to come across as someone good and gentle. Provoking attacks on oneself passively and unknowingly. Easily stepping into the role of a violence victim. Rejecting everyone who declares their help or support. Linking suffering with love. Ambivalent and polar behaviour of a "yes" and "no" type at the same time or passivity or aggression. Shallow and persistent depression (dysthymia). Choosing such people and situations that almost certainly lead to failure. Getting satisfaction from the experience of humiliation or unconditional subjugation, in order to feel better. Tendency to moralise. Compulsive repetition of certain destructive situations from one's childhood. Self-destructive and life-threatening behaviours. Tendency to reach for illegal stimulants.
Typical beliefs	"I will never give up," "Love always comes with suffering," "The world is compelling and overwhelming," "If I am good, others will love me," "Suffering makes me a good person," "If I surrender, they will destroy me," "I will never accept my failure," "I will show you," "I will punish you by my withdrawal," "What does not kill us, makes us stronger," "One must never give up."
Life position	I am not OK. – You are OK. (I-, Y+). I am not OK. – You are not OK. (I-, Y-).
Favourite interpersonal games	"Tormented", "Why don't you try...., yes, but....", "I only wanted to help you", "Rape".
Some real, film, literary and fairy tale characters	Feature films "White Oleander" (2002), directed by P. Kosminsky. "Anything Else" (2003), directed by W. Allen. "Where The Wild Things Are" (2009), directed by S. Jonze. "The Wife" (2017), directed by B. Runge. A book for children "Tadek Niejadek" by Wanda Chotomska. Mahatma Gandhi. Kamikaze – Japanese airborne formations that suicidally sacrificed their lives during WWII with a band on their foreheads reading "Sacrifice for Country". Eeyore from the story "Winnie the Pooh" by Alan Alexander Milne, whose favourite thing to eat was ... thistle. It is worth looking for one's own examples.

Table 3
Masochistic adaptation (cont.)

Defeated child	Masochistic adaptation*
Positive traits	Modesty. Dedication to others. Prudence in decision-making. No illusions about certain people or events. Resilience in the face of adversity according to the motto, "I'll endure beating, but I'll preserve my life." They prefer professions giving the feeling of freedom (e.g. traveller, driver, pilot, etc.), or the ones linked with sacrifice, dedication to others, or having a low social status (e.g. messenger, cleaner, doorman, gravedigger, nurse, hospice caregiver, educator in a children's home, etc.). Such a person can be described as a <p style="text-align: center;">"Melancholic Sufferer"</p>
Desired signs of recognition	Positive unconditional.
Teacher's affirmations	"You've got the right to be self-assured," "Your sacrifice should have its limits," "Decide yourself what you want to do and where," "Stick to your needs and goals," "Treat yourself to something."

* does not figure in the clinical classifications ICD-11 and DSM-5.

Source: own materials.

Teachers and educators may rarely encounter students with the aforementioned traits. These are not frequent cases, nevertheless, they can be noticed with a certain amount of insight. In such a situation, it is worth being familiar with the psychological mechanism which triggers this adaptation. Thus, if someone wanted to imagine the origins of masochistic adaptation – let us remember it is about psychological not sexual masochism – it is a good idea to use an old example for the emergence of this adaptation type. As it is known, animals, including pets, are to some extent free and have their natural preferences. What is more, they can (if they are in a cage) do what they want depending on circumstances and their desire. Dogs love to lounge for hours on their bedding, cats love to climb various objects, hamsters love to run, etc. In case of the child described as "defeated", its freedom, will and desires were persistently and invasively destroyed at the price of bestowing love on it. It mainly happened by forcing the child to do things it would sometimes naturally do on its own, e.g. eating, sleeping, bowel movements, etc. One can, by analogy, imagine that the dog would be forced to stay only on its bedding, the cat would have to walk on the fence when its owner says so, and the hamster would have to run all the time on its own territory against its will. One of the patients recalls the following, "As far back as I can remember, it always used to be like that: no matter how much I ate, it was never enough. My mother forced terrible amounts of food into me (...) I remember, when I was three or four years old, I was running around the kitchen table and my mother was chasing me, in one hand holding a spoon with

something I didn't want to eat, and a belt in the other, threatening to hit me, which she often did (...) One of the worst things my mother did was threatening that she would leave me or kill herself, jumping from the roof, is I didn't finish my meal. Often, she would walk out to the staircase, and then I usually threw myself to the ground crying hysterically" (Johnson, 1993, p. 53). It was worth quoting this example as it is the essence of psychological mechanisms constituting the foundation of masochistic adaptation.

The inevitable question arises at that point, i.e. Why do parents behave in such a way? They do not act with the intention of harming the child or acting to its detriment. There can be only one answer: due to anxiety and entanglement in their own psychological problems. Out of fear that they do not take care of the child in the right way, that others (e.g. their mother-in-law) will accuse them of that, that they do not provide it with security and do not protect its health. They are afraid of losing their child if it does not succumb to their intrusive violence. They are convinced that they do it for its good and that relieves them of any doubt whether they do the right thing.

Guidelines for teachers and educators

Teachers and educators may create in their relation with their student a certain type of mild emotional counterbalance to the parents' intrusive interactions. An alternative to the child's difficult family experiences. In this situation it is a good idea to:

- Let the child protest, not taking any care, love and approval away ("I understand you don't agree with this. It's your right. Yet, it doesn't change my positive attitude towards you.").
- Say sometimes, "If you've got a different opinion than me, go ahead and tell me. I never draw any consequences in such situations."
- Encourage self-expression and spontaneity ("And now who wants to show some silly face?").
- Block self-destructive behaviour ("Lukas, I've seen you smoke. Remember, it is very bad for you, and I'll have to draw unpleasant consequences for you.").
- Block any tendencies to complain ("I can't listen when you keep complaining about your Biology teacher.").
- Reduce the feelings of guilt for experiencing anger or pleasure ("I think you had a right to be so angry," "I can see it's given you a lot of joy.").
- Reduce the feelings of revenge and retaliation ("It is sometimes worth letting go and forgiving when someone treated us wrong.").
- Show possibilities of having someone's support without violating their boundaries ("You can rely on me.").

- Encourage to experience pleasure and enjoyment (“Let everyone say what makes them the happiest in life.”).

The next personality adaptation is the one that teachers and educators may encounter most frequently, especially at the time of adolescence as it is expressed via passivity and rebellion against the demands made.

4. I will always be against

When we look at the next adaptation, also in this case, we shall find a number of elements that coincide with the personality discussed earlier. In masochistic adaptation, destructive factors are in most cases directed by the person at themselves. As for passive-aggressive personalities, they direct their negativism outside. The ambivalence that appears here can be closed with the statement, “You will not make me do anything – and in the process I can also hurt you.” The order in which the personalities are presented in the paper is not accidental, but forms a certain logical and developmental sequence, presenting moments of this development when deficits, conflicts or psychological injuries occurred, leading to far from optimal adaptation. In this case, the adaptation described as passive-aggressive, develops between the 18th and 36th month of one’s life.

Table 4

Passive-aggressive adaptation

Negativist child	Passive-aggressive adaptation
Central problem	Independence
Basic unmet need	Autonomy
Dominating feelings	Anger combined with protest. Hidden aggression, not always expressed directly. Lack of self-satisfaction. Irritability and explosive behaviour. The feeling of hopelessness and gloom. Impatience.
Parents’ behaviours towards their child	Subjugating the child to changing and ambiguous parental expectations. Too much control. Not appreciating the child’s effort. At times, lack of parents’ acceptance and love.
Attachment pattern (White, 2019)	Ambivalent and disorganised
Some prohibitions	Don’t give up. Don’t feel. Don’t be close. Don’t grow up. Let you fail.
Script drivers	Try.

Table 4
Passive-aggressive adaptation (cont.)

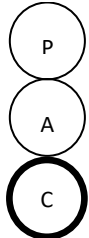
Negativist child	Passive-aggressive adaptation
Possible ego states	
Selected traits and behaviours	<p>Passive, yet often hidden, resistance to requirements and routine duties. Passivity. Rebellion against people who are perceived as role models. Mocking people having power or importance. Reluctance to meet others' expectations. Stubbornness. Postponing responsibilities. Obstructing one's own and others' activities. Lack of efficiency. Activities done carelessly or with a sense of not wanting to do them. Being the last one. Often excusing themselves by forgetfulness or objective difficulties. Being late. More or less directly expressed anger combined with opposition. Negativist behaviour, inadequate to the situation. Inability to achieve one's goals. Generating conflicts. Saying no to compromise. Blaming others for one's ineptitude. Lack of empathy. Explaining oneself by allegedly objective circumstances of the events. Expecting help and guidelines and boycotting or sabotaging them right afterwards. Skepticism. Apparent amicability and politeness hiding opposition. Manifesting dependency and repentant submission alternately with demonstrated hidden and hostile independence. Ambivalences and ambitemencies: all or nothing! Jealousy towards others. Reluctant and critical attitude towards people. Complaining about lack of understanding by one's surroundings and about one's fate.</p>
Typical beliefs	<p>"No one will tell me what I should do," "I'll take care of it tomorrow," "People don't understand me," "When I rebel, I stay independent," "I'll do what I think is right and that's it," "I won't do it the way others do," "I will ostensibly agree not to cause conflict, but still, on the whole, I will proceed my own way." "Others make me angry," "I am only an observer here."</p>
Life position	<p>I am not OK. – You are OK. (I-, Y+)</p>
Favourite interpersonal games	<p>"This window is already closed," "Why not you," "Do something," "Yes..., but..."</p>
Some real, film, literary and fairy tale characters	<p>Holden Caulfield in the book "The Catcher in the Rye" by D. Salinger. Olga G. in a feature film "Hi Tereska" (2001), directed by R. Gliński. Such behaviours also resurface quite often in employees of many types of offices, post offices or shops in the form of impoliteness, lack of kindness towards applicants or customers. A rebellious snail in the poem "The Snail" ("Ślimak") by Jan Brzechwa. Juliette, a heroine of the book "No, no, no !" (2019) by A. Masson, M-I. Callier. "Llama, Llama Red Pajama" (2018) by A. Dewdney. It is worth looking for one's own examples.</p>

Table 4
Passive-aggressive adaptation (cont.)

Negativist child	Passive-aggressive adaptation
Positive traits	Reasonable at times objection to unrealistic demands or superficial and fake role models. Caring about one's independence and skepticism in the situations of imposed norms and prohibitions. The capacity for humour, fun, spontaneity and enjoying the moment. Negativist persons can, if they want, overcome their limitations and regain love and attention they lacked as children. Probably we would call such a person a Perverse Rebel
Desired signs of recognition	Very positive, unconditional (many !).
Teacher's affirmations	"I accept the fact that you rebel, I would just like you to know why you do that," "We can disagree, but let us respect each other," "I can see you're trying to be independent in your opinions and it is fine," "Try to tell me directly and simply everything you don't like."

* does not figure in the clinical classifications ICD-11 and DSM-5

Source: own materials.

Teachers and educators, as it was mentioned earlier, in their relations with students and their parents, are probably often faced with various types of ambivalent behaviour of submission and resistance. It is well described by one of the teachers talking about her student, "It can be said that he behaves as he pleases. When I ask everyone to leave the classroom, he wants to stay. When I ask everyone to take everything from their desks, he demonstratively leaves everything on. Nothing is gained by admonitions or remarks."

Guidelines for teachers and educators

Understandably, such behaviour often generates teachers' frustration or irritation. That is why dealing with somebody with this type of adaptation requires a lot of consideration and skill and is an art above art itself. These are some determinants of such behaviour:

- Coping with confrontation ("I can see that you have a different view on your son's upbringing. I see it in a different way. Let us stay with this discrepancy.").
- Not demonstrating one's superiority and power ("Together, we have to figure out some better solutions.").
- Showing empathy ("I understand that it is difficult.").
- Being consistent ("Marcin, I do not approve of your behaviour.").
- Encouraging self-observation ("Try to look at situations when you rebel and draw conclusions for yourself.")

- Developing communication skills (“It is worth listening attentively to be able to respond meaningfully.”).
- Protecting one’s own psychological boundaries in a relationship (“This is not what we agreed on.”)
- Learning how to control and manage anger (“Maybe it is a good idea to express your irritation differently at times?”).
- Not yielding to provocation and keeping one’s balance (“I’ve got a feeling you want to make me angry.”).
- Being aware that being attacked is often not about us but someone else who is important in the child’s life (“Try to guess who else you confront in such a rebellious and mean way like me.”).

Resistance, next to procrastination (putting things off) is an immanent feature of passive-aggressive personality. Thus, let us devote a bit more attention to it, based on experience from psychotherapy. Resistance is most frequently understood as a stubborn adherence to one’s position and a desire to preserve the status quo, often against obvious facts – it is a certain feature that accompanies not only passive-aggressive adaptation, but it can be noticed in many different situations. It is not unknown to teachers and educators, especially with regard to adolescents who in this way try to protect their autonomy or their path to independence. Work on resistance is well-known to all psychotherapists, and depending on the school of therapy they represent, they manifest diverse approaches to this phenomenon. Beginning with the recognition of resistance as a significant obstacle to the implementation of psychological assistance, to seeing it as an ally in solving problems.

Coping with resistance, which generates tension in interpersonal relations and makes both sides more stiff, is not easy and requires some training. Many articles and books were devoted to this subject matter (e.g. Naar-King, Soares, 2012; Kottler 2003), showing ways of acting in a professional way, e.g. by a motivating interview, making use of a multidimensional action plan, reformulating resistance or paradoxical intervention. There are different symptoms of resistance and they manifest differently. More than once, students boycott teachers’ effort, are silent or stubborn, make the progress of the lesson difficult, etc. On the other hand, parents deny their responsibility and existing problems, attack teachers indirectly, are mean, project their problems outwardly, or defend themselves from having to make significant changes in their own lives or just the way they do things.

However, one may be tempted to make some general indications, which may turn out helpful for teachers and educators both in their relations with students and their parents. They read as follows:

- Do not forcefully convince, pressure or coerce (“I’ve expressed my opinion, however, you’ll do as you see fit.”)

- Sometimes it is necessary to stop a pointless conversation on a particular topic (“Ladies and gentlemen, let us put a full stop here.”).
- One should take, so to speak, a step back, e.g. come back to the previous thread (“As I’ve already said earlier...”).
- One can express understanding for this point of view (“I understand your reservations.”).
- It makes sense to emphasise freedom in the choices one makes (“The decision is yours.”)
- Show the arguments “for” but also those “against” (“If we look closer at the issue, one can notice its advantages, but also, on the contrary, its drawbacks.”).
- One can reflect the adversary’s point of view in one’s own words (“If I’ve understood you correctly, then it would be appropriate to proceed as follows...”).
- It is worth noticing positive sides (“The good thing about all this is that...”).

Summarising, proceedings of this kind are not about teachers or educators giving up their position and their own point of view, or recognizing another view as valid. The strategy of dealing with resistance consists in getting out of a colliding relationship (avoiding cross transaction), which in such cases does not lead to problem solution, but in resorting to the rational area (the Adult ego state). Dealing with the afore-discussed adaptation, similarly to other difficult personalities, requires these people’s decision to finally grow up and part with their infantile problems that block their relationships with others. As practice proves it, changing the way one behaves in certain situations often leads to the possibility of coming back to a contentious subject matter and make a more sensible, realistic and reasonable attempt to resolve the issues involved.

5. I am to be admired

The issue of using one’s child in order to increase one’s self-esteem by parents is a key issue to understand the origins and development of narcissistic adaptation. That is why “The Exploited Child” was indicated as a slogan and characteristics of this type of formed personality. “The unsatisfied narcissism of the inner child poisons adult life with an insatiable longing for love, care and affection. The child’s claims will prevent adult relationships as no matter how much love it receives in life, it will never have enough of it” (Bradshaw, 2008, p. 35). However, attempts to get to this inner narcissistic child are generally doomed to failure. It is hidden by a façade and adoption of a particular mask that hides hurt so that no one hurts it any more, no one humiliates it or uses it for their

own purposes. The ambivalence present here reads as follows, “I am wonderful and admirable – or I am nobody and I deserve contempt.”

Werdy T. Behary writes, “Probably they are afraid of contacting that child as they think it is an underdeveloped, lonely, wicked little pest, thus, they will push it as far out of consciousness as possible by any means possible” (Behary, 2014, p. 48). The real child was used mentally and emotionally to increase its parents’ self-esteem. “Narcissistic upbringing,” writes Otto Speck, “as you can easily guess leads to narcissism” (O. Speck, 2005, p. 34). Very often, narcissistic parents have narcissistic children. The whole process takes place in a similar developmental period like in case of previously discussed passive-aggressive adaptation but it is secondary to the primary stage described by psychoanalysts – and then it is a correct phenomenon. In primary narcissism, self-love is appropriate first, preceding the ability to love others.

Table 5
Narcissistic adaptation

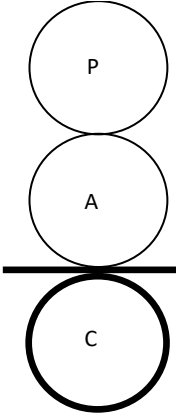
Exploited Child	Narcissistic adaptation
Central problem	Sense of self-esteem and uniqueness
Basic unmet need	Importance and recognition by others
Dominating feelings	Fear of humiliation and criticism. Shame. Despair. Fury when one’s self-esteem is threatened. No contact with one’s true feelings.
Parents’ behaviours towards their child	In the shortest terms, parents’ desires can be characterised as an expectation that their child should not be who it is and should meet their exorbitant expectations.
Attachment pattern (White, 2019)	Disorganised and ambivalent.
Some prohibitions	Do not be yourself. Do not feel. Don’t be a child. Don’t be close.
Script drivers	Be perfect. Be strong. Try.
Possible ego states	

Table 5
Narcissistic adaptation (cont.)

Exploited Child	Narcissistic adaptation
Selected traits and behaviours	<p>Exaggerating the importance of one's own person. Expecting admiration. The conviction of "magical" power of intoxicating others with one's personal charm and attractiveness. False self-image. Fear of humiliation. Expecting immediate gratification for one's effort or image. Lack of success makes one abandon an undertaken task quickly. A desire to manipulate others. Strong tendencies towards rivalry and jealousy. Controlling the environment's reaction to oneself and one's behaviour. Lack of empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others. A demanding attitude towards one's environment. Using other people in order to increase one's self-esteem, e.g. making friends with someone enjoying a high status in a given environment. The feeling of internal emptiness. Instrumental use of others for one's own purposes, without any remorse. Emotional coldness. Egocentrism and selfishness. Overestimating one's achievements. Bravado in some activities often hides the fear of failure. A desire to dominate in a group and give orders to others. Lack of one's own opinions. Inability to ask for help. Arrogance. Disturbed perception of others. Ambivalent, uncritical idealisation of someone, or ruthless depreciation of this person. Bivalence expressed by a euphoric sense of one's uniqueness and importance or by an extreme belief in one's worthlessness and depression sometimes leading to deep depressions. Opening of the so-called "narcissistic wound" which provokes the so-called "narcissistic hemorrhage", when one's self-esteem is hurt and there is no end to one's feeling of sadness and mad despair. Mothers taking up the role of the so-called "stage mom", i.e. exposing the child to countless castings, presentations and performances to increase the feeling of one's importance with the help of ones child.</p>
Typical beliefs	<p>"I am a special person," "I have to be perfect," "I'll achieve everything without any effort," "I'll be someone in life, or I'll become no one," "You owe me that," "The rules that other people comply with do not concern me," "I expect special treatment as I am a better person than anyone in my environment," "Only someone outstanding can understand me," "If someone criticizes me, they envy me."</p>
Life position	<p>I am OK. – You are not OK. (I+, Y-) (I am not OK. – You are OK.: I-, Y+)*</p>
Favourite interpersonal games	<p>"Mine is better than yours," "The best gunfighter,"*** "Had it not been for me ... ," "Here I've got you, you bastard."</p>
Some real, film, literary and fairy tale characters	<p>Suzanne Stone Maretto in the film "To Die For" (1995), directed by G.V. Sant. "Narcissus" (2012) directed by D. Gasiunaite. Neron in "Quo Vadis" (2001), directed by J. Kawalerowicz. Izabela Łęska in the novel "The Doll" by B. Prus. Mythical Narcissus that fell in love in his reflection. "The Frog Prince" in Grimm's fairy tale. "The Frog who would grow as big as the Ox" by Jean de La Fontaine, who grew so much that it ended badly as a consequence.*** The King in "The Little Prince" by A. Saint-Exupéry, who "heard only praise." Owl from the story "Winnie The Pooh" by Alan Alexander Milne. It is worth looking for one's own examples.</p>

Table 5
Narcissistic adaptation (cont.)

Exploited Child	Narcissistic adaptation
Positive traits	People from this type of adaptation enjoy a lot of success and often occupy prestigious positions in social life. They occupy prominent positions, they are often chairpersons, managers or directors. They are sometimes lawyers, doctors, academics or artists. They may show creative talents in a given area, but this is not a rule. They are self-confident, which guarantees their success in life. To some extent, narcissism as a driving force may contribute to one's general development, similarly to snobbery that may make one interested in ambitious art. It is undoubtedly:
	Insatiable Megalomaniac
Desired signs of recognition	Positive conditional.
Teacher's affirmations	"Your self-esteem is not about being applauded all the time, but about not needing that applause," "You don't become bigger by showing others that they are smaller," "If you know your value, you don't have to prove it to others," "Everyone is special in their own way," "One can receive a lot from others and it is not necessary to compete with them," "Everyone has the right to be who they really are."

* deeply hidden position

** one of competition games among psychotherapists who bid among themselves in the best of their own interpretations or patients' diagnoses; it can also refer to other professions.

*** This world of art is full of foolish creatures too.

Commuters want to build chateaus,
Each princeling wants his royal retinue,
Each count his squires, and so it goes.

Source: own materials

Teachers and educators know that in case of this group of difficult students and parents there are no universal and unequivocally effective ways to deal with such people. Similarly, there are no methods of building optimal relationships. One of the most general ways that also works in case of other types of internally hurt childhood adaptations is the answer coming from our inner structure of the Adult ego state.

Guidelines for teachers and educators

Only an adult person is able to offer support and deal with someone else's unruly inner child. Then, one can take the following guidelines into account:

- Include in educational programmes those elements that enhance each student's sense of real, rather than imaginary, dignity and worth ("Let's talk about what makes us like and respect some people and avoid others.").

-
- Counteract the so-called “illusion of superstardom” (“Your marks reflect the average of marks in our class.”).
 - Praise empathetic behaviour and the one that carries understanding more than achieving particular success (“I liked it very much when you helped Martha.”).
 - Gratify all sorts of situations when a student is able to notice and acknowledge their errors, shortcomings or mistakes (“I appreciate the fact that you’ve spotted that error.”).
 - Support any manifestations of showing the student’s real image (“I think that not only me but everyone in that class likes it when you show what kind of person you really are.”).
 - Do not focus too much on the student’s success, but also show their achievements in other areas (“Your good mark from that assignment is one thing, but I can also see that more and more you can recognize the effort of others in the class.”).
 - It is worth being aware of the fact that a critical remark addressed to this type of student will most often generate an inappropriate or rude defending response (“Your words are tactless and offensive. I’m waiting for your apology.”).
 - Notice that behind expressed ridicule or disregard, often true emotions are hidden (“Tell me what touched you so much in my remarks.”).
 - Do not allow for shortening the distance between you and the student (“You allow yourself to do something to me that I do not accept.”).
 - Perhaps, one of the most difficult tasks in relationships with students manifesting narcissistic traits is keeping one’s calm and self-esteem (“You can’t insult me. I have a different opinion about myself.”).
 - Show the value of mediocrity in life (“Only someone great can admit how small and hopeless they can be at times.”).
 - Show the value of effort to reach one’s goals (“What do you think Honoré de Balzac meant when he wrote that one cannot be a great man at little cost?”).
 - Make the student take a realistic look at their abilities (“I can see you’ve got ambitious plans for the future. What may be difficult or what may go wrong on the way?”).
 - In the face of mistreatment, it is worth recognising the reasons for our submission and subordination to narcissistic claims (“I don’t think your child is mistreated in the classroom. If I am wrong, please prove it.”).
 - Let us make sure that in relations with narcissistic people our own needs (equal treatment, respect, integrity, etc.) are respected. If they are not, let us try to regain the mutual balance in these relations (“All teachers and parents are treated equally in this school.”).

- Skillfully violate deeply rooted and destructive beliefs (“It is possible to be average in life and yet very happy.”).
- Put limits to any kinds of behaviour that reflect infantile self-esteem building (“Let’s agree that this classroom will not be a place of competition for the latest type of smartphone, clothing, amount of pocket money and similar things.”).
- Do not accept private offers from the student’s or their parents’ side, which are aimed at increasing the student’s or their prestige (“You’ve mentioned you can’t arrange it – my mother can take care of it.” “Thank you very much but I hope I’ll manage on my own.”).

Many academics point to the fact that the issue of narcissism is becoming more and more present in our life. Christopher Lasch thinks that it is due to socio-cultural conditions, “Narcissism seems to be the best way to cope with tension and anxiety of contemporary life. The prevailing social conditions accentuate narcissistic traits, which are present to a various extent in everyone of us” (Lasch, 2015, p. 7). Thus, the issues of narcissistic adaptation are also present in school life (Jagięła, 2007), together with the phenomena described below concerning the violation of social and customary norms, constituting a difficult challenge in the work of a teacher or an educator.

6. I’ve got the last word here

It can be reasonably stated that narcissism and psychopathy are close to each other, and the conducted research shows that the traits of narcissistic personality highly correlate with the antisocial behaviours in question (Rhodewalt, 2005, p. 277). The differentiating feature here, however, is fear. We can read that “It is an inability to experience fear that differentiates people with psychopathic traits from those with narcissistic traits. As far as other aspects are concerned, they function similarly to each other. A psychopath does not experience fear, while a narcissistic person is worried all the time how they will be perceived by others” (Talarowska, Moczulski, Strzelecki, 2021, p. 55).

Narcissistic personality is well illustrated by one of Internet memes, in which a little cat can see a tiger reflected the mirror, and a pawn can see a chess king. It is similar in case of antisocial adaptation. Here, the pawn thinks it is the king but additionally it wants to rule over all the other figures on the chessboard and manipulate them. The ambivalence is expressed by the statement, “You have to submit to me – otherwise you will gain an advantage over me and mock me.” At the beginning though we have to explain something important. When we talk about antisocial personality we mean someone who violates prevailing norms of collective life, e.g. legal, moral, customary or others. Very often, these are

criminals. On the other hand, it is claimed that in case of psychopaths these norms are not so evidently and directly violated (maybe apart from some customary and ethical ones), but such a person, although they do not clearly violate the law, has got the traits consistent with antisocial adaptation and that influences interpersonal relations. In case of children and adolescents, when their personality is not fully developed yet, we use the term of behavioural disorder. It is similarly done by one of the authors who describes 6-12 year-old children with the issue of the narcissistic line of development referring it to behavioral disorders (Małkiewicz, 2000, pp. 170-183). A complete clinical diagnosis of the antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) can be formally performed only when the patient turns 18. Nevertheless, some authors rightly point out, "Psychopathy often reveals itself around the age of nine and children-psychopaths already cause a lot of trouble" (Erikson, 2018, p. 36). These are dependencies that are worth noticing initially.

Biological conditions are also not to be underestimated. "Neuroimaging studies show weakened strength of neuronal connections between frontal lobes and amygdala body. In these cases, frontal lobes which are responsible for our morality do not have enough impact on impulsive and violent reactions of amygdala body. It is an innate feature of people with dissocial personality. It is not known why it happens" (Talarowska, Moczulski, Strzelecki, 2021, p. 56). Thus, this aspect also deserves our attention.

Table 6
Antisocial adaptation

Manipulative child	Antisocial adaptation (sociopathic, dissocial, psychopathic)
Central problem	Defence by attack
Basic unmet need	Safety
Dominating feelings	Anger. A high level of aggression directed towards others. Irritation. Lack of anxiety or fear. Being too sensitive as far as one's own person is concerned. Lack of compassion, empathy and ability to love.
Parents' behaviours towards their child	Parents' needs were more important than the needs of the child who experienced abandonment or oppression, being overlooked or physical violence. Life in the atmosphere of constant domestic chaos. Well-known tyrants such as Hitler, Stalin, Hussein and many others used to be beaten by their fathers.
Attachment pattern (White, 20219)	Uncertain and disorganized
Some prohibitions	Do not trust. Do not feel. Let you fail in relationships with others. Do not feel joy. Do not be close. Do not be mentally healthy.
Script drivers	Be strong. Be perfect.

Table 6
Antisocial adaptation (cont.)

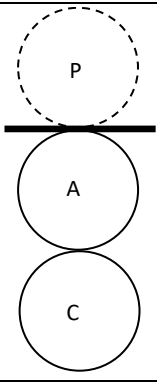
Manipulative child	Antisocial adaptation (sociopathic, dissocial, psychopathic)
Possible ego states	
Selected traits and behaviours	<p>Uncontrolled impulsiveness, irresponsibility and lack of ability to conform to social norms and the law. Too aggressive towards others. Propensity for fights and assaults. Repeated lies and frauds. A limited ability to self-control one's behaviour. A need of constant stimulation. Exaggerated feeling of one's possibilities and worth. Seeking intensive experiences. Little tolerance to frustration. Frequent violation of others' boundaries (e.g. during one's childhood, taking other children's toys frequently, forcing other children to provide various services, etc.). No feeling of guilt in situations of doing harm to others. Tendency to blame one's surroundings and rationalize one's actions. Cruelty towards people and animals. Recklessness. Lack of empathy. No ability to postpone pleasure. Destroying one's achievements. In one's childhood, behavioural disorders in many areas, e.g. in relation to adults, peers, or given tasks. No regularity in school work. Playing truant constantly. Appearances of involvement in some activity. De-adaptation behaviours show the features of stability, self-destruction and maladaptation. Striving to gain control over others regardless of consequences. The belief that one has never made any mistakes. Too much control and criticism towards the environment. An exaggerated idea of one's greatness and importance. An inability to plan the future and living the moment. Not taking into account the environment's needs. Not taking into account others' feelings and no ability to recognize these feelings in oneself. Unreliability, incredulity and insincerity. Pathological egocentrism and lack of any ability to love. Sex treated objectively. Flawless recognition of others' weaknesses. Very limited sense of humour. An inability to make use of one's own experiences and a limited ability to learn. A low level of anxiety prompting risky behaviour. No care of one's own safety and the safety of one's charges. Parasitic lifestyle. Taking pleasure in the troubles or failures of those around you.</p>

Table 6
Antisocial adaptation (cont.)

Manipulative child	Antisocial adaptation (sociopathic, dissocial, psychopathic)
Typical beliefs	“Others have to be defeated,” “I have to carry on and be strong at all cost,” “I will never give up,” “You have to elbow your way in life to achieve anything,” “One can get something the fastest though trickery or foray,” “Losers deserve what will happen to them, i.e. failure,” “People are losers,” “If someone is stupid and naïve and lets others exploit them, then it is their own fault,” “People are not as stupid as we think – they are even more stupid,” “If someone cannot take care of themselves, it is their problem,” “This way or another – they deserve failure,” “I have to take care of myself,” “The weak deserve only to be used by others,” “I will do what I want and when I want,” “I am smarter than others.”
Life position	I am OK. – You are not OK. (I+, Y-) (I am not OK. – You are OK.: I-, Y+)*
Favourite interpersonal games	“A game of power,” “Catch me if you can,” “Policemen and thieves,” “Getting cornered.”
Some real, film, literary and fairy tale characters	Joker in the film “The Dark Knight” (2008), directed by Ch. Nolan. The title character of Eric Ban in an Australian film “Chopper: 20 th Anniversary” (2021), directed by A. Dominik. “American Psycho”(2000), directed by M. Harron. The character of the demonic psychopath Dr. Hannibal Lecter in “The Silence of the Lambs” (1991), directed by J. Demme. “Preżył” (2004), directed by M. Piekorz. Sister Mildred Ratched in the film “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” (1975), directed by M. Forman. “Psychopath” (1995) directed by J. Amiel. A husband trying to make his wife mentally ill in the film “Gaslight” (1944), directed by G. Cukor. Duke Bogusław in the novel “The Deluge” by H. Sienkiewicz. Alice in the novel by Alan Sasinowski “A Boy in the Flames” (“Chłpiec w ogniu” (2023). Herod at the times of Christ. A difficult to note group of presidents, dictators, tyrants and despots and some of today's public figures in prominent political and social positions e.g. Mohammed Bin Salman – an heir to the throne in Saudi Arabia. Tadeuszek, “a fly tormentor” from the poem for children by S. Jachowicz. Queen of Spades in “Alice in Wonderland”. The Evil Queen in “Snow White”. The King in “The Little Prince” by A. Saint-Exupéry, who gave orders and “did not tolerate disobedience.” It is worth looking for one’s own examples.
Positive traits	An ability to undertake difficult challenges and an ability to directly communicate with others. Resilience to stress. Self-dependence. An ability to realise ambitious or unachievable plans in the situation when others only dream about it. Seducing others with personal charm and ease of expression. Care about one’s image. Average or over-average intelligence, which is unfortunately often associated with cleverness. Such persons choose professions offering power, self-satisfaction and consisting in being in charge of others (e.g. police officers, controllers, vindicators, bailiffs, etc.).** Unfortunately, too often they become politicians or leaders of various social or religious movements.*** They are sometimes: Charming Manipulators ****

Table 6
Antisocial adaptation (cont.)

Manipulative child	Antisocial adaptation (sociopathic, dissocial, psychopathic)
Desired signs of recognition	None
Teacher's affirmations	"Your needs are as important as the desires and dreams of other people," "Why don't you go out into the corridor for a while and calm down there?" "You tell me they are guilty, but what is your part in the whole situation?" "Sometimes it is worth putting some pleasures off – and it pays off," "Our new sports section is going to develop a certain code of conduct and I would like you to participate actively in this."

* deeply hidden position

** In his research, British psychologist Kevin Dutton found that psychopaths can be found more frequently in some professions, such as: 1. CEO (understood as the manager of all managers in a company or organization, legal or not), 2. Lawyer, 3. Media employee (television, radio), 4. Merchant, 5. Surgeon, 6. Journalist, 7. Police officer, 8. Religious leader, 9. Kitchen chef, 10. Public administration employee (Erikson, 2018, p. 62).

*** Bill Eddy provides his readers with interesting arguments showing that sociopathic and narcissistic personalities are often chosen to be leaders (Eddy, 2019).

**** the term used in PCM

Source: own materials

Teachers and educators meet quite frequently this group of students. One of comprehensive and exhaustive works on psychopathy begins with the statement, "Psychopaths are people who can be met in every culture, race, society and environment" (Pastwa-Wojciechowska, 2013, p. 7). Thus, it would be bizarre if we did not find them also in the school environment. They occur there most often with a psychological diagnosis of behavioural disorders.

The problem with antisocial personality traits can be discerned most frequently in the context of school aggression and violence. This subject matter has recently received a lot of attention in numerous pedagogical articles and university theses. Some articles point to the fact that psychopathy, in addition to Machiavellianism and narcissism, constitutes an important element of the so-called "Dark Triad" forming a person of a destructive explorer of mutual relations (Paulhus, Williams, 2005, pp. 556-563).

Guidelines for teachers and educators

The aforementioned correlations of antisocial adaptation and narcissism make some guidelines addressed to teachers and educators convergent. When challenging personalities of a psychopathic nature, it is worth remembering the following guidelines:

- It is vital to recognise as soon as possible that we deal with psychopathic adaptation (“After our conversation today, I’ve got to think our mutual relations over. I’ll give you the answer tomorrow.”).
- Be aware that our weaknesses will be the field of confrontation (“It’s true, like you’ve said, I don’t have my own children, yet it doesn’t mean I can’t understand parents.”).
- It is worth getting to know oneself, e.g. tendency to be greedy, receive flattery, uncertainty, etc. (“Maybe I’m a bit lost in that situation? I have to think it over.”).
- Notice and reveal a typical sequence of interpersonal games and be able to stop them. Psychopaths are masters of this kind of hypocritical relationship (“I won’t play these games with you.”).
- In case of emotional traps, act quickly and decisively (“I feel manipulated – I don’t agree to that!”).
- Call a spade a spade (“In our conversation I feel pressure to do what I wasn’t going to do at all.”).
- Identify hidden motives of certain actions or decisions (“You have enrolled Dominik in classes of a rather aggressive martial art, i.e. *kajukenbo*, why this one?”).
- Do not be fooled by appearances and illusory charm (“These are only words, and where are actions?”).
- Get rid of your naivety (“If something is too beautiful, cheap, attractive... to be true, then in all probability it is not real.”).
- Set boundaries to your trust (“It’s the first time I’ve heard that, I have to check it.”).
- Set rules and conditions (“I suggest we agree on what belongs to me and what belongs to you as far as the upbringing of your son is concerned.”).
- It is important to pay attention to actions, not declarations (“You always talk about it, but tell me what you have done about it so far.”).
- An ability of assertive behaviour is very useful in such situations, much more than in case of other difficult adaptations (So, say firmly “No!” and possibly raise your voice slightly).
- Build ties instead of competition (“We shall solve our problems together in class.”).
- Eliminate all symptoms of aggression and violence with consistency and great determination (“I will not allow such things to happen in the classroom.”).
- Create the experience of closeness without wanting to take away others’ freedom (“I am always ready to talk frankly.”).

- Seek professional advice sometimes (“We’ve known each other for a long time, I’d like you to tell me as a school psychologist what to do in this situation.”).
- Do not overestimate your capabilities and back off in time (“I don’t see any chance for us to communicate with each other, that is why I’ve decided to resort to someone else’s help.”).

Perhaps there are too many guidelines and pieces of advice? Yet, it is worth being aware that it is not a trivial issue and getting rid of the naivety that it is a simple thing. Psychopaths are sometimes called “predators” and there is no exaggeration in it. It is vital to notice some problems earlier, before they take over our lives. Describing psychopaths with his great expertise, Robert D. Hare called them none other than “predators”. He writes as follows, “Psychopaths are social predators, who charm, manipulate and ruthlessly make their way through life, leaving broken hearts, shattered hopes and empty wallets behind. Completely devoid of conscience and sensitivity to others’ needs, they egoistically get what they want and act as they want, violating social norms without a shadow of regret or guilt” (Hare, 2008, p. 9).

However, let us not be calm and sure that the subject matter of antisocial personality does not concern the very teaching profession. Some authors even postulate being a psychopath because it ensures achieving success in life (Dutton, McNab, 20017). It is a diabolical suggestion that I leave without any comment. Nevertheless, not only students and their parents manifest traits characteristic for psychopathic adaptation, but they also occur among teachers. Let us quote only two accounts from the previously mentioned adult research. A forty-year-old woman stated, “(...) In secondary school, I had a teacher, a typical psychopath who in each first grade picked a victim and tormented them for the next four years. I was probably a good candidate for a victim. She was unfair towards me. She lowered my marks, constantly oppressed me. I cried many times because of her. I got stomach neurosis. Nowadays, more than one kid would probably do something to themselves because of someone like that, but back then nobody used the word mobbing (...)” (Szyszka, 2020). A Biology student described her experience with a Maths teacher in the following way, “Such typical teacher behavior during lessons included ridicule for a simple mistake in the classroom, reading out loud surnames of those students who’d received bad marks, or mocking those who could not understand a given issue. Due to constant humiliation and recalling past failures, my self-esteem which was already low, got even worse (...)” (Szyszka, 2020). Let us hope that such situations do not happen very often.

In the context of existing interpersonal relations, it is probably the most important thing that must be mentioned. In case of psychopathic adaptation there is no reciprocity in mutual interactions. Reciprocity means that “I gain meaning

in the other person, and they gain meaning in me” (Simon, Stierlin, 1998, p. 14). In diplomacy, we sometimes talk about the rule *do ut des*, which means, “I give something in order to get something in this way.” Such a process of mutual exchange does not take place when we meet an antisocial person. So often they follow a completely different rule, “I take unscrupulously and I don’t quibble.” We gain meaning in a psychopath’s eyes only when we turn out to be useful and gullible. The result is what J. Lacan called in his lectures a confusion of desire and demand. Practically we can then either comply or withdraw from this kind of difficult relationship. That is why contact with psychopaths happens to be so destructive and mentally burdensome. However, similar things happen with regard to the next personality adaptation that shall be described at the beginning of the next article from that series.

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Uczniowskie adaptacje osobowości, cz. II

Streszczenie

W trzech kolejnych artykułach ukazano przykłady uczniowskich adaptacji osobowości. Odwołując się do koncepcji analizy transakcyjnej oraz wiedzy z zakresu zaburzeń osobowości, przedstawiono szereg typowych cech i zachowań, dominujących potrzeb oraz wybranych parametrów AT, a także podano praktyczne wskazówki mogące pomóc nauczycielom i wychowawcom w rozumieniu swoich relacji z uczniami sprawiającymi kłopoty wynikające z problemów charakterologicznych. Wskazano też sposoby działań kompensacyjnych oraz interwencji w postaci afirmacji służących zapobieganiu ujawniających się przejawów dysfunkcyjnego rozwoju osobowości.

Słowa kluczowe: uczeń, adaptacje osobowości, symbiotyczność, lęklivość, masochizm, bierna-agresywność, narcyzm, psychopatia.



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Integrative Approach in Transactional Analysis as a Theory and Working Tool in Psychotherapy

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the integrative approach in transactional analysis (TA) as both a theory and method in psychotherapy. The contemporary integrative approach in TA expands traditional theoretical frameworks by incorporating elements from other schools of psychotherapy. This article discusses the core concepts of transactional analysis such as Ego states and life scripts within the integrative perspective, while also presenting specific to this approach concepts and methods in therapeutic practice. Particular attention is given to the dimensions of contact and relational dynamics within therapy.

Keywords: transactional analysis, integrative approach, psychotherapy, interpersonal relationships, relational needs.

Introduction

Developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, transactional analysis has gradually changed over time. Social transformations in the 1970s and 1980s (civil rights movements, the gradual normalization of conversations about mental health or the growing interest in mental health) as well as the development of psychoanalytic theories and new psychotherapeutic currents also contributed to the evolu-

tion of transactional analysis (Gregoire, 2007). This is because the original assumptions of transactional analysis began to be seen as too rigid and oversimplified, especially in the context of working with more complex mental problems.

Transactional analysts began to successfully incorporate elements of other modalities into their work (such as the Gestalt techniques of the school of redecision (Christoph-Lemke, 1999 p. 200). Gradually, an approach in transactional analysis began to emerge, called integrative, pioneered by Richard Erskine and Rebecca Trautmann. Beginning in the mid-1970s and with the publication of the article *The ABC's of effective psychotherapy* (Erskine, 1975), attention began to be drawn to the importance of integrating in psychotherapy in transactional analysis not only theoretical elements but also different dimensions of human functioning (behavioral, affective, cognitive and physiological. (Erskine, 1980, O'Reilly-Knapp, Erskine, 2003). This found expression in subsequent works and concepts such as the script system (Erskine, Zalcman, 1979), which became a permanent part of transactional analysis psychotherapy practice and for which the authors were honored with the Berne Award (1982, <https://member-sarea.itaaworld.com/sites/default/files/itaa-pdfs/award-procedures/EBMA%20WINNERS%20AS%20OF%2010-23.pdf>).

The term "integrative" began to be interpreted in several ways. On the one hand, integrative referred to the integration of the client's personality. Taking elements of the personality that had been separated due to trauma, unresolved internal conflicts and integrating them into a fully integrated personality. The integration of the aforementioned dimensions of the client's functioning with the awareness of the social and transpersonal systems existing around the patient was emphasized (Erskine, Trautmann 1996, <https://integrativeassociation.com/what-is-integrative-psychotherapy/>, <https://www.integrativetherapy.com/en/integrative-psychotherapy.php>).

Integration also concerned the way theories were combined. Authors working in the integrative approach built on the work of Eric Berne (O'Reilly-Knapp, Erskine 2003), they critically analyzed and supplemented it. The theoretical foundations drawn from transactional analysis were supplemented by other approaches, such as "psychodynamic, client-centered, behaviorist, family therapy, Gestalt therapy, Reichian-influenced body psychotherapy, object relations theories, and psychoanalytic self psychology" (Erskine, Trautmann, 1996, p. 316). At the same time, care was taken not to fall into the trap of eclecticism that was sometimes attributed to transactional analysis (Schlegel 1995, in Christoph-Lemke, 1999 p. 210). This in turn required theoretical consistency, a logically coherent approach where every component or method would be consistent with the rest. (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999).

Relationship and values

Based, among other things, on research conducted by the APA on factors influencing the effectiveness of therapy (Lambert, Barley, 2001), it was recognized that the theoretical framework that binds together elements from different approaches is the relationship and the need to be in relationship inherent in every human being (Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004). As a result, "the therapy that emerges uses the therapeutic relationship as the primary vehicle for change and growth" (Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004, p. 11). The importance of the relationship between client and therapist is also made apparent in the following philosophical principles, which form the basis of therapeutic interventions in this approach (Erskine, 2013):

- All people are equally valuable
- All human experience is organized physiologically, affectively and/or cognitively
- All human behavior has meaning in some context
- Internal and external contact is essential for human functioning
- All people are relationship-seeking and interdependent throughout life
- Humans have an innate thrust to grow
- Humans suffer from relational disruptions
- The intersubjective process of psychotherapy is more important than the content of the psychotherapy

The above-mentioned values of the integrative approach clearly indicate that they are rooted in humanistic philosophy, particularly in the concepts of self-actualization and the innate desire of human beings for growth and development. They emphasize the equality of all people, their inherent value and the fundamental need for human relations. Every individual, regardless of his or her behavior or motivations, deserves respect. The therapist's role in this approach is to support the client in building a sense of security by understanding his or her vulnerability and defense mechanisms, and each behavior should be understood in the context of its psychological function, such as stabilization or identity building.

Integrative therapy thus avoids pathologizing behavior, focusing instead on understanding it in a relational context. Thus, it steers toward the salutogenetic model (Cierpiąłkowska, 2016, pp. 27-28). The therapeutic process in this approach thus aims to help the client achieve authenticity and function more fully in relationships, reflecting the concept of the natural pursuit of health and development.

Contact

A key concept underpinning the philosophy of work as well as the theories of personality and motivation in the integrative approach described below is the

Gestalt-derived concept of contact (Trautmann, Erskine 1999). Contact, referred to as the "touchstone of relationship" (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, p. IX), is an innate reflex and the main motivation of human behavior (see motivation theory below). It forms the basis for healthy child development. (op.cit. p. 2). Disruption of contact in the relationship, inadequate reactions of the environment prevent the healthy development of a sense of Self (Winnicott 1965 in Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, p. 3). Integrative psychotherapy distinguishes between internal and external contact. The two forms of contact are intertwined and are essential to the proper functioning of the individual. Contact involves full awareness of both internal processes (such as feelings, needs and thoughts) and external events recorded by the senses. Proper contact in a relationship allows needs to be met in a natural and healthy way. When contact is disrupted, needs cannot be met. This, in turn, triggers coping mechanisms to deal with the resulting unmet discomfort, which can result in rigid response patterns and contribute to the development of a script (Erskine, 2018/2015). Contact is also crucial in interpersonal relationships, providing the foundation for relationship building and authentic encounters with others. Established patterns of disruption in internal and external contact contribute to a lack of integration in the client's psyche. For this reason, the direction of therapeutic work is therefore to assist the client in the ability to maintain contact with self and others (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, p. IX) . A model to help understand where in the client's intrapsychic world and how ruptures in both internal and external contact occur is the so-called relational system (O'Reilly-Knapp, Erskine 2003). It takes into account the four dimensions of functioning (affective, cognitive, behavioral and physiological) and the interpersonal space in relation to others.

Theoretical framework

Theoretical models were grouped into three categories: theory of motivation, theory of personality and theory of method (O'Reilly-Knapp, Erskine 2003). The goal was to create a distinct yet coherent psychotherapeutic paradigm, providing the foundation for a distinct therapeutic modality.

Theory of Personality

The key concepts that, with regard to personality, the authors of the integrative approach dealt with were Ego states and the script (Trautmann, Erskine, 1999, p.14). The concept of Ego states was analyzed in depth by the authors (Trautmann, Erskine 1981, Erskine 1988) and modified - compared to the models of Ego states accepted in transactional analysis at the time. Based on Berne's work, the integrative approach focuses on the intrapsychic, relational and de-

velopmental aspects of the perception of Ego states (as opposed to the descriptive and behavioral understanding of these states introduced in Berne's later work). (Erskine, 1991). Thus, the concept of Ego states in the integrative psychotherapy defines Ego states as a triad (Erskine 1991, Erskine 1998, Erskine 2003, Gregoire 2007)

1. Archeopsyche (Child, characterized by the fixated experiences of earlier developmental stages, including needs, feelings and defenses against discomfort resulting from unmet needs).
2. Neopsyche (Adult, who integrates past experiences and the influence of important objects from the past on the current situation and, at the same time, is a force for behavior corresponding to the developmental age of the client)
3. Exteropsyche (Parent, understood to be the introjected images, attitudes, behaviors, feelings of real-life significant persons as perceived by the child at the time of introjection (Erskine 1988).

In this view, only the Neopsyche Ego state is in contact with the here-and-now, and comes into contact via non-transference transactions. This approach, however, has met with criticism from other transactional analysis authors alleging the limitations of such a way of thinking, i.e. ruling out the possibility of being in contact with the here-and-now in the Child or Parent state (Joines 1991).

Script

The integrative approach originally defined scripting as “a life plan based on decisions made at any developmental stage which inhibit spontaneity and limit flexibility in problem solving and in relating to people” (Erskine, 1980, p. 102). The definition was developed to include a relational element and took the form: “Life scripts are a complex set of unconscious relational patterns based on physiological survival reactions, implicit experiential conclusions, explicit decisions, and/or self-stabilizing introjections made under stress, at any developmental age, that inhibit spontaneity and limit flexibility in problem solving, health maintenance, and relationships with people” (Erskine ed. 2018/2010, p.1). The importance of cumulative negative relational experiences (Erskine, 2009), understood as repeated ruptures in relationships with significant others, was emphasized. The theory of script was also developed by emphasizing its multidimensionality, including linking the concept to attachment theory (Erskine 2009) and other aspects of individual functioning (Erskine ed. 2010). The new conceptualization of the script earned R. Erskine another Eric Berne Award for a series of articles (2018, <https://membersarea.itaaworld.com/sites/default/files/itaa-pdfs/award-procedures/EBMA%20WINNERS%20AS%20OF%2010-23.pdf>).

A model for understanding the course and dynamics of how people implement unconscious and archaic decisions made in childhood on a daily basis is the aforementioned script system (Erskine, Zalcman 1979). This model, understood as the unconscious organization of experience (Erskine 2018/2015, pp. 112–116) takes into account 4 basic areas: 1. primary archaic intrapsychic process of repressed needs and feelings 2. primary beliefs about self, world and others and resulting script decisions, 3. script manifestations (behavioral manifestations of the script: observable repetitive behaviors and physiological reactions, fantasies), and 4. script reinforcing events (present or past as well as the results of fantasies that help consolidate the original beliefs within a closed loop.

Theory of Motivation

Noting that classical transactional analysis does not offer a comprehensive theory of the motivation of an individual's actions, the authors developed Berne's (1961) original concept of hungers. Combining the hungers with one of the basic assumptions in the integrative approach, i.e. the assumption that the need to be in a relationship is one of the main motivators of human functioning (O'Reilly-Knapp, Erskine 2003, p. 172), the authors created the concept of relational needs. These needs arise and are/can only be satisfied in a relationship with another person. (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, p. 122, Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004 p.46). They are related only to interpersonal contact (Erskine 1998). Hargaden and Sills (2002) in their work compare the concept of relational needs to Self-Object needs and locate them in their model of personality at the C_0 level, or primary, "bodily-affected states" (Hargaden & Sills, 2002, p. 18). Relational needs, however, do not pertain to the earliest developmental phases, but are present throughout life and are the driving force for interacting with the Other within a relationship. When unmet, they contribute to the reinforcement of script beliefs, which constitute an unconscious "cognitive defense against the against full awareness of the pain of needs not met" (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, p.122.) The authors identified 8 relational needs, stipulating, however, that this is not a limited number given the intersubjective uniqueness of each therapeutic relationship (Erskine, 2018/2015).

Relational Needs (Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004):

- Security: the need to feel safe in a relationship with another, which allows one to expose oneself fully, a "visceral experience of having our vulnerabilities respected" (p. 47)
- Valuing: the need to be validated, to feel important in the relationship
- Acceptance: the need to be respected and accepted by a "reliable, stable and protective person" (p. 47)
- Mutuality: the need to be understood, to have one's experience validated by someone who has experienced the same thing or is able to imagine what it means

- Self-definition: the need to express one's separateness and to be recognized and accepted in that separateness
- Making an impact: the need to be able to influence the other e.g. change in thinking or behavior, create an emotional relationship that will show our importance in the relationship
- Having the other initiate: the need for the other to initiate contact, to reach out first, to show that he or she is involved in the relationship
- Express love: the need for a safe opportunity to express your feelings, admiration, appreciation for the other

Theory of Methods

Psychotherapy in the integrative approach focuses on resolving intrapsychic conflict through deconfusion of the archeopsyché and elimination of introjects from the exteroopsyché. The goal of this process is to integrate the entire experience into a neopsyché state (Erskine, 1991, Erskine 2008). This process is accomplished by integrating the dissociated elements of personality and experience in the various levels of functioning (affective, cognitive, physiological and behavioral), which occurs in a respectful and contactful therapeutic relationship.

The methods, or rather multidimensional categories, each of which is a set of methods (Erskine, Trautmann 1996, O'Reilly-Knapp M. 2001) facilitating and supporting the process of integration of the client's personality described above are inquiry, attunement and involvement. These methods are defined as a continuum of therapeutic activities, from the most tangible, teachable, related to skill and techniques (inquiry), through attunement to the most intangible, acquirable related to emotion, attitude, art, (involvement) (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, p. 84). The harmonious and balanced use of all is intended to support the client in integrating the dissociated pieces of inner experience.

Inquiry

Inquiry is a process of empathetic and respectful discovery of the client's subjective phenomenological experience, without imposing ready-made interpretations or judgments. It "involves the therapist being open to discovering the client's perspective while the client simultaneously discovers his or her sense of self." (Erskine, Trautmann 1996, p.318). It is important to create an atmosphere of safety, which makes it possible to enter into contact both on the therapist-client level and in the area of the client's inner contact. This in turn is to support the client in gradually uncovering unmet relational needs, archaic defense mechanisms, fantasies and script beliefs so that they can be integrated.

Attunement

Attunement means the ability to adjust and be sensitive to the client's experience and experiences - both physically and intrapsychically. It is a kind of "synchronizing of therapist and client process" (Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004, p. 104), on the conscious and unconscious levels. It goes beyond empathy and Kohut's "vicarius introspection" invoked by the authors (Kohut 1977, in Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004, p.104) while giving the client a sense of security in the relationship. It is described as a two-part process: involving awareness of what is going on in the client and communicating that awareness coupled with an appropriately attuned response (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999). At the same time, attunement requires the therapist to be constantly aware of the boundaries between his own and the client's experience. Communicated both verbally and nonverbally, it is directed at acting reparatively to the client's previous relational experiences. (Erskine, Trautmann, 1996)

Attunement takes place on several levels (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999, Gregoire 2007, Erskine 2018/2015)

- cognitive - going beyond simply understanding what the client is thinking, rather understanding the process of the client's internal logic
- affective: an authentic response from the therapist, taking into account the type and intensity of the client's affect, expressed in an adequately reciprocated affection (where the client's individual emotions are accompanied by an adequate response: sadness - compassion, anger – seriousness, joy – vitality, sharing joy, fear – creating a sense of security and protection)
- developmental: recognizing and taking into account from which developmental age the client's regressive response originates (in archeopsyche) and responding appropriately attuned to the developmental needs of the child at that age
- rhythmic: adapting the pace of intervention and the degree of involvement of the therapist to the pace of the client, taking into account the dimension in which the client operates (affective, cognitive and so forth) as well as attention to defensive manifestations (client's false vitality or rhythm)
- to relational needs: identifying a need emerging from the background at a given point in the process and responding accordingly

Involvement

Involvement is a way to build a therapeutic relationship that is safe for the client. It is defined as "the process by which the therapist conveys his or her desire and ability to be in full contact with a client" (Salinger 1996, p. 295). Its components, acknowledgment, validation, normalization, and presence, are de-

signed to increase the sense of security in the relationship and thereby reduce the client's defenses against entering into contact and relationship.

Acknowledgment is a type of therapist activity for which the need emerges very early in the process (Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004). It begins in the therapist's attunement to the client on both emotional and behavioral levels, in order to communicate the validity of the phenomenological experience. It is a kind of "I hear you and I see you, and what you say matters to me" communication. Thus, it allows the client to make a connection between experiences and emotions. Consequently, it is supposed to lead the client to a greater understanding of him/herself and his/her reactions, not only in the phenomenological dimension but also in the relational one. This, in turn, gives access to repressed relational experiences in which communicating needs and emotions was impossible. (Erskine, Moursund, Trautmann, 1999)

Validation is the process of affirming a client's emotions, behaviors, and physical sensations, linking them to significant personal experiences. It helps the client understand the cause-effect relationship in their responses, enhancing the client's acceptance of his / her phenomenological experience.

Normalization involves helping clients reframe their internal experiences or coping behaviors, not as pathological, but as understandable. They are seen as natural defensive reactions to difficult or abnormal situations, adequate to the developmental stage when they appeared. Normalization involves interventions such as e.g. "anyone would cry in such a situation" which is supposed to act as a countermeasure to the potential introjected critical message of the client (e.g. "don't be such a crybaby"). The goal is to reduce self-criticism and promote self-compassion (Erskine, Trautmann, 1996).

The therapist's presence requires him/her to be in contact on both the internal and external levels. This means being both aware of what is going on in the therapist's intrapsychic world, but at the same time, along with this awareness, maintaining focus and willingness to participate in and focus on the client's process. Presence is communicated by maintaining stable, attuned responses to the client's behavior. It "includes the therapist's receptivity to clients' affect-to be impacted by their emotions, to be moved and yet to stay responsive to the impact of their emotions" (Erskine, Trautmann, 1996, p. 325)

Juxtaposition reaction

Therapeutic work based on involvement and attunement also requires the therapist to be attentive to the so-called juxtaposition reaction. This term describes the dichotomy between the client's experience of the past (e.g., lack of attention) and the therapist's response of sensitivity and attentiveness to the client. The contrast between the abundance of the therapeutic relationship in

the here-and-now and the frustration of the past relationship can sometimes be unbearable for the client. The difficulty in integrating what is present with the vivid experience of lack from the past can affect the weakening of commitment to therapy and is a signal to the therapist that the relational work is moving too fast, inadequate to the client's capacity. (Erskine, Moursund 2022/2004)

Summary

Integrative psychotherapy is a profoundly humanistic approach whose foundation in both philosophical and practical terms is relationship. Intersubjectivity plays a key role in the therapeutic process (Stark 1999). Here the process is co-created by the client and the therapist, making each session unique and individual. The quality of the relationship and the involvement of the therapist are crucial to the success of therapy, often outweighing the importance of the theories or methods used.

This approach offers a flexible and multifaceted framework to psychotherapy. By combining various techniques and theories, the therapist can tailor his or her work to the individual needs of the client, allowing for a holistic approach to the therapeutic process. By taking into account cognitive, behavioral, emotional and physiological aspects, the integrative approach supports deep work on understanding internal conflicts and strengthening healthy adaptive mechanisms. With the increasing complexity of psychological problems and the diversity of clients, integrative transactional analysis has become a valuable tool that can support effective and personalized therapeutic intervention.

The development of the integrative approach has played a significant role in the evolution of transactional analysis's view of psychotherapy. It met with criticism from some transactional analysts (Cornell, Bonds-White, 2001), who perceived relational approaches, including the integrative, as relying too much on empathy. This attitude, according to the authors, was a departure from the original assumptions of Berne (who considered the pre-imposition of feelings over thinking to be a psychological game of Greenhouse (Berne 1964)). They also pointed out the risk that too strong a focus on relationship and empathy could lead to "romanticizing and idealizing its curative power." (Cornell, Bonds-White, 2001, p.82). Similarly, an emphasis on intersubjectivity (i.e., the two-person therapy model) could be limiting.

Erskine and Trautmann's work was recognized and honored in 1998 with the Eric Berne Memorial Award, which was given for a series of articles in the category "Comparison and integration of transactional analysis with other theories and approaches" (Leigh, 1999). Over time, the integrative approach has taken its place in transactional analysis. It is now recognized as one of the mainstreams

(along with psychoanalytic, relational or co-creative, among others) (Gregoire 2007), although the popularity that developed in the 1990s and early 2000s has now waned. This may be due to the fact that the integrative psychotherapy approach developed by R. Erskine has moved beyond transactional analysis. A separate association for certification and teaching was established (1991, <https://integrativeassociation.com/>), along with a separate peer-review journal (International Journal of Integrative Psychotherapy (<https://doaj.org/toc/2156-9703>)). Still, the integrative approach can be the axis of effective therapeutic work.

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Podejście integracyjne w analizie transakcyjnej jako teoria i narzędzie pracy w psychoterapii

Streszczenie

Celem tego artykułu jest analiza integracyjnego podejścia w analizie transakcyjnej (AT) zarówno jako teorii, jak i metody w psychoterapii. Współczesne podejście integracyjne w AT rozszerza tradycyjne ramy teoretyczne, włączając elementy z innych szkół psychoterapii. W artykule omówiono kluczowe pojęcia analizy transakcyjnej, takie jak stany Ja oraz scenariusze życiowe, w ujęciu integracyjnym, a także przedstawiono specyficzne dla tego podejścia koncepcje i metody stosowane w praktyce terapeutycznej. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono wymiarom kontaktu oraz dynamice relacyjnej w terapii.

Słowa kluczowe: analiza transakcyjna, podejście integracyjne, psychoterapia, relacje interpersonalne, głądy relacyjne.



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Types of Digital Presence Among Seniors

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Abstract

The article is a review and summarizes the knowledge in the presented research area; it also integrates and interprets the results of scientific research to date. It aims to diagnose the scope of seniors' participation in digital media. The presented narrative is an extension of the thesis that activity in digital media (especially in social media) is still perceived as reserved for the younger generation. The text also refers to Berne's transactional analysis, assuming that seniors treat digital media functionally and relationally as companions in everyday life. The research method used in the study was the analysis of the literature on the subject and analyzing statistical data regarding the discussed issue. The analysis showed three main problems that prevent seniors from using digital media on a broader scale. Firstly, there is a limited scope of digital media use by seniors in general; second, there is reduced activity related to age and well-being; and third, there needs to be standard system solutions that increase the digital competencies of seniors. The value of the study lies in identifying the main factors enabling seniors to use digital media actively.

Keywords: seniors, new technologies, digital media, social media, active senior.

Introduction

The problem of aging societies, which is receiving more and more attention, poses new challenges to the Polish state's health, social, and educational policies. The growing percentage of people over 65, combined with the dynamic

development of new technologies, should prompt us to look at how seniors cope with transferring many forms of social life to the digital space. As the statistical data show, despite the constantly growing group of seniors using digital media, their use by this group is still limited [Use of technology..., 2021; Digital exclusion... 2021]. Making full use of the opportunities offered by the Internet is undoubtedly connected, on the one hand, with the lack of access to the network or digital tools, and on the other hand, with the lack of digital competencies, leading to digital exclusion, understood as exclusion from functioning in the information society (Jedlińska, 2018, p.226) and social and civic life (Czerski, 2020, p.16). Digital exclusion also significantly reduces social well-being (Jedlińska, 2018, p.226) and is an element of a broader phenomenon called digital inequality. This phenomenon is nothing more than the social exclusion of people who do not use digital media, forcing them to passively participate in the life of a new digital society. However, another problem in the use of new technologies by older people is, on the one hand, health problems, and the other - fear of using technologies that older people associate with those available only to young people (Wyszkowska et al., 2018, p.145).

According to the Central Statistical Office, among people aged 60 to 74, 61.1% of respondents used the Internet in 2022 (GUS, 2023a). This means a successive increase in new network users each year (compared to 2020, this is an increase of 10 percentage points). This group regularly uses the Internet, in which the frequency of use is correlated with age (among people with primary education, 26%; users with secondary education – 55.8%; higher education – 90.6%) (GUS, 2023a). Older people most often used the Internet to look for information about goods and services (46.7%), read the news (44.8%), look for health information (37.7%), and send and receive an e-mail (34.3%), and use instant messaging – 31.9% (GUS, 2023a). 24.6% of surveyed seniors use social networking sites. At the same time, the percentage of people who have never used the Internet is systematically decreasing (from 34.5% in 2021 to 29.9% in 2022) (GUS, 2023b).

Broadly understood communication via the Internet, especially social networks, plays an increasingly important role in establishing and maintaining interpersonal contacts and mental well-being. Reeves and Nass already in 2000 showed that people tend to treat digital devices relationally, assigning their personality the ability to influence our emotions and participate in our lives (Reeves, Nass, 2000, p. 194, after Łęski, 2017, p.122). We often hear seniors talk on their smartphones, for example, thanking them for connecting with their family, completing a task, showing a movie, or vice versa: they get angry with them, irritating them. Research conducted by Łęski shows that we attribute a structure to digital tools.

1. Seniors as users of digital media

Seniors are an increasingly numerous social group - the aging of Polish society is a fact today. At the same time, the technological development of societies results in the need to include seniors in the digital world and "manage" their presence there, especially since the process of entering the "digital market" of a group of older people with already developed digital competencies has begun.

The use of new technologies allows seniors to feel empowered in their own social, economic, and cultural life; independent in the provision of goods and various goods; gives quick access to information from the country and the world; eliminates the information gap; increases the sense of quality of life (Kowalik, 2000, p.74). It is also a new form of civic and public dialogue (Popielec, 2014, p.97); it allows for self-education and competence development and reduces the problem of loneliness and alienation (Gryczka, 2012, p.108).

Digital skills are slowly no longer an attribute of only the young generation - seniors are quickly catching up in this area, developing their digital competencies, and increasingly using digital media. One of the reasons is that each year, the group of seniors is joined by more and more digitally experienced people, and the youngest seniors quickly learn technological innovations from the younger generation, encouraging them to use digital tools. However, the oldest group of seniors still needs strong support in using digital media. Research by the *National Media Institute* from 2021 shows that seniors in Poland use information and communication technologies to a small extent. The most popular medium in the 65+ group is still TV (92.3%); only 13.8% use a laptop with Internet access.

Meanwhile, as some researchers show, changing media habits (e.g., fewer hours spent in front of the TV in favor of more frequent use of digital media) may benefit seniors. According to Fancourt and Steptoe (2019, p.35), longer viewing of television (over 3.5 hours a day) leads to weakening some cognitive functions. Due to the lack of stimulation and passive reception, long-term television viewing may impair developmentally beneficial activities, impair memory, and reduce the volume of gray matter in the brain and, as a result, even accelerate dementia (Rettner, 2021, p. 120). It is also worth noting that the Internet (in the 55-74 age group) is more willingly used by people who do not have significant health problems that make it challenging to use it (e.g., vision problems) – this is a group of as many as 61.6% (GUS, 2021).

In turn, the "Mature Consumers in Poland" report by the "ARC Rynek i Opinia" research institute shows that 71% of people over 60 already use the Internet. The most popular social media and messengers in this group are Facebook (35%), WhatsApp (33%), Messenger (32%) and YouTube (24%) (Tkaczyk, 2023, p.31). A social media market study conducted by *Gemius* shows that peo-

ple 55+ spend a relatively long time on TikTok - on average 55 minutes a day (Gemius, 2023), while slightly younger users from the 35-44 age group spent 1 hour 22 minutes a day there. One of the biggest surprises of this report is the analysis of social media users (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube) divided into age groups. In 2022, the largest group of recipients were people aged 55-75. In second place were users aged 35-44 and in last place - the youngest, under 14. This research shows that social media is no longer just a place for teenagers and young adults. Social media, especially during the pandemic, have become more popular among seniors as a contact tool. Previous research has already shown (Erickson, 2013, p.243) that the well-being of older people most often depends on the relationships they maintain with their loved ones and other members of society. Digital media can play an essential role in helping older people maintain these relationships. Reduce their sense of isolation while increasing their sense of empowerment. They are essential for people whose families are geographically distant, allowing them to maintain family ties regardless of the place and time in which family members are located.

It is worth emphasizing here that initiatives supporting seniors' use of new technologies are becoming increasingly common in Poland. Such activities aimed at counteracting digital exclusion and improving digital competencies are carried out by commercial, educational, non-governmental, social (e.g., senior clubs), and cultural institutions (Tomczyk, 2010). These valuable initiatives should be one of the priorities of governmental and non-governmental institutions.

2. Digital media and the sense of meaning in seniors' lives

The meaning of life is often understood as a driving force for action, the goal of which is to continue one's existence satisfactorily and complete it as best as possible. The meaning of life underlies subsequent actions and decisions, inspires us to be active, and makes us strive for self-fulfillment, regardless of age (Zajac, 2002, p.54). Paying attention to the sense of meaning in life in older people seems particularly important. Many factors determine the meaning of life. These include social change, quality of life, everyday needs, and loneliness (Pikuła, 2016, p.9). Education of older people should be mentioned as necessary in the context of the meaning of life because it is science that enables them to search for it. Learning is a basic positive aging strategy that leads to positive thinking about changing age (Hill, 2008, p.75). Research shows that higher-educated people have a greater sense of meaning in life (Zajac, 2002, p.53).

The life of seniors is associated with new challenges and difficulties. These are undoubtedly unmet needs, which Tibbitts includes: playing social roles (especially those lost with age), maintaining social contacts (including with peers),

self-expression and sense of achievement, mental stimulation, relationships with family, and spiritual satisfaction (Tibbitts, 1960). Such needs can be met, at least in part, by participation in the digital world. The area related to maintaining social relationships and self-expression can especially be well developed through social media. The education accompanying the use of new technologies (both institutional and - more often - non-institutional) will significantly increase the sense of quality of life and delay the process of biopsychological aging. When they retire, seniors must redefine themselves, their social roles, and activities – there is even a need to redefine the value of life.

A growing problem in this period of life is social isolation, a sense of loneliness, and a lack of meaning in life. In some cases, such meaning in life may be provided by activity on social media, which seniors are increasingly willing to use. Research conducted by Lenhart and Duggan (2013) on a sample of 2,252 people showed a rapid increase in people over 50 years of age as users of social networking sites (an increase from 22% of social media users to 42%). In social media, the surveyed seniors valued the ability to contact family, friends, and acquaintances, help manage daily communication, and share information about themselves with others: photos, videos, messages, and status updates. 47% of social media users were aged 50-64, and 26% were over 65. The respondents most often used Facebook (52%), and 11% used Twitter (currently: X). These studies also showed that one of the reasons why seniors still need to use social media more is problems with high-speed Internet and health (Lenhart, Duggan, 2013).

Older people who use social media declare that they enjoy better well-being and health than those who do not use digital media. Paradoxically, this is the only social group whose use of social media increases their mental well-being (unlike, for example, children and adolescents). Research by Chopik (2016) shows that the use of social media by seniors aged 65+ is prevalent (N=591). Seniors declared a positive attitude towards new technologies. The vast majority responded that they were "delighted with the ability to use technology (95% of respondents). 30% said that new technologies are too complicated, so they do not use them. More frequent use of new technologies (including social media) was associated with better self-assessment of health, fewer chronic diseases (such as hypertension and diabetes), higher (subjective) well-being, and fewer depressive symptoms.

Moreover, the researcher observed that the use of social media was accompanied by a lower sense of loneliness and a sense of successful interpersonal relationships (Chopik, 2016). Moreover, loneliness is strongly associated with harmful health habits, such as overeating, lack of exercise, and avoiding people (Chopik, 2016). However, the researcher emphasizes that it is impossible to answer whether the surveyed seniors are healthier because they use social media or whether their willingness to use social media is simply because they are as-

sumed to be healthier and happier. However, there is a potential link between loneliness and Internet use, and Internet use and better mental health (e.g., no depression).

3. Self-creation of seniors in the digital space – senior as a teacher

Older people see the media as an opportunity to develop their interests and passions (Szmigielska et al., 2012, p.146), educate themselves (Maczuga, 2018, p.38), and share knowledge, experience, and interests. This requires an entirely different type of participation in the digital world: being active, interacting, creating content, and having digital competencies. Following the European Commission, I assume that: "Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competencies related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem-solving, and critical thinking" (Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, 22 May 2018, ST 9009 2018 INIT).

Adults often have excellent development potential, which they should activate and nurture (Pietrasiniński, 1996, p. 12). The ability to use these potential opportunities is called self-creation. This concept includes intentional and unconscious activities for developing oneself, working on oneself, self-education, and self-education (Błaszczak, 2014, p. 97). It happens that such potential can only be realized in old age. Seniors have time to fulfill old, unfulfilled desires; they can follow their dreams and aspirations. It can be said that such a zone of self-creation will be the transition from one "I" - focused on meeting the expectations of others, to a new "I," in which there is finally room for self-realization. Indeed, such a pattern can be found by listening to the statements of seniors who create on social media. "Silver influencers" and "Granfluencers" – are increasingly common terms for people over 60 who create on social media.

According to Margaret Mead's concept of four cultural systems, the digital world (and the use of new technologies) is the domain of figurative culture, in which younger and older people are equal partners, drawing from each other (Mead, 2000). The young generation most often teaches the older generation how to use new technologies and shows how social media works and how to be active there. Young people are a source of knowledge in this area for seniors; they are a source of advice and support and take preventive actions against digital exclusion. Therefore, generations can learn from each other and stimulate

and motivate each other to act. As Jedlińska (2013) showed, people who have finished their professional careers are ready to share their knowledge and experience with other members of society, and - if their health allows and they have the opportunity - they do it willingly to the benefit of their well-being (Jedlińska, 2013, pp.134-135). People active in social media, such as the creators of: "Życie zaczyna się po 90" ("*Life Begins after 90*"), "Clever Grandma" ("*Mądra Babcia*") or Jan Adamski, and foreign ones: "The Spanish King," gather several dozen thousand followers of various ages and successfully run profiles on Instagram or TikTok. Often, their grandchildren start running the account on their behalf, and over time, when the seniors feel more confident, they run it themselves, introducing their content. "The Spanish King" runs his account with his granddaughter, where he shows how to enjoy life and what the body of a person over 60 looks like. Beata Borucka ("*Wise Grandma - Talks from the Cottage*" – "*Mądra Babcia – Gadki z Chatki*") talks about what it is like to be a grandmother, an older person who has already lived most of her life and who can share her experience. Instagram accounts of fashion seniors are also popular. Jan Adamski is an influencer who discusses style, class, elegance, and chic. He advises choosing *accessories for a given occasion or tying a tie*. In turn, "Szafiarka Dorka" ("*Wardrobe Woman Dorka*"), i.e., Dorota Świętoniowska, shows that even after sixty, you can dress in youth stores, that fashion has no specifics and is for everyone. There are also accounts of senior DJs - one of the first Polish seniors creating online was "DJ-Wika," Wirginia Szmyt, who not only shared her passion for music on social media (the oldest DJ not only in Poland but also in the world), but she is also a social activist involved in senior issues. Virginia breaks stereotypes regarding the image of Polish seniors and shows that at any age, there is time to pursue your passions. Moreover, virtual social spaces connect their users, and the paths of teenagers and seniors often "cross" in the form of comments, providing valuable exchanges.

4. Senior as a student

One of the spaces for self-realization in retirement is the space of intergenerational relationships. The benefits of remaining in good relationships can be noted at the gerontological level (for the senior) and the general social level (for the community). Such intergenerational maintenance of exemplary personal, social, and existential relationships is conducive to finding the meaning of life, defining oneself, and developing (Dubas, 2016, p.302). Only education towards, in, through, and for old age guarantees a satisfactory passage of the aging process (Szarota, 2014, p.14). Szarota understands it as preparation for the last stage of life, shaping certain attitudes and developing appropriate personality

traits. He also notes that our intense times require us to turn to past experiences and draw on older generations' wisdom (Szarota, 2014, p.14). For this to happen, a senior must have the right attitude towards old age and the passing of life. Only people with a positive attitude towards old age can "infect others with life." The problem that stands in the way of digital media activity is often health and physical limitations resulting from age. Visual perception and motor skills (e.g., hand tremors, rheumatism, farsightedness, cataracts, glaucoma) can significantly limit the pleasure of using digital devices. Adjusting digital devices to a person's physical capabilities helps reduce these inconveniences. However, while on a desktop computer, we can use a special keyboard and mouse to increase the font size and image brightness, the smartphone market firmly excludes older people in this respect. Only a few devices available on the market with full digital functionality take age-related dysfunctions into account.

Undoubtedly, one area of implementing the excellent aging model is education, in the context of seniors, which is understood as later life learning - learning at later stages of life, which provides for continuous improvement of competencies throughout an individual's life. Seniors who overcame their fears and entered the online world eagerly take advantage of the opportunity to further their education, improve their competencies, and develop their interests by participating in courses, webinars, and training.

Universities of the Third Age (UTA) play an important role here; they aim to activate seniors in the social, physical, and intellectual spheres and counteract old age's growing stigmatization (Jakubaszek, 2014, p. 88). Unfortunately, only a tiny percentage of seniors still use their offer - according to research, only 1% of all people over 65 (Pikuła, 2020, p. 184).

UTA introduced media-related content into their programs to adapt to the rapidly changing reality and used new technologies as teaching resources (Wróblewska, 2007, p. 82). Using online resources, social networking sites, e-learning courses, and webinars has become an everyday part of UTA functioning. The forms of work with seniors have also partially changed: distance education is now a large part of the UTA offer, requiring seniors to improve their digital competencies but also allowing them to tailor education to their own needs (Błaszczak, 2014, p. 100). Research conducted by Grogor and Kaczorowska-Spychalska (2015) among UTA students showed that as many as 71% of respondents used social media. However, such a high percentage may be related to the specificity of the research sample selection: UTA students are usually enrolled by active people with better health and well-being and more education than the average population. These people spent about an hour on social media (46.6%), and 38.6% even up to three hours daily (Gregor & Kaczorowska-Spychalska, 2015, p. 12).

Senior Clubs (most often run by communes, parishes, foundations, and associations) are also popular among seniors, and they perform the same function as UTA: they activate seniors in many fields. It is worth mentioning their modern alternative: digital e-senior clubs, i.e., virtual spaces intended for older people, presenting them with a wide range of forms of activity, helping them solve everyday problems related to health, public life, etc. These places are entirely interactive. They offer users webinars and videos but also perform a social function: they enable participation in closed groups or discussion forums where seniors make new friends, discuss, and exchange views. Senior clubs also meet information and educational needs - they use new technologies that seniors are increasingly willing to learn.

Summary

Modern seniors are increasingly curious about the digital world, braver and more aware. Although sometimes lost, they are eager to learn and become more and more digitally competent. They are also more likely to break the habits of learned helplessness or beliefs about the inappropriateness of behavior at a certain age in favor of actively influencing their future. Skibińska encourages seniors to consciously make critical decisions regarding the present and the future (Skibińska, 2007, p. 61).

During the pandemic, seniors noticed that there is also a place for them on the Internet and a chance for offline activities that they cannot always participate in. Locked at home, they were motivated - most often by family members - to enter the digital world. They overcame their fear and started digital education because, fearing social exclusion, they wanted to learn something new. They noticed that thanks to such education, they could be more self-reliant, independent, and active. They also broke certain generational stereotypes: They showed that joy, activity, and vitality are not reserved only for young people but can be shared by every generation, including seniors. Seniors' involvement in the use of digital media can be treated as an example of taking on new roles and fitting into the active aging paradigm. The Active Aging Index (AAI) promoted by the European Union has been one of the tools since 2012 that allows countries to develop senior policies and estimate the potential of this age group that can be used. In the Active Aging Index rankings, Poland could fare better. In the categories of employment, social activity and participation, independence, and health and safety, we were placed in one of the last positions (33 out of 100 possible points). These data clearly show that Poland still has a lot to do in terms of systemic solutions and activities aimed at activating seniors. One such activity may be the development of seniors' digital competencies, with the participation

of relatives or appropriate institutions. If taken appropriately, such actions will positively impact the broadly understood well-being and activity of seniors.

Much research still focuses on the reasons why seniors do not use technology (Cotten et al., 2014), showing the digital divide between generations (Carcvalho et al., 2014; Hills et al., 2012; Norris, 2010). They show a decidedly depressing image of seniors who lack the will and motivation to adapt to the changing world and have a negative approach to new technologies. Although there are undoubtedly individual differences in seniors' approach to new technologies, the picture of seniors using digital media may be less gloomy than we thought until recently. A large group of seniors sees the benefits of new technologies (Wagner, Hassanein, 2020), especially when it comes to maintaining relationships with loved ones (Cotten, Anderson, 2013). As long as their health and well-being allow it, they are increasingly willing to use the solutions offered by digital media, seeing them as opportunities to take full advantage of social life. Their positive attitude towards digital media can also improve their well-being – digital competencies are essential in this context. Their absence or low level may constitute a practical obstacle that digitally excludes seniors.

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Formy aktywności cyfrowej seniorów

Streszczenie

Artykuł ma charakter przeglądowy i stanowi podsumowanie wiedzy w zaprezentowanym obszarze badawczym, integruje też i interpretuje dotychczasowe wyniki badań naukowych. Jego celem jest diagnoza zakresu udziału seniorów w korzystaniu z mediów cyfrowych. Zaprezentowana narracja jest rozwinięciem tezy, że aktywność w mediach cyfrowych (zwłaszcza w mediach społecznościowych) wciąż jeszcze postrzegana jest jako ta zarezerwowana dla młodszych pokoleń. W tekście odwołano się też do analizy transakcyjnej Berne’a, przyjmując, że seniorzy traktują media cyfrowe nie tylko użytkowo, ale i relacyjnie, jako towarzysza w codziennym życiu. Metodą badawczą wykorzystaną w opracowaniu była analiza literatury przedmiotu oraz analiza danych statystycznych dotyczących poruszanego zagadnienia. Przeprowadzona analiza wykazała trzy główne problemy, które uniemożliwiają korzystanie przez seniorów z mediów cyfrowych na szerszą skalę. Po pierwsze: nikły zakres wykorzystywania mediów cyfrowych przez seniorów w ogóle; po drugie: obniżenie aktywności seniorów związanej z wiekiem i samopoczuciem; po trzecie: brak powszechnych rozwiązań systemowych, zwiększających kompetencje cyfrowe seniorów. Wartość opracowania polega na identyfikacji głównych czynników umożliwiających seniorom aktywne korzystanie z mediów cyfrowych.

Słowa kluczowe: seniorzy, nowe technologie, media cyfrowe, media społecznościowe, aktywny senior.



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The Potential of Educational Transactional Analysis for Human Rights Education

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Abstract

Human Rights Education (HRE) is a dynamic initiative fostering knowledge, values, and skills for the promotion and protection of human rights. Rooted in principles like dignity and justice, HRE empowers individuals to actively contribute to human rights advancement. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) exemplifies this commitment, engaging in initiatives to raise awareness and understanding of human rights principles. Concurrently, Educational Transactional Analysis applies TA theory to educational settings, enhancing communication and relationships. TA, with its Parent, Adult, and Child Ego States, aligns with HRE principles, promoting self-awareness and empathy. Applying TA in HRE involves recognizing emotional responses and understanding social and historical contexts. Integrating TA concepts enriches the educational experience, fostering an empathetic and communicative environment. The study applies TA concepts to real-life dialogues, exploring their applicability in HRE. Results reveal TA's potential to address workplace and educational challenges, aligning with HRE principles of open communication, conflict resolution, and rights-respecting dialogue. The intersection of TA and HRE provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing social interactions and promoting human rights principles.

Keywords: Human Rights Education; Transactional Analysis; Empowerment; Communication; Rights-Respecting; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Introduction

Human rights (HR) have been referred to within the global field of Transactional Analysis (TA) since the 1970s (Baute 1979; Klein 1980; James 1983; Whitney 1982; Rinzler 1984; Drego 2006; Campos 2010; Campos 2012; Campos 2014; Oates 2012). Human Rights Education (HRE) is a multifaceted endeavor aimed at equipping individuals with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to promote and protect human rights. Rooted in principles such as dignity, equality, and justice, this education seeks to instill a culture of respect for human rights in individuals and communities. At its core, HRE strives to empower individuals, enabling them to actively contribute to the advancement of human rights in their daily lives and within their communities. Central to Human Rights Education (HRE) is the dissemination of fundamental principles and concepts, often grounded in international instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This education emphasizes the inherent dignity and equal rights of all individuals, fostering critical thinking about human rights issues and encouraging the evaluation of policies and actions in the context of their impact on human rights. Beyond knowledge acquisition, HRE involves the development of skills for active citizenship. It seeks to equip individuals with the tools to participate in civic life, advocate for human rights, and contribute to the construction of a just and inclusive society. Tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity are promoted, while discrimination, prejudice, and injustice are rejected.

HRE can be integrated into formal education curricula, non-formal education programs, and community initiatives through various methods, including classroom instruction, workshops, awareness campaigns, and experiential learning activities. The overarching goal is to foster a more just, equitable, and human rights-respecting society. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) exemplifies the commitment to HRE, actively engaging in initiatives to increase awareness and understanding of human rights principles within the EU. This includes the development of educational materials, research on HRE practices, and providing resources for educators.

In parallel, Educational TA applies the principles of TA theory to educational settings. Originating from Eric Berne's theory, TA focuses on analyzing interpersonal communication and relationships, utilizing concepts like Ego States, Transactions, Life Positions, and Scripts. In education, TA serves as a framework to enhance communication between educators and students, address conflicts, and tailor teaching methods to students' preferred learning styles. Educational TA, when applied effectively, contributes to a supportive and productive learning environment by improving communication and relationships. It enables educators to understand communication patterns in the classroom, identify and resolve conflicts, and create an engaging learning experience. TA promotes

a rights-based approach by emphasizing clear communication, acknowledging diverse perspectives, and fostering positive relationships. TA can be introduced through the TA 101 basic course, providing participants with foundational knowledge applicable to personal development, communication, and relationships. This course serves as a stepping stone for those interested in pursuing further training or certification in TA.

The interconnection between TA and HRE becomes evident when TA concepts are applied to enhance understanding, communication, and interactions within the realm of promoting human rights principles. The structural model of TA, which includes Child, Adult, and Parent Ego States, aligns with the principles of HRE, contributing to self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication. Understanding and recognizing emotional responses in the Child Ego State parallel the importance of acknowledging individual emotions and perspectives in human rights discourse. The Adult Ego State's logical and respectful behavior resonates with fostering dialogue and critical thinking, essential elements in human rights advocacy. The Parent Ego State, with its caring and normative attributes, aligns with the nurturing aspect of HRE.

Moreover, the historical and social criteria in TA correspond to HRE's emphasis on understanding the context of human rights issues and promoting informed, contextualized approaches to education. Practical application of TA in HRE involves recognizing individuals in the Adult Ego State, fostering positive interactions, and understanding and responding to caring or normative behavior in the Parent Ego State. In summary, the application of TA concepts in HRE enriches the educational experience by creating a more empathetic, understanding, and communicative environment. By integrating TA principles, HRE endeavors to instill values and principles inherent in HRE, contributing to the development of individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also actively engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Materials and methods

Several TA concepts will be applied to real-life dialogues in order to discover their applicability to HRE. TA serves as a powerful framework for understanding and influencing social interactions, making it a valuable tool in various contexts. In organizational settings, TA principles can be applied to address workplace issues and foster effective communication. For example, a supervisor using the Normative Parent Ego State can address an employee's lateness by engaging in a dialogue that respects individual rights and encourages collaborative problem-solving. This application aligns with HRE (HRE) principles by promoting open communication and resolving conflicts in a rights-respecting manner. Educa-

tional settings also benefit from the applicability of TA, particularly in the sub-discipline of educational TA. Teachers can use TA concepts to observe and reflect on classroom dynamics, addressing behavioral challenges while respecting students' rights and perspectives. By navigating interactions with students in the Adult Ego State, setting boundaries, and inviting discussions at appropriate times, educators align with HRE principles. This approach fosters open dialogue, acknowledges individual perspectives, and promotes a respectful and inclusive educational environment.

The structural model of TA, involving the states of Self (Child, Adult, and Parent), intersects with HRE by enhancing self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication. Understanding these states contributes to the development of key elements in HRE, such as recognizing and respecting individual emotions, fostering logical and respectful behavior, and promoting caring and normativity in line with human rights principles. Analyzing different transactional dynamics within HRE, such as simple, implicit angle, and crossed transactions, provides valuable insights for educators. Simple transactions, characterized by reciprocal and respectful exchanges, align with the principles of mutual respect and constructive dialogue in HRE. Implicit angle transactions, foundational to games and manipulative practices, highlight the need for awareness to empower participants against potential manipulation. Crossed transactions, indicative of underlying tensions or power dynamics, underscore the importance of addressing conflicts to create a healthy and inclusive educational environment.

The concept of "hunger for stimulation, recognition, and structure" in TA offers considerations for fostering a conducive learning environment in HRE. Recognizing diverse needs in terms of stimulation, providing equitable recognition, and accommodating preferences for structure contribute to creating an inclusive, empowering, and respectful educational setting. The concept of a script system, metaphorically described as a "rocket system," offers insights into how ingrained beliefs and memories influence an individual's perception and behavior. In HRE, understanding and addressing these deep-seated beliefs are crucial for fostering a commitment to human rights principles. The selective nature of script reinforcement, along with the resistance to changing scripts, reflects challenges in human rights advocacy and education.

In summary, the intersection between TA and HRE provides a comprehensive framework for understanding, analyzing, and enhancing social interactions, communication, and the promotion of human rights principles in organizational and educational settings. Additionally to TA, the principle that "method is the message" emphasizes the significance of instructional methods in HRE. Choosing methods that align with human rights principles, such as participatory, inclusive, and reflective approaches, not only enhances the learning experience but also reinforces the values of human rights through the instructional process.

HRE involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, values, and skills related to human rights. Its aim is to promote awareness of human rights principles and foster a culture of respect for human dignity, equality, and justice. The ultimate goal is to empower individuals to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in their lives and communities.

Key aspects of HRE encompass educating individuals about the principles and concepts of human rights, including international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It emphasizes the inherent dignity and equal rights of all individuals, irrespective of factors like race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or social status. HRE encourages critical thinking about issues related to human rights, analyzing situations, and evaluating the impact of policies and actions on human rights. Furthermore, it involves developing skills for active citizenship, enabling individuals to participate in civic life, advocate for human rights, and contribute to building a just and inclusive society. It also fosters values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity, while rejecting discrimination, prejudice, and injustice. HRE encourages a sense of social responsibility, recognizing the interconnectedness of global issues and emphasizing the role individuals can play in addressing human rights challenges.

This education can be integrated into formal education curricula, non-formal education programs, and community initiatives through various methods, including classroom instruction, workshops, awareness campaigns, and experiential learning activities. The overarching aim is to contribute to the development of a more just, equitable, and human rights-respecting society.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is an agency of the European Union dedicated to promoting and protecting fundamental rights across the EU. The FRA has engaged in various activities related to HRE, emphasizing its importance in cultivating respect for fundamental rights and values within the European Union. Activities include increasing awareness, understanding, and respect for human rights among individuals and communities through initiatives in education, training, and awareness-raising. This encompasses the development of educational materials, research on HRE practices, and the provision of resources for educators.

Educational TA involves applying the principles of TA theory in educational settings. Developed by Eric Berne, TA focuses on analyzing interpersonal communication and relationships. In education, TA serves as a framework to understand and enhance communication between educators and students, as well as among students themselves. In TA, key concepts include Ego States, representing different patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Parent, Adult, and Child); Transactions, which occur during interpersonal interactions; Life Positions, indicating basic stances towards oneself and others; and Scripts, which are life plans shaping beliefs and behaviors. Educational TA is applied to improve

communication, relationships, and the overall learning environment. Educators use TA to understand communication patterns in the classroom, identify and address conflicts, tailor teaching methods to students' preferred learning styles, and foster positive relationships. By analyzing how individuals communicate based on ego states and transactions, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning experience. Resolving conflicts involves identifying underlying ego states and transactional patterns contributing to the conflict. Tailoring teaching methods to students' learning styles enhances the learning process, while promoting positive relationships is achieved through clear and effective communication.

Educational TA, thus, serves as a tool for educators to understand and improve the dynamics of interpersonal communication in educational settings, fostering a supportive and productive learning environment. The TA 101 basic introductory course in TA introduces participants to the foundational ideas of TA and its application in various aspects of life, including personal development, communication, and relationships. It is a learning opportunity. Participants may engage in discussions, activities, and exercises to deepen their understanding of TA. It is often the first step for individuals who are interested in pursuing further training or certification in TA. While the content of the TA 101 course is standardized to cover fundamental concepts, different trainers and training institutions may offer variations in the way the course is conducted.

The concept of TA refers to making diagnoses stating which ego states sent a transactional stimulus and which performed a transactional response, but also diagnosing which transaction among those listed was performed. It consists of three elements: a psychotherapeutic system, a theory of personality and a theory of social action. This psychotherapeutic system is based on the analysis of transactions and chains of transactions that occur during therapy sessions. Personality theory is designed to explore characteristic states of the Self, while social action theory is based on close analysis of transactions through transactional diagrams.

Results and discussion

This structured definition of TA as a theory of social action leads us to consider two illustrative examples of how AT - as a concept - can be used to bring about change in lives. AT can be used to bring about change in the lives of communities by contracting for change with different groups. I imagine two areas of application of AT in community action, both formal and informal: organizations and education.

Example 1. In organizations, processes can be set in motion to imbue actions with knowledge from AT and the sensitivities characteristic of that knowledge, the skeleton of which can be translated into transactional diagrams. A supervisor may enter into a shift contract with an employee who is late. Using the healthy intensity of the Normative Parent Ego State, the supervisor can address the need arising from the Adapted Child Ego State, where the employee rebels against the rules. After going through a series of Parent-Child transactions, both individuals can enter the Adult Ego State. The dialogue could read:

- I have a request for you not to be late.
- After all, it's not my fault that there are traffic jams.
- You know, we are trying to maintain a high standard of work here, and clear hours of availability are fundamental.
- I don't have standards written into my employment contract.
- That's true. They come from the Labour Code, various other sources. We can banter like this now, but I have a suggestion for you to come up with another solution. What do you propose?
- Well, we move the hours up by one. That will make it very easy for me. Let's change the hours to be more convenient for you. Traffic is a hindrance, so maybe from tomorrow I'll arrive an hour later and stay an hour longer. Is that OK?
- OK.

In the context of HRE, the application of TA, as demonstrated in organizational processes, can foster effective communication and problem-solving, contributing to a rights-respecting environment. This example illustrates how TA principles can be applied to address workplace issues while respecting individual rights. The dialogue promotes open communication, addresses concerns from both parties, and encourages collaborative problem-solving. The supervisor respects the employee's perspective and engages in a constructive negotiation, ultimately reaching a solution that accommodates the employee's needs while maintaining workplace standards. This application of TA fosters a rights-based approach to conflict resolution and communication in the organizational context, aligning with the principles of HRE.

Example 2 The applicability of AT also applies to educational organizations, the best example being the existence of a sub-discipline in pedagogy and educational science known as educational TA. It is possible to use TA to observe and reflect on educational situations, including informal education such as psychological and psychotherapeutic training and workshops. The organizational side of education also lends itself to being covered by the conceptual categories of TA - that is, the main analytical tools of the concept. As a result of conducting observations and reflections in organizational and educational settings, interventions based on AT concepts can be tried in them, such as unmasking a game in which a student tests a boundary by starting an exchange from the state of I Parent after being late.

- You start the lesson at eight o'clock, and it is said, after all, that we have the right to be late.
- Where is it said so?
- The bus has a sign at the stop saying that it can be on time, so we can too as we ride it.
- I don't want to get into a discussion about city transport regulations and timetables now, because that's not the subject of our lesson. I invite you to have that discussion tomorrow, if you remind me at the end of the lesson today, and we'll make a deal on how that discussion should go exactly. Now I will just add that I am very happy that you are reading the bus timetables and trying to exercise your rights. Who will remind me at the end to come back to this issue?

This example illustrates how TA can be applied in educational settings to address behavioral challenges while respecting the rights and perspectives of students. The teacher navigates the interaction by transitioning to the Adult Ego State, setting boundaries, and inviting a discussion at an appropriate time. This approach aligns with the principles of HRE by fostering open dialogue, acknowledging individual perspectives, and addressing issues through a respectful and inclusive process. TA provides a framework for educators to navigate challenging situations while promoting a rights-based approach to education.

States of Self in the structural model are "a coherent pattern of feelings and experiences, directly linked to a corresponding coherent pattern of behaviour" (Joines and Stewart 2021: 467), which is expressed in the way one experiences reality and the emotional and behavioural responses typical of the metaphorical Child, Adult and Parent. The Child Ego State is characterised by increased emotionality towards freedom and liberty or submissiveness or rebellion. The Adult Ego State exhibits a matter-of-fact, logical, cheerful and respectful capacity for social exchange. The Parent Ego State reveals itself in experiencing increased caring or normativity, analogous to parental tenderness, sometimes overprotectiveness, as well as chastisement and policing of rules.

According to this concept, we can only infer what is structurally in our personality from the manifestations at the level of behaviour, the way we experience, the person's life history and social diagnosis. Thus, we speak respectively of behavioural, phenomenological, historical and social criteria that allow us to diagnose the structure of the Self. The person in the ego state of the Child Self. The behavioural criterion refers to the functional model: we observe the body, the voice, the words. The person behaves emotionally, thinks magically, emotionality is strong and inadequate to the here and now. The phenomenological criterion concerns the functional and structural model: we observe ourselves, how we feel ourselves, we make insights into ourselves. The person has access to themselves and declares being in the Child Ego State or we have access to their experiential world and experience contact with the person in the Child Ego State such that the Parent Ego State may be activated in us. By sensing such an invitation to enter the Child Ego State, we can recognise that the participant in our transaction is the person in the Parent Ego State.

The historical criterion refers to a functional model in the past: we inquire about childhood reactions and observations. We learn about the ways in which the person we expect to be or has been in the Child Ego State is functioning from their history – for example, that they were not stimulated in their development and were left with an overstimulated Child Ego State. The social criterion relates to the functional model, specifically the course of the transaction: we observe how people interact and what reactions they elicit. A person elicits reactions in others that are typical of the reactions to the Child Ego State – for example, the anger of the Normative Parent or the concern of the Caring Parent, or possibly the carefree non-fear of the Free Child. In this way we can guess that we are dealing with a Child.

Person in the ego state of the Adult Self. The person behaves logically, relevant to the here and now, and also has good access to the resources of the Child and Parent. The person has access to themselves and declares being in the ego state Adult Self or we have access to their experiential world. The Adult, unless they are simultaneously sending us a message to a state other than the Adult Self (e.g. not a salesman trying to activate our Child Ego State), activates the rather cheerful and logical side of the personality in us and this is how we experience contact with such a person. We learn about the ways of functioning of the person we expect to be or to have been in the Adult Ego State in the situation we are interested in from their story.

Example: a person at a young age behaves in a matter-of-fact and logical manner, does not allow himself or herself to take liberties, but also does not enter the ego state of the Parent Self, i.e. does not instruct, does not refer to standards, does not try to perform tasks for others. The person elicits in others reactions typical of the Adult Ego State, especially inviting complementary transactions between two people who are in the Adult Self ego state.

Person in ego state Self Parent. The person behaves in a caring or normative way, surrounds himself with care or invokes norms, values, rules, principles, procedures. We know this from the fact that the person has access to himself or herself and declares being in the ego state of Parent Self or we have access to his or her experiential world. If the person is in the Parent Ego State, we may also experience the person as inviting us into the Child Self role, i.e. we feel cared for and nurtured or relatively harshly admonished, chastised. We learn from the story that the person's parental figures looked like this and that, for example they were warm and caring but demanding, which allows us to infer their current presence in the Parent Ego State. The person elicits in others reactions typical of the Parent Ego State, inviting either complementary transactions between two people in the Parent Ego State (e.g. the "teacher's room") or crossed transactions initiated from the Parent Ego State - where the Child Self is activated in us.

The interrelation between TA and HRE (HRE) lies in the potential application of TA concepts to enhance understanding, communication, and interactions within the context of promoting human rights principles. In the structural model of TA, the Self represents a coherent pattern of feelings and experiences linked to behavioral responses associated with metaphorical states of Child, Adult, and Parent. Understanding these states can contribute to the development of self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication—key elements in HRE. The Child Ego State, characterized by emotionality, freedom, and rebellion, aligns with the importance of recognizing and respecting individual emotions and perspectives in human rights discourse. Understanding emotional responses, such as despair or anger, can contribute to a more empathetic approach in HRE. The Adult Ego State, marked by logical and respectful behavior, is relevant to fostering a culture of dialogue and understanding in HRE. Encouraging individuals to engage in logical and relevant discussions contributes to the development of critical thinking and informed citizenship, both essential in human rights advocacy.

The Parent Ego State, displaying caring or normativity, can be related to the nurturing aspect of HRE. Encouraging care for others and the promotion of norms and values associated with human rights aligns with the principles of the Parent Ego State. Recognition of historical aspects, as emphasized in the historical criterion, enables a deeper understanding of the context of human rights issues, promoting a more informed and contextualized approach to HRE. In practical scenarios, recognizing individuals in the Adult Ego State fosters complementary transactions, promoting positive interactions and effective communication. Understanding someone in the Parent Ego State allows for recognizing and responding to caring or normative behavior, creating an environment conducive to human rights principles. Overall, the application of TA concepts in HRE can contribute to creating a more empathetic, understanding, and communicative environment, fostering the values and principles inherent in HRE.

In the context of HRE (HRE), analyzing the three types of transactions – simple, implicit angle, and crossed – from a perspective of healthy interpersonal relationships and potential dynamics within educational settings is insightful.

Below: Simple transaction (the natural order of healthy interpersonal relationships). All its elements flow from Adult to Adult.

- I like your report.
- Thank you. That's good to hear.
- Did you write it for a long time?
- Quite a long time. Will you find it useful?
- Yes. Thank you again. And what are you doing tomorrow after the meeting?
- I'll call you when I know where I'm going.

It was a straightforward transaction (the natural order of healthy human relations).

Below: an implicit angle transaction (the basis of games, e.g. sales).

- Here we have such an offer specifically for our customers who can afford an annual subscription. [From Adult to Adult and Child at the same time].
- And at what price? [From Child to Adult]
- But as I mention, this is only for people with a budget for a year in advance. I don't know if I can go on. [From Adult to Adult and Child at the same time].

It was a hidden angle transaction (the basis of games, e.g. sales).

Below: crossed transaction (basis of games).

- I have a request to do a breakdown for tomorrow at 12 o'clock and email it to me. [From Adult to Adult].
- But I will find the time to complete this task tomorrow at 10 p.m. [from Child to Parent].
- That's too late after all. [From Parent to Child]
- What do I care? You're the boss, not me. [From Child to Parent]

It was a crossed transaction (the basis of the games).

The simple transaction presented reflects a harmonious exchange where all elements flow from Adult to Adult. The conversation is straightforward, respectful, and reciprocal. In an HRE context, such transactions are conducive to effective communication, fostering an open and collaborative learning environment. Encouraging such interactions among educators, students, and participants aligns with the principles of mutual respect and constructive dialogue promoted in HRE.

The implicit angle transaction involves a subtle maneuver, combining communication from Adult to Adult and Child simultaneously. This type of transaction is foundational to games, such as sales tactics. In HRE, awareness of implicit angles becomes crucial to equip individuals with the ability to discern manipulative practices, ensuring a more informed and empowered community. Educating participants about implicit transactions prepares them to navigate situations where hidden agendas may compromise the integrity of human rights discussions.

The crossed transaction, exemplified by conflicting messages between the Adult, Parent, and Child ego states, forms the basis of psychological games. In HRE, encountering crossed transactions may indicate underlying tensions or power dynamics. Analyzing and addressing such scenarios becomes essential to create a healthy and inclusive educational environment. Educators need to recognize crossed transactions to foster a respectful and equitable atmosphere, ensuring that power imbalances do not undermine the principles of HRE.

In summary, understanding and analyzing different transactional dynamics within the context of HRE allows educators and participants to navigate interpersonal interactions effectively, promoting a culture of respect, transparency, and open communication. Recognizing the nuances of transactions contributes to the development of critical thinking and empowerment within the HRE framework.

The hunger for stimulation, the hunger for recognition and the hunger for structure are related in such a way that all three demand to be satisfied and neglecting to satisfy one of them will not achieve balance. It is necessary to be mindful of the three simultaneously. The strength of each of these hungers varies from person to person and the tolerance for stimulation, recognition and structure also varies. However, all three hungers should be addressed, preferably constructively, through health feeding.

The hunger for stimulation is related to the challenges, the stimuli, the pace of work, the number of tasks to be completed, the number of difficulties provided by the environment. One can be overfed by challenges, or one can be underfed by a lack of challenges.

Example: a person looking for a high level of stimulation will be bored by a static, repetitive, routine job or one where everything is planned in advance. A journalist covering international conferences may suffer from a hunger for stimulation after switching to a district office. An accountant from a public institution may not find himself in the dynamic environment of a corporation with a fast-paced culture.

Hunger for recognition refers to the signs of recognition. A person experiencing a hunger for recognition needs to receive evidence that he or she is being noticed, seen, rewarded (and perhaps disciplined when it is warranted because, for example, he or she is breaking arrangements). She may perceive a lack of reward for an achievement as an inadequate omission. Conversely, a person with a low hunger for recognition will prefer to remain in the shadows and may react badly to praise or even being mentioned in a list of acknowledgements.

Example: an employee gives an opinion at a meeting. The meeting leader omits just this one opinion from the summary and does not refer to it. This can be problematic for a person with a high hunger for recognition. Perhaps such a person will recognise the omission as a negative unconditional or conditional sign of recognition.

Hunger for structure refers to order, a clear hierarchy - or a clear lack of it in the case of an organisation declared to be a flat entity. Responsibilities, hours, contract rules are all manifestations of attempts to satisfy the hunger for structure.

Example: an employee with a high level of hunger for structure, such as an ex-military man, ends up in a company that promotes open communication, no titles, equal pay. He may not find himself there. The same may be true for an employee of an NGO of free-spirited artists when he finds himself working in an office with numerous regulations, orders, procedures or clear hierarchies.

From the perspective of HRE, the analysis of the hunger for stimulation, recognition, and structure reveals important considerations for fostering a conducive learning environment that respects the diverse needs and preferences of individuals.

In HRE, recognizing and addressing the hunger for stimulation is crucial to engaging participants effectively. Understanding that individuals may have varying tolerance levels for challenges, stimuli, and work pace emphasizes the importance of designing educational activities that cater to diverse learning preferences. Ensuring a balance in the stimulation provided allows for a more inclusive and dynamic learning experience, accommodating both those seeking high levels of stimulation and those preferring a more structured and predictable environment.

The hunger for recognition is pertinent in HRE where individuals contribute to discussions, express opinions, and engage in activities. Acknowledging the diversity in individuals' needs for recognition is essential for creating an inclusive learning environment. Educators should be mindful of providing equitable recognition, ensuring that participants feel noticed, rewarded, and valued for their contributions. Awareness of varying levels of hunger for recognition helps prevent potential negative impacts on individuals' experiences within the educational setting.

The hunger for structure has implications for the organizational aspects of HRE programs. Recognizing that some individuals thrive in environments with clear hierarchies and well-defined rules, while others prefer more flexible and flat structures, underscores the need for adaptable educational approaches. HRE should be designed to accommodate diverse organizational preferences, ensuring that individuals with high levels of hunger for structure and those with a preference for more fluid environments can both benefit from the learning experience.

The statement "method is the message" implies that the way something is communicated or taught is as important as the content itself. This phrase suggests that the method used to convey information shapes the way the message is received and understood. In the context of education, including HRE, the method of instruction plays a significant role in influencing how learners perceive, engage with, and internalize the content. From a HRE perspective, the choice of instructional methods becomes crucial in conveying the principles and values of human rights. The methods employed should align with the ethos of human rights, promoting inclusivity, respect for diversity, and active participation. Emphasizing interactive methods, such as group discussions, role-playing, and experiential activities, can enhance learners' understanding of human rights concepts. Participation in decision-making processes within the educational setting reflects the democratic principles inherent in human rights.

Providing opportunities for self-reflection fosters a deeper connection to the human rights principles being taught. Utilizing collaborative learning methods, such as group projects or community engagement activities, reinforces the idea that human rights are interconnected and require collective efforts. In essence,

the method of delivering HRE should embody the principles it seeks to convey. A participatory, inclusive, and reflective educational approach not only enhances the learning experience but also reinforces the values of human rights through the very process of instruction. In conclusion, addressing the hunger for stimulation, recognition, and structure in HRE contributes to a more inclusive, empowering, and respectful learning environment. By recognizing and accommodating these diverse needs, educators can create educational programs that resonate with participants, fostering a culture of understanding, equity, and mutual respect.

The elements of a script system are metaphorically called a rocket system. An emotional rocket is a pattern of scripted behaviour from which the social environment is manipulated in such a way that the person experiences unpleasant vicarious feelings. The script system is self-perpetuating and distorted in terms of feelings, thoughts and behaviours. The life script sustains it. Three components interact: thought-feeling, behavioural and memories. The reinforcing memories are related to selected events in a person's life. These are emotional memories associated with interaction, both real and imagined. Recalling bodily experiences, stored memories, dreams, fantasies can be helpful, as we often do not fully remember the event, only the feelings left behind; also this emotional memory is sometimes unassociated with the event. Any reinforcing memory can strengthen or weaken script beliefs.

Memories that support the script are readily accepted to reinforce the script. Memories that do not support the script are discarded or forgotten. Even years later, we create interpretations, memories and fantasies to support our script. By reinforcing the beliefs of the script, the person feels familiar feelings from when the script decision was made. When faced with memories or situations that do not support the script, the person can simply ignore them and switch to another script. By switching script, one remains scripted and may continue to feel angry, sad or fearful about their scripted beliefs. Struggling with having to give up a script that once ensured survival, a person feels uncomfortable. He or she has to question his or her preconceptions. I will present the layout of the script and its circulation in the table below. The direction of circulation, where the elements reinforce each other, begin with what I say to myself, how I react, the Experiences that confirm what I say to myself.

The example of the person and their rocket system follows:

My beliefs about myself. I have difficulty in pursuing larger projects with insight.

My beliefs about others. Others are not conducive to immersion in a single issue; versatility and being reactive are rewarded.

My behaviour (what I show outwardly). I don't focus on one issue. I do several things at the same time.

What is happening in my body, my bodily sensations. I am hyper-reactive and can hardly sit in one place for longer.

My past memories. Strong concentration on one subject bored me. In addition, my parents distracted me from concentrating fully, sending the message that what I was doing was not the most important thing and it was worth pursuing several endeavours at the same time.

My beliefs about life, the world. The world is not conducive to exploring one topic and building clear proficiency in one area.

My emotions (what I feel about these beliefs): Helplessness, guilt and lack of agency, sometimes pride and sometimes shame.

My dreams, fantasies, imaginings, fears. What I imagine: If I give a lot of attention to one area, I will miss out on something in other areas and generally suffer a loss.

What I fear: Losing an opportunity, I don't want to miss an opportunity.

What I dream about: In a dream I achieve mastery in one area. In another dream I am scattered between different fields. These dreams make no clear sense to me, I don't know what meaning they have.

My distant memories, from the recent past. My lack of clear proficiency in one field allowed me to profit from mediating between two different ones.

Analyzing the presented concept in terms of HRE involves understanding how ingrained beliefs and memories, often formed early in life, can influence an individual's perception and behavior. In the context of the script system described as a "rocket system," we can explore its relevance to HRE. The concept of a life script suggests that individuals develop beliefs about themselves, others, and the world based on their early experiences. In the example provided, the person's beliefs about themselves and the world impact their behavior, including the difficulty in pursuing larger projects with insight. In HRE, this could be analogous to individuals developing beliefs about their role in promoting human rights and their efficacy in contributing to larger societal issues.

The idea that reinforcing memories related to selected events can strengthen or weaken script beliefs aligns with the way individuals perceive and internalize human rights values. Memories that support a belief in equality, justice, and respect for human dignity can reinforce a commitment to human rights. Conversely, memories inconsistent with these values may be discarded or forgotten, reflecting the selective nature of script reinforcement. The concept of switching scripts to avoid discomfort aligns with challenges in human rights advocacy. Individuals may resist changing their beliefs or scripts, even when confronted with evidence that challenges their preconceptions. This resistance can hinder progress in HRE, as it requires individuals to question and potentially give up scripts that no longer align with human rights principles.

The example of the person's rocket system illustrates how beliefs about oneself, others, and the world influence behavior, emotions, and even bodily sensations. Similarly, in HRE, individuals' beliefs about their role in promoting human rights, perceptions of others' contributions, and views on the world's receptiveness to human rights principles can impact their behavior, emotions, and overall engagement with human rights issues. The dreams and fantasies de-

scribed in the example mirror aspirations and fears individuals may have in the context of human rights. The fear of missing an opportunity or the dream of achieving mastery in a specific area can be analogous to individuals' aspirations and concerns in their human rights advocacy journeys. In summary, the script system presented can be relevant to HRE by providing insights into how individuals form beliefs, reinforce memories, and navigate challenges in embracing human rights values. Understanding these dynamics is crucial in designing effective HRE programs that address deep-seated beliefs and promote a commitment to human rights principles.

Concluding discussion

In conclusion, the integration of Educational Transactional Analysis (TA) into Human Rights Education (HRE) demonstrates significant potential for enhancing communication, understanding, and the promotion of human rights principles. The intersection of TA and HRE provides a comprehensive framework for addressing workplace and educational challenges while fostering an empathetic and rights-respecting environment. Human Rights Education, rooted in principles of dignity, equality, and justice, aims to empower individuals to actively contribute to the advancement of human rights. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights exemplifies this commitment by actively engaging in initiatives to increase awareness and understanding of human rights principles. On the other hand, Educational Transactional Analysis applies TA theory to educational settings, focusing on improving communication and relationships through concepts like Ego States. The application of TA in HRE involves recognizing emotional responses, understanding historical and social contexts, and integrating TA concepts into real-life dialogues. The study explores the potential of TA to address workplace and educational challenges, aligning with HRE principles of open communication, conflict resolution, and rights-respecting dialogue.

Through the structured analysis of ego states – Parent, Adult, and Child – TA enhances self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication, paralleling the goals of HRE. The historical and social criteria in TA align with HRE's emphasis on understanding human rights issues within their contexts. Practical application involves recognizing individuals in the Adult Ego State, fostering positive interactions, and responding to caring or normative behavior in the Parent Ego State.

Moreover, the study demonstrates how TA can be applied to real-life scenarios, both in organizational and educational settings, providing valuable insights for addressing challenges while respecting individual rights. In organizational contexts, TA fosters open communication, collaborative problem-solving, and a rights-based approach to conflict resolution. In educational settings, TA con-

tributes to creating an inclusive and respectful learning environment by addressing behavioral challenges and acknowledging students' rights and perspectives.

The interconnection between TA and HRE extends beyond theory into practical applications, enriching the educational experience and promoting values inherent in HRE. By integrating TA principles, HRE seeks to develop individuals who are not only knowledgeable about human rights but also actively engaged in promoting and protecting these rights in diverse social contexts. This symbiotic relationship between TA and HRE holds promise for advancing the shared goals of effective communication, conflict resolution, and the promotion of human rights principles in various spheres of society.

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Potencjał edukacyjnej analizy transakcyjnej w edukacji o prawach człowieka

Streszczenie

Edukacja na rzecz praw człowieka (HRE) to dynamiczna inicjatywa wspierająca wiedzę, wartości i umiejętności w zakresie promowania i ochrony praw człowieka. Zakorzeniona w zasadach takich jak godność i sprawiedliwość, HRE umożliwia jednostkom aktywne przyczynianie się do rozwoju praw człowieka. Agencja Praw Podstawowych Unii Europejskiej (FRA) jest przykładem tego podejścia, angażując się w inicjatywy mające na celu podnoszenie świadomości i zrozumienia zasad praw człowieka. Jednocześnie Edukacyjna Analiza Transakcyjna stosuje teorię AT w środowisku edukacyjnym, poprawiając jakość komunikacji i relacji. AT, z jej Stanami Ego Rodzica, Dorosłego i Dziecka, jest zgodna z zasadami HRE, promując samoświadomość i empatię. Zastosowanie AT w HRE obejmuje rozpoznawanie reakcji emocjonalnych i zrozumienie kontekstów społecznych i historycznych. Integracja koncepcji AT wzbogaca doświadczenie edukacyjne, wspierając empatyczne i komunikatywne środowisko. W badaniu zastosowano koncepcje AT do rzeczywistych dialogów, badając ich zastosowanie w HRE. Wyniki ujawniają potencjał AT w radzeniu sobie z wyzwaniami w miejscu pracy i edukacji, dostosowując się do zasad HRE dotyczących otwartej komunikacji, rozwiązywania konfliktów i dialogu szanującego prawa. Przecięcie AT i HRE zapewnia kompleksowe ramy dla poprawy interakcji społecznych i promowania zasad praw człowieka.

Słowa kluczowe: prawa człowieka, analiza transakcyjna, komunikacja, empowerment.

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Perception of the Sexual Sphere of Older People by Young People, Taking Into Account Ageism Attitudes and the Level of Their Own Sexual Satisfaction

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Abstract

Despite the fact that the population is ageing and more people reach 100 years old, the needs of the elderly in Poland are still a little-discussed political issue. Discrimination against older people exists and affects all areas of their lives, including the sexual sphere. The aim of the paper is to determine what attitudes towards the sexuality of older people have people aged 18-26 years, taking into account their declared sexual satisfaction and manifested ageistic attitudes. The article is based on a study conducted in December 2022, on a group of 114 people. The studies used a quantitative approach and used questionnaires to examine the severity of these parameters. The study showed that the assessment of the sexuality of the elderly does not differ according to the sex of the subject and that the level of ageism and sexual satisfaction is important in the assessment of said sexuality. Interestingly, the study also showed that sexual satisfaction is more a predictor for men than for women, and ageistic attitudes are more a predictor for women than for men.

Keywords: ageism, sexual satisfaction, sexuality of the elderly, transactional analysis.

Introduction

Ageism is an attitude of age discrimination directed at individuals and/or groups, associated with stereotyping and prejudices about age. It can have var-

ious characters: internalised, interpersonal or institutional. Discriminatory attitudes may lead to exclusion from social and economic life, leading to a lower quality of life and higher rates of loneliness and social isolation among older people (Flesia, Monaro, Jannini, & Limoncin, 2023). The consequence of discrimination and stereotyping of seniors is a negative perception of their sexuality, which is after all an inseparable part of life (Fabiś, 2015). Taking into account the above phenomena, the first research question arises: Do people with a higher level of ageism attitudes perceive the sexuality of older people less favorably than people with a lower level of ageism attitudes (H1)?

Although ageism as a phenomenon affects older people regardless of gender, the literature on the subject indicates that women are more likely to experience it which provokes adaptive behaviours such as hair dyeing, treatments masking signs of aging of the face and body, etc. (Clarke, Griffin, 2008, quoting: Ayalon, Tesch-Romer, 2018). Such actions are much less often observed in the case of older men, the phenomenon is not described or noticed. Francine M. Deutsch et al. (1986) showed that older men are perceived as more attractive than older women, although there were no differences in perceived attractiveness between men and young and middle-aged women (quoting: Kite, Deaux, & Miele, 1991).

As ageism affects older women more often than men, a research question arises: Will the degree of favor among women in their perception of the sexuality of older people depend on the degree of severity of ageism attitudes (H4)?

Referring to the assumptions of transactional analysis, we can distinguish six basic forms of time structuring that are key to the organization of a person's life: withdrawal, rituals, activities, entertainment, psychological games, and intimacy (Stewart, Joines, 2016). Each of these forms plays a different role in building relationships with the environment and shaping interpersonal experiences.

Intimacy, being one of these forms, has unique importance in the context of interpersonal relationships. In the light of transactional analysis, intimacy should not be limited solely to the context of sexual activity, although this aspect can be an important part of it. Eric Berne (2021) indicates that intimacy is divided into unilateral and bilateral. Unilateral intimacy is based on openness and sincerity on the part of one person, while bilateral intimacy requires reciprocity, openness and sharing of experiences between partners. It is this mutual exchange that makes bilateral intimacy simultaneously the least risky and most authentic.

In this context, sexuality, which is a natural and inherent part of human life, can be an expression of true intimacy. Sexuality accompanies people from birth and seems to stem from attachment patterns, can take different forms and be conditioned by many factors (Izdebski & Ostrowska, 2003; Birnbaum et al., 2006; Butzer and Campbell, 2008; Davis et al., 2006, quoting: Khoury & Findlay, 2014; Impett and Peplau, 2002; Birnbaum et al., 2006; Khoury & Findlay, 2014, quoting:

Szymczyk & Trzęsowska-Greszta, 2014). This indicates a deep-rooted need for intimacy in human nature, the formation of which begins in the earliest stages of life. Attachment patterns that develop in relationships with caregivers form the foundation for later emotional and sexual experiences. From the perspective of transactional analysis, intimacy in sexual relationships can reach its fullness if it is based on reciprocity, sincerity, and willingness to share both emotions and needs. Sexuality, though conditioned by many factors, including biological, psychological, and cultural, can be a space for authentic understanding between partners. Thus, transactional analysis provides tools to better understand how different forms of structuring time, including intimacy, contribute to building lasting, satisfying relationships in which sexuality plays an integral role.

Sexuality and sexual satisfaction are not only an important aspect of our lives, but it is also correlated with the perception of sexuality in older adults (Allen, Petro, & Philips, 2009). In connection with the above, the next research question is: Do respondents with higher sexual satisfaction rate the sexuality of older people better than those with low sexual satisfaction (H3)?

The feeling of sexual satisfaction varies significantly between women and men. Women associate their sexuality with, for example, the menstrual cycle and pregnancy (Snell, Fisher & Walters, 1993). On the other hand, the determinant of sexual satisfaction for men is the size of their penis (Izdebski, 2012). Men combine sexual activity with respect, motivation and assertiveness, while in women it is associated with fear (Snell, Fisher, & Walters, 1993).

Because women's sexual satisfaction relates to many aspects of life, and in men refers (only) to the sexual sphere itself, whether the degree of perception of the sexuality of older people assessed by men will depend on the degree of their sexual satisfaction (H5)?

The age of women, with all its aspects, is assessed significantly worse than the age of men (Buczowski, 2015). Older men are defined as those who are still alive, capable of professional success and sexual activity (Barret and von Rohr, 2008, quoting: Kornadt, Voss, & Rothermund, 2013). Men are not afraid of old age, because it is not associated with drastic changes in their lives. The old age of women, on the other hand, is identified with curiosity, quarrelsomeness and devotion. (Cieślik, 2005, quoting: Rogala, 2007). Women are also perceived as significantly less attractive by men, which is associated with evolution and the association of fertility with young age (Rak-Suska, 2018). In the context of transactional analysis, a person, living in a certain society must fulfill certain roles, which are imposed from the moment of birth. A person acquires the ability to play the roles assigned to them on the basis of gender, nationality and belonging to a certain social class. For their fulfillment, the individual receives approval from the social environment, on the other hand, failure to fulfill roles according to social expectations is punished by society (Tomkiewicz, 1984). Also, in the con-

text of transactional analysis, ego states, which constitute a coherent set of thoughts and feelings, are expressed through appropriate sets of behaviours (Berne, 1998, quoting: Jagieła, 2017). Given that women are often judged through the prism of stereotypes, which affects their sense of identity and specific beliefs and actions, the research question is: Can we assume that they will be more likely to formulate a negative assessment of the sexuality of older people than men (H2)?

Based on the analysis of available scientific sources, it can be assumed that that no studies have been carried out to verify the relationship between ageism attitudes, sexual satisfaction and attitudes towards the sexual sphere of older people among young people. Therefore, given the current state of knowledge, it seemed justified to carry out studies that would allow a more complete understanding of this phenomenon.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to verify the relationship between the perception of sexuality of older people and the manifestation of ageism attitudes and the declared, felt sexual satisfaction in young people.

Material and methods

The Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (2014) by Agnieszka Nomejko and Grażyna Dolińska-Zygmunt (Nomejko & Dolińska-Zygmunt, 2019) was used to examine attitudes towards one's own sexuality. This method has undergone a number of revisions to identify the 10 questions used in the final version. Subjects are asked to respond to them on a 4-level Likert scale, and the total result obtained indicates the level of sexual satisfaction, which varies according to sex.

For women, we are talking about low sexual satisfaction, when the score is between 10 and 25 points, the average sexual satisfaction is between 26 and 31 points, and the high is between 32 and 40 points. In contrast, for men, the ranges look sequentially: from 10 to 27 points, from 28 to 33 and from 34 to 40.

This questionnaire was chosen because of its extensive design, testing the relevance of the questions with numerous competent judges, and measuring the reliability of the test using Cronbach's alpha.

Attitudes towards sexuality of older people were examined using Attitudes Towards Older Adult Sexuality in Long-term Care Scale (Spalding, Katz, Byers, Edelstein, 2021). The questionnaire originally consisted of 32 statements, but its final version contains 18 statements, and the respondents are asked to respond

to them on a 4-point Likert scale. Despite the name of this method, only one element refers to the situation of the elderly in the care home. This was one of the reasons for using this questionnaire, as most of the other methods oscillating around this issue focused mainly on situations in nursing homes and were dedicated to people working in these institutions.

Lindsey A. Cara, Alison L. Chasteen, and Jessica Remedios The Ambivalent Ageism Scale (2016) was used to examine ageism attitudes. The scale was developed and tested in four stages leading to the final, 13-element version. The authors of the questionnaire (Cary, Chasteen & Remedios, 2016) argue that it can be used regardless of the culture from which respondents come and is intended to investigate the assessment of hostile and benevolent ageism. The scale was chosen for the study because of its short but concise form. The aim of the study was to verify the relationship between the assessment of the sexuality of older people and the assessment of their own sexuality, ageism attitudes are only a clarification of the mentioned topic and serve to expand it. Taking these factors into account, the 13 statements to which the subjects must respond, on the 7-point Likert scale, seems sufficient.

A total of 61 women and 43 men participated in the study. The distribution of education level is as follows: secondary – 52,9% (55 persons); basic vocational – 1,9% (2 persons); higher – 45,2% (47 people). Place of residence: village – 21,1% (22 persons); city with up to 100 thousand inhabitants – 15,4% (16 persons); city with 100-500 thousand inhabitants – 27,9% (29 persons), and city with more than 500 thousand inhabitants – 35,6% (37 people). The average age of the subjects was 23 years; the youngest was 18 years old and the oldest was 26 years old.

The survey was conducted online, by providing a survey in the Google Docs form. The participants were asked to answer 10 questions from the Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (Nomejko & Dolińska-Zygmunt, 2014) and to respond to them on the 4-level Likert scale, respond to 18 statements from the Attitudes Towards Older Adult Sexuality in Long-term Care Scale (Spalding, Katz, Byers, Edelstein, 2021) also on the 4-degree Likert scale and on the 7-degree Likert scale to relate to 13 theorems of the Ambivalent Ageism Scale (Cary, Chasteen & Remedios, 2016). The hypotheses are as follows:

1. People with a higher level of ageism tend to perceive the sexuality of older people less favourably than people with a lower level of ageism.
2. Women rate the sexuality of older people less favourably than men.
3. Respondents with higher sexual satisfaction rate the sexuality of older people more favourably than those with low sexual satisfaction.
4. The degree of favor in the perception of sexuality of older people among women depends on the degree of presented ageism attitudes.
5. The degree to which older men perceive their sexuality favourably depends on their degree of sexual satisfaction.

Results

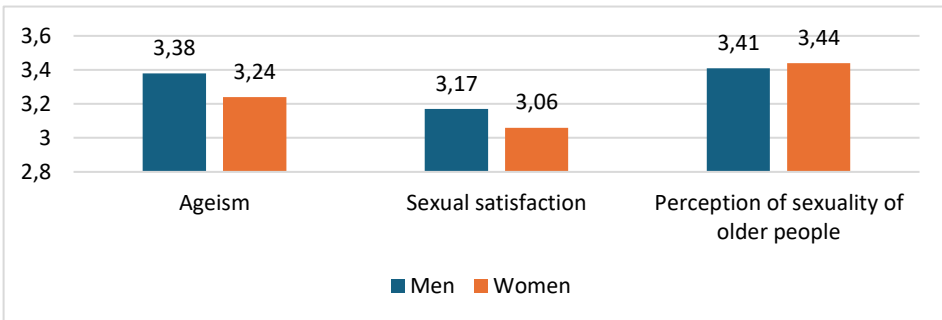
In order to present the obtained results, Table 1 presents descriptive statistics - means (M), standard deviations (SD) and medians (Me), sum (Σ), minimum and maximum, and reliability factors (α -Cronbach) of the individual test tools included in the study.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics and reliability of individual research tools.

Variables	N	Means	Medians	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Standard deviations	α -Cronbach
Ageism	104	3,3	3,56	42,95	2,04	4,87	0,87	0,85
Sexual satisfaction	104	3,10	3,10	31,05	2,86	3,49	0,22	0,86
Perception of sexuality of older people	104	3,43	3,59	58,4	2,6	3,83	0,36	0,87

Source: own research

In order to compare the mean scores of women and men on individual scales and to confirm hypothesis 2, a t-Student test was used to evaluate the results obtained by women and for independent rehearsals. The results of this analysis are presented in bar graph 1.



Bar graph 1.
The average results of the subjects obtained in the individual scales.

Source: own research

Analysis of the results presented in bar graph 1. showed a statistically significant difference between the mean sexual satisfaction scores of men ($M = 3,17$; $SD = 0,53$) and women ($M = 3,06$; $SD = 0,71$), at the level of $p = 0,04$, $t = -0,84$ and *Cohen's d* value = 0,18. On the other hand, there was no significant statisti-

cal difference between the mean results obtained by men ($M = 3,41$; $SD = 0,47$) and women ($M = 3,44$; $SD = 0,45$) in the sexual perception of older adults ($p = 0,77$; $t = 0,29$; *Cohen's d* = 0,07). This means that the hypothesis assuming a relationship between the perception of older people's sexuality and gender has been not confirmed. There were also no significant statistical differences between women ($M = 3,24$; $SD = 1,02$) and men ($M = 3,38$; $SD = 1,05$) in ageism attitudes ($p = 0,49$; $t = -0,7$; *Cohen's d* = 0,14).

In order to verify the first and third hypothesis, Pearson's correlation between the perception of sexuality of older people and sexual satisfaction and ageism attitudes was analyzed, with an assumed significance level of $p < 0,05$. The results of the obtained correlations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Pearson correlation coefficients between the perception of sexuality of older people and sexual satisfaction and ageism among respondents (N = 104).

Variables	Sexual satisfaction	Ageism
Perception of sexuality of older people	0,24*	-0,42*

* $p < 0,05$

Source: own research

Analysis of the results included in Table 2. shows that there is a positive, weak correlation between perceptions of older people's sexuality and sexual satisfaction ($p = 0,12$) and a moderate, negative correlation between perceptions of older people's sexuality and the degree to which the subjects hold ageist attitudes ($p < 0,001$).

On the basis of the results, it can therefore be concluded that both hypotheses 1 and 3 are confirmed, as significant relationships between low ageism and positive perception of the sexuality of older people, and greater sexual satisfaction and a positive perception of the sexuality of older people, have been revealed.

Pearson's r correlation analysis was conducted to test the validity of hypotheses 4 and 5, by gender, between perceptions of elderly people's sexuality and sexual satisfaction and ageism attitudes, with an assumed significance level of $p < 0,05$. The results of the obtained correlations are presented in Table 3. and Table 4.

Table 3.

Pearson correlation coefficients between the perception of sexuality of older people and sexual satisfaction and ageism among women (N = 61).

Variables	Sexual satisfaction	Ageism
Perception of sexuality of older people	0,21*	-0,56*

* $p < 0,05$

Source: own research

Table 4.

Pearson correlation coefficients between the perception of sexuality of older people and sexual satisfaction and ageism among men (N = 43).

Variables	Sexual satisfaction	Ageism
Perception of sexuality of older people	0,31*	-0,24*

* $p < 0,05$

Source: own research

As the results in Table 3. indicate, there was a negative, strong correlation between ageism attitudes and perceptions of elderly sexuality ($p < 0,001$) and a positive and weak correlation between perceptions of elderly sexuality and sexual satisfaction in women ($p = 0,104$). In contrast, men (Table 4.) showed a positive, moderate correlation between perceptions of elderly sexuality and sexual satisfaction ($p = 0,043$), and a negative and weak correlation between ageism and perceptions of elderly sexuality ($p = 0,121$). The results testify of the confirmation of hypothesis 4 and hypothesis 5.

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the determinants of sexual perception of older adults.

Table 5.

Multiple regression analysis for subjects for variable: perception of sexuality of older adults.

N=104	b*	Std. Error b*	b	Std. Error b	t(99)	p
Age			3,58	0,64	5,59	0,00
Gender	0,02	0,09	0,01	0,08	0,19	0,84
Sexual satisfaction	0,21	0,09	0,15	0,06	2,32	0,02
Ageism	-0,41	0,09	-0,18	0,04	-4,47	0,00

Source: own research

The results of the regression analysis obtained for the variable perception of sexuality of older people showed that the intensity of ageism attitudes and attitudes towards one's own sexual satisfaction were important predictors of the level of this variable. However, the age of the subjects is not a predictor (Table 5.). A predictor of the perception of sexuality among older people among women turned out to be the level of presentation of ageism attitudes (Table 6.), and among men the declared level of sexual satisfaction (Table 7.). The magnitude of the multiple correlation coefficient (R) was 0,07. This indicates a very weak correlation between variables, which is also proved by the value of R^2 and the value of corrected R^2 , which are 0,00. The F value is 0,48, and $p = 0,49$, making the regression statistically insignificant.

Table 6.

Multiple regression analysis for surveyed women for variable: perception of sexuality of older adults.

	N=61	b*	Std. Error b*	b	Std. Error b	t(99)	p
Age				3,96	0,28	14,06	0,00
Sexual Satisfaction		0,12	0,11	0,08	0,07	1,18	0,24
Ageism		-0,54	0,11	-0,24	0,05	-5,01	0,00

Source: own research

Table 7.

Multiple regression analysis for surveyed men for variable: perception of sexuality of older adults.

	N=43	b*	Std. Error b*	b	Std. Error b	t(99)	p
Age				2,89	0,46	6,29	0,00
Sexual satisfaction		0,32	0,14	0,28	0,13	2,21	0,03
Ageism		-0,25	0,14	-0,11	0,06	-1,74	0,09

Source: own research

Discussion

During the research process, three key research questions were posed, and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to address them.

The first research question concerned the relationship between the level of ageism attitudes and the perception of sexuality in older people. In its context, the following hypothesis was put forward:

H1. People with a higher level of ageism tend to perceive the sexuality of older people less favourably than people with a lower level of ageism. This hypothesis was confirmed. The results show a negative but moderate correlation between the perception of sexuality of older people and the degree of ageism in the subjects. This means that the greater the approval of the sexuality of older people among the respondents, the weaker the degree of severity of ageism attitudes.

The study is part of the broader context of studies confirming the relationship between the perception of sexuality of older people and ageism attitudes. It can be concluded that discriminatory behaviour towards older people is also associated with a less favourable perception of their sexual sphere. The correlation between ageism and the perception of sexuality in older people can be explained by a number of theories. One of them is attribution, which, in terms of transactional analysis, represent the social expectations passed on to children by their parents. These expectations are about who and what we should be in

order to meet social expectations (Jagięła, 2017). Given that the sexuality of older adults remains a marginalized and often overlooked topic, compounded by stereotypes that exclude their sexual expression, it is unsurprising that stronger prejudices against older individuals correlate with less favorable perceptions of their sexuality. It can be argued that education about old age should be linked to greater attention to the problems of older people, while at the same time eliminating myths and stereotypes, including those related to sexuality. Such actions can improve the perception of older people in different spheres of their lives. The sphere of sexuality is one of the essential spheres of adult functioning.

The second problem concerned the verification of gender differences in the perception of sexuality among older people. The following hypothesis was put forward:

H2. Women rate the sexuality of older people less favourably than men. This hypothesis has not been confirmed. The analysis showed an insignificant difference between the sexes in the perception of the sexuality of older people.

This result may reflect the changes that have occurred in recent years in the perception of gender differences. This may be due to the fact that fewer and fewer institutions segregate citizens by gender, such as schools, workplaces (occupations), gender-related privileges (such as parental leave), which was the case even a few decades ago. Based on educational theories and transactional analysis, Berne suggested that people learn behaviours at an early stage of development (Jagięła, 2017). Therefore, teaching children at an early stage of education that women and men are not different “species” will contribute to the formation of appropriate attitudes in them. Today, gender is no longer a variable that differentiates society and the labour market to the same extent as before.

The third research problem concerned the verification of one’s sexual satisfaction with the perception of the sexuality of older people. In its context, the following hypothesis was put forward:

H3. Respondents with higher own sexual satisfaction rate the sexuality of older people more favourably than those with low sexual satisfaction. The results show a positive but weak relationship between the perception of sexuality in older people and sexual satisfaction.

Despite the limited number of studies focusing on the relationship between perceived sexual satisfaction and perceived sexuality of older adults, the literature suggests that there should be a positive correlation. The results of the study confirm this statement.

As an example, a study by Rebecca S. Allen, Kathryn N. Petro and Laura L. Phillips (2009) showed such relationship. Using the *Duke University Religion Index*, the *Aging Sexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale*, and the *Human Sexuality Questionnaire*, the researchers found that young adults who described their sex life positively rated the sexuality of older women more liberally.

The fourth research problem concerned the predictors of women's perception of sexuality of older people. The hypothesis is:

H4. The degree of favor in the perception of the sexuality of older people among women depends on the degree of presented ageism attitudes. The study showed a negative, strong relationship between ageism attitudes and the perception of sexual satisfaction, and a positive and weak correlation between the perception of sexuality in the elderly and sexual satisfaction in women. This means that a predictor of the sexual perception of older people is the degree of ageism among women.

The concept of ageism, while generally referring to the elderly, seems to apply more to women than to men. Analysis of the results of numerous studies suggests that older women are more discriminated against than their male counterparts (Kornadt, Voss, & Rothermund, 2013; Saxena & Shukla, 2016; McGann, Ong, Bowman, Duncan, Kimberley, & Biggs, 2016). This leads to natural consequences, including stronger stereotypes, prejudices and concerns related to the aging process in women. Studies show that women are more aware of this problem, more afraid of aging, but also more inclined to counteract this phenomenon from an early stage of life (Clarke, Griffin, 2008, quoting: Ayalon, Tesch-Romer, 2018; Saxena & Shukla, 2016; Lössbroek and Radl 2018, quoting: Kornadt, Kessler, Wurm, et al., 2020).

The fifth and final research problem concerned the predictors of the sexual perception of older men. The hypothesis for this research question is:

H5. The degree to which older men view their sexuality favourably depends on their sexual satisfaction. In men, there was a positive, moderate correlation between the perception of sexuality in older adults and their own sexual satisfaction, and a negative and weak correlation between ageism and the perception of sexuality of older adults. This means that a predictor of men's perception of the sexuality of older people is their level of sexual satisfaction.

The issue of differences between women and men in the sphere of sexual satisfaction has been addressed by both Polish and foreign researchers. Szymon Kucharski and Teresa Rzepa (2017) in their research on the relationship between self-esteem and sexual satisfaction proved that men showed statistically significant, higher satisfaction of sex life than women. This can be explained by the number of components that are responsible for feeling sexual satisfaction depending on gender. We know that for both men and women, sexual satisfaction is positively correlated with quality of life and quality of relationship. However, it is also important for women to build open, close, sincere relationships, to achieve common goals in a relationship and to self-fulfill (Żak-Łykus, Nawrat, 2013). A study by Agnieszka Nomejko, Grażyna Dolińska-Zygmunt and Anna Mucha (2017) also showed lower sexual satisfaction among women. Women paid more attention to the quality of communication in close relationships and its seniority, compared to men.

It can be concluded that since women's higher sexual satisfaction consists of more components than men's, it is more difficult to maintain it at the same high level. One can speculate that the assessment of sexual satisfaction is influenced not only by conscious factors, but also by unconscious factors, educated under the influence of culture and upbringing.

Conclusions

According to the results of the presented research, attitudes towards the sexuality of older people correlate positively, though weakly, with sexual satisfaction and negatively, at a moderate level, with ageism attitudes, while a strong negative relationship was observed between ageism attitudes and the perception of sexual satisfaction, alongside a weak positive correlation between the perception of older people's sexuality and sexual satisfaction among women. In contrast, men showed a positive, moderate correlation between perceived sexuality of older adults and sexual satisfaction, and a negative and weak correlation between ageism and perceived sexuality of older adults. The results confirm the hypothesis, but also show gender differences in feeling sexual satisfaction and presenting ageism attitudes.

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Postrzeganie sfery seksualnej osób starszych przez osoby młode, z uwzględnieniem postawy ageizmowej i poziomu własnej satysfakcji seksualnej

Streszczenie

Mimo iż społeczeństwo się starzeje i coraz więcej osób dożywa czwartego, a nawet piątego wieku, potrzeby osób starszych w Polsce są wciąż rzadko rozpatrywanym tematem społecznym i politycznym. Dyskryminacja osób starszych istnieje i dotyczy wielu dziedzin ich życia, również sfery seksualnej. Praca ma za zadanie określić, jakie postawy wobec seksualności osób starszych prezentują osoby w wieku 18–26 lat, z uwzględnieniem ich deklarowanej satysfakcji seksualnej oraz przejawianych postaw ageizmowych. Artykuł przygotowano w oparciu o badania przeprowadzone w grudniu 2022 roku, na grupie 114 osób. W badaniach zastosowano podejście ilościowe, a narzędziem były kwestionariusze badające nasilenie wymienionych zmiennych. Przeprowadzone badanie wykazało, że ocena seksualności osób starszych nie różni się ze względu na płeć osoby badanej oraz, że poziom ageizmu i satysfakcji seksualnej ma znaczenie przy ocenie wspomnianej seksualności. Badanie również wykazało, że dla mężczyzn predyktorem oceny seksualności osób starszych jest w większym stopniu satysfakcja seksualna niż dla kobiet, a dla kobiet predyktorem oceny są posiadane postawy ageizmowe bardziej niż dla mężczyzn.

Słowa kluczowe: ageizm, satysfakcja seksualna, seksualność osób starszych, analiza transakcyjna.



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Problematic Use of the Internet and Young Adults' Mental Health

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Abstract

The article is an attempt to present the phenomenon of problematic Internet use in the context of its potential links with other mental health issues. The objective of the presented pilot study was to check whether there is any link between the feeling of being addicted to the Internet and the occurrence of depression, anxiety and stress symptoms in young adults. 117 students from three universities took part in the study which used the authors' questionnaire and a shortened version of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21). The study revealed an alarmingly high level of depression, anxiety and stress in the group of respondents as well as a correlation between it and one's declaration of being addicted to the Internet.

Keywords: problematic use of the Internet, behavioural addictions, mental health, depression, student.

Introduction

The conceptualisation of the phenomenon of addiction to the Internet, both in theoretical and research terms, is significantly difficult. This is influenced by

both galloping technological changes and progressing adaptation (not always constructive) of children, adolescents and young adults to certain phenomena of the virtual world. Subsequent generations function not only in the reality of the Internet and smartphones, but in the situation of dynamically developing solutions based on artificial intelligence algorithms. Both gratification and negative consequences of this technological-psychological combination, existing in the life of a person not prepared for it, are currently difficult to estimate, and its future shape and consequences hard to predict. However, the correlations between e-activities and multifaceted health consequences occurring in web users are becoming more and more visible, which makes them a more frequent subject of various studies, not only in the area of pedagogy and psychology, but also medical and health sciences. With the concomitant increase in emotional and identity problems of adolescents and young adults, the addiction to the virtual world further exacerbates the mental health crisis in this age group.

This article tackles the phenomenon of problematic use of the Internet by young adults in the light of their mental health. The studies presented in the text aimed at determining the relationship between the feeling of being addicted to the Internet and the occurrence of depression, anxiety and stress in people that are about to enter adulthood with the experience of a generation growing up in the world of digital media. The survey, including the group of pedagogy, psychology and medicine students from three Warsaw universities, revealed an alarmingly high level of the feeling of depression, anxiety and stress in the group of respondents as well as the existence of a relationship between it and one's declaration of being addicted to the Internet.

Diagnosis of addiction to the Internet

An addiction can be diagnosed in a situation when an individual's behaviour linked with it and their actions cause damage or harm to themselves or those around them, while this behaviour continues despite this negative impact. An increasing pace of life and the need to look for continuous gratification while avoiding difficult emotional states is deeply linked with the whole pleasure and escape system, which can be manifested by one's immersion in cyberspace and making use of new technologies (Woronowicz, 2021, p.12). Thus, addiction to the Internet can be defined as the wrong way of participating in cyberspace, which can lead to disturbances of mental functions and behavioural disorders. The addiction is also manifested by difficulties pertaining to tolerance understood as the need of longer and longer Internet use in order to attain the sense of satisfaction and/ or a marked decrease in the sense of satisfaction despite being online for the same period of time (Woronowicz, 2001, p. 192).

The problem of cyber-addiction has become so serious that the guidelines concerning it are being systematically detailed. For example, a new version of the International Classification of Diseases ICD-11 introduces a new category concerning *disorders caused by addictive behaviours*, i.e. *Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD)*. This new clinical unit, similarly to the sub-category *non-substance related disorders* introduced earlier in the American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), understood as the one encompassing various mental disorders, where one of the factors is the loss of control (constant or recurring) over the intensity of one's action or performance of certain activities in spite of the feeling of loss or other negative consequences (Wojtczak et al., 2023, p. 2).

For a long time, problematic use of computer games (especially online) has been one of the most important and serious educational and health issues concerning the use of new technologies. Thus, it invariably attracts special attention from researchers. In the diagnostic context, the American Psychiatric Association (APA), in the fifth version of its classification of mental diseases, distinguishes the following symptoms of the disorder concerning online gaming: excessive preoccupation with playing; the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms such as irritability or anxiety; increasing tolerance; failed attempts to control playing; the loss of previous and alternative interests to gaming; constant and intrusive engagement in gaming despite its negative consequences; manipulation and deception of loved ones, teachers or therapists as far as time devoted to gaming is concerned; gaming as a manifestation of an attempt at a remedial mechanism, the occurrence of the risk of losing an important, close relationship or other psycho-social consequences. In order to diagnose the aforesaid disorder, there must be the occurrence of at least five abovementioned symptoms lasting no shorter than 12 months (Grajewski and Dragan, 2021, p. 78).

Based on the analysis of professional literature, one can distinguish three trends in the area of social-psychological determinants of Internet addiction. The first trend is psychodynamic, assuming the link between childhood traumas, personality traits and a tendency to become addicted to the Internet. The other tendency is behavioural concerning the reinforcement theory, which points to the fact that the Internet offers immediate gratification, good entertainment, the feeling of escape from real life problems, and an opportunity to develop close or even intimate relations with others. The last trend is connected with biomedical concepts which explain addiction as the deficiency of chemical substances in the brain, neurotransmitters that regulate its activity (Siudem, 2013, p. 173).

From the perspective of neuroscience, the particular vulnerability of children and adolescents to addiction derives from the immaturity of their central nervous system (CNS) structures. During the adolescent transition period, the brain is undergoing rapid maturation processes which last until the age of 25.

The dopaminergic system responsible for motivational systems may create a neurobiological base of abnormal behaviours such as addictions or compulsions. Other brain structures such as the prefrontal cortex or the amygdale responsible for integrating emotions and information processing are immature too (Radochońska and Radochoński, 2012, p. 18). Due to neurological need for stimulation, children and adolescents as well as young adults may choose stimuli providing high activation and stimulation with little effort. Such a condition is fulfilled by, among all, computer games, online games, telephone games or console ones, e.g. the RPG (Role-Playing Game, creating a character and his identity) and FPS (First-person Shooter, in which the player takes on the role of a character using several types of weapons, most often firearms), strategic, skill, logical, simulation, fantasy, and adventure games.

As the author of one of the first standardised tools for diagnosing cyber-addiction (the Internet Addiction Test), Kimberly S. Young states, compulsive use of the Internet includes four components: excessive use linked with neglecting one's basic biological and emotional-social needs; the feeling of withdrawal, including the feeling of anger, irritation, tension in a situation when one cannot have access to the Internet; increasing tolerance concerning more and more time spent online; negative consequences and losses regarding education, work, social relations. What is more, addicted persons manifest a destructive relapse cycle accompanied by inner dialogues and defence mechanisms such as rationalization, feeling of shame and regret due to time lost online, taking up abstinence followed by a relapse (Young, 2017, p. 44).

There are three basic models exploring the etiology of addictions in the context of developmental changes in adolescents and young adults. These models seem adequate not only in relation to addictions to psychoactive substances, but also in the context of behavioural addictions. These are:

- overload model, which is caused by stress triggered by the very changes and challenges of a given developmental period; in this case the virtual world is treated as an escape from duties and tasks typical for the real world;
- mismatch model, where the biggest focus is put on interactions taking place between a young person and their environment; when such needs are not met by the family, educational, or school environment, frustration grows, which leads to the occurrence of psychopathological symptoms in a person's behavior;
- model of increased heterogeneity, which regards the effectiveness of dealing with stressful situations by choosing constructive or non-constructive reactions; in such circumstances, adolescents may prefer e.g. virtual, not real-life relations, in this way satisfying their need of peer relations and quitting school (Radochońska and Radochoński, 2012, p. 25).

Addiction to the Internet proceeds in a few stages, the first one being fascination with the Internet, its potential and resources. An individual at that stage is not overly engaged in the virtual world and does not suffer from consequences of their addiction (losses). At the second stage of the addiction (hazardous use), the individual loses their ability to control and is subject to more and more frequent impulses of using the cyber space. The third stage has negative consequences deriving from lack of control of one's needs and behaviours. At that stage, the individual experiences deterioration in functioning in important spheres of life for an extended period of time (Kaliszewska, 2007, p. 82).

The subject matter of Internet addiction, initially focused on game addiction, nowadays covers a wider and more varied group of phenomena. Together with technological progress and future which is harder to predict, it should be assumed that both classifications and new definitions of cyber-addiction will be subject to further detailing. New e-addictions that have been described recently encompass the following:

- FoMo (Fear of Missing out) – addiction concerning fear of missing out on information or being omitted;
- Nomophobia (No Mobile Phone Phobia) – addiction concerning fear of separation from one's phone ; this type of fear (phobia) is becoming more and more frequent and gaining momentum every year. In Poland alone, 13% of people manifest the strongest and 52.6% moderate severity of nomophobia (Czerski, 2022 p. 137);
- Doomscrolling – understood as an addictive search for negative information; such behaviours are originally linked with the feeling of fear, anxiety and tension; although at the beginning, the Internet user tries to explore a given subject matter in order to calm down and avoid emotions difficult to accommodate, as a result they fall into a trap of obsessive and compulsive pursuit of a given activity, for example, checking the news about disasters, war sentiments or post-pandemic effects. This type of addiction was linked with passive and habitual use of social media, anxiety and poor self-control (Sharma et al., 2022, p. 1);
- cyberchondria – a compulsive tendency to worry about the state of one's health linked with simultaneous search for medical information on this subject on the Internet; concern for one's health is manifested by obsessive doubts and compulsive search for knowledge in order to diagnose one's ailments or ease tension and uncertainty (Woronowicz, 2021, p.132).

There is no doubt that the Internet, including social media, plays a very important role in psycho-social functioning of adolescents and young adults, and using digital technologies has become a universal and indispensable activity. Already before the pandemic, the percentage of school-age children using the net approached 100%, which was reflected by social surveys exploring the activity

of this age group on the Internet. The questions whether the respondents use the net have practically disappeared from questionnaires as the number of people answering them negatively oscillates below the statistical error limit. In the survey *Problematic Use of the Internet by Adolescents (Problematiczne użytkowanie Internetu przez młodzież)* conducted by Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę Foundation in 2019, 97.1% of adolescents stated that they use the Internet via their smartphones (Makaruk et al., 2019, p. 21). The question is not any longer “if” but “how long” young users stay online. The average amount of time teens use the Internet is steadily increasing. According to the survey *Teens 3.0 (Nastolatki 3.0)* conducted in 2023, on schooldays it equaled 5 hours and 36 minutes, whereas at weekend sit was 6 hours and 16 minutes (Lange et al., 2023). For many children exposure to the screen already begins before the age of two, and having reached adolescence, most teens are already completely immersed in the world of mobile devices. Early, abnormal relationships based on, e.g. cyber-victimisation in social media, may constitute potential risk factors regarding the occurrence of mental issues (Nesi, 2020, pp. 116-117). Today’s young adults partially belong to the end of generation Y, and partially to generation Z, which means they grew up in an already digitalized world (Barhate, Drani, 2022), which has become their primary operating environment, offering endless development and communication possibilities, but at the same time being full of temptation, traps and hazards not always easy to identify. Related experiences and habits from the period of childhood and adolescence may have an impact on one’s functioning in the years to come. A particularly worrying phenomenon today is a very high and growing number of children, adolescents and young adults with mental health problems (cf. Sitnik-Warchulska et al., 2019).

Mental health of adolescents and young adults

Among the most frequently mentioned issues in the area of mental health experienced by young adults are mood disorders (depressive disorders) as well as anxiety and stress disorders linked with them. These disorders often develop during one’s childhood and adolescence, and addiction to the Internet may constitute a prodromal or moderating factor in the context of the disease.

Among depressive disorders, i.e. unipolar affective disorders, one can mention serious mood disorders, including major depression and recurring depressive disorders. It should be emphasised that emotions difficult to handle such as sadness, discouragement, lack of hope and pessimism concern the majority of people and reaching a certain level of intensity they usually disappear on their own after a few days or weeks. Thus, a short depressive episode is usually aimed at adapting to a given stressful situation. However, when symptoms persist and

get more and more serious, a diagnosis for depression should be considered (Butcher et al., 2020, p. 277).

The development of depressive disorders is affected by biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors. Among theories concerning depression predictors in professional literature, these are the dominating ones:

- biological theories pertaining to the influence of somatic diseases and medicaments on how the organism functions,
- genetic theories – about 42% of people manifest susceptibility to major depression,
- neurochemical theories, including the monoamine theory of depression (depression understood as the result of a significant decrease in the number of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine in certain receptor areas of the brain),
- depression as a result of abnormalities in the hormonal and immune systems, especially in the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis and the hypothalamus - pituitary - thyroid gland axis (Butcher et al., 2020, p. 287).

Analysing organic causes of depression, it is worth quoting studies with the use of non-invasive methods of brain examination. Neuroimaging results indicate that cognitive abnormalities typical for depression are linked with the dysfunction of specific brain structures. Focusing on negative thoughts and gloomy visions is correlated with decreased activity of the upper parietal lobe, as well as ventral-lateral and dorso-lateral prefrontal cortex. What is more, the brain of a person with depression finds it much easier, comparing to a healthy person, to recall negative content. Moreover, overactivity of the brain's functional network, e.g. amygdala and hippocampus, is responsible for tunnel thinking and the growth of obsessive, negative thoughts in a given person (Golonka et al., 2024, p. 678).

Research overview

The research on Internet addiction has already been conducted for several decades and recently, since the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, publications pertaining to the subject matter of behavioural addictions in pedagogical, psychological and medical literature have been even more frequent.

Lozano-Blasco and others (2022) conducted the meta-analysis of studies, describing the results regarding Internet addiction among young adults. The meta-analysis included 30 studies from Europe, Asia, America and Oceania, encompassing the total sample of 21 378 people. The conclusions from the studies overview show that Internet addiction is becoming a bigger and bigger problem in most countries, and that it is linked with young adults experiencing interpersonal difficulties, depression and anxiety resulting in a more frequent occurrence of disorders and mental issues (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2022, p. 6).

Diotaiuti, Mancone and others (2022) conducted the research pertaining to inadequate Internet use in a group of 481 students. In the whole group, 38% of the respondents were diagnosed as addicted persons, whereas 37.7% displayed behaviours linked with excessive Internet use. Moreover, the analysis conducted regarded the relationship between Internet addiction and the trait of impulsiveness as well as the occurrence of co-addiction in the subjects, while both variables turned out to be predictors in the formation of addiction (Diotaiuti, 2022, p. 1).

Further research concerning the relationship between depression and anxiety disorder symptoms, and problematic use of smartphones by young adults was conducted by Elhai, Yang and others (2020). The research sample included 1034 Chinese BA students. The main objective of the research was to determine the relationship between the level of anxiety intensity as far as access to information and FOMO were concerned, and the occurrence of anxiety-depression disorders and an increase in the phenomenon of problematic smartphone use (PSU). The research results show a significant correlation between the aforesaid features and the occurrence of FOMO, which constituted a mediation variable between the anxiety level and intensified smartphone addiction (Elhai et al., 2020).

Wojtkowska, Hewiak and Gąsiorowska (2023) proposed a research project concerning a correlation between an educational aspect, including the parent-child relationship, and Internet addiction in children. 936 students (aged 7 to 14) qualified for the project, including 51.6% girls and 46.3% boys and 19 students (2.2%) who defined their sex as other. The strongest predictors of addiction risk in schoolchildren turned out to be their manifested level of anger and the child-mother attachment style. An abnormal relationship with a child's parent conditioned increased manifestations of depression, a higher level of anxiety and sleep issues, which were linked with excessive use of e-media. The quality of relations with a child's mother directly determined the child's self-regulation ability at the emotional level and the feeling of its agency, which was also significantly linked with the child's tendency to abuse the Internet. What is more, adults who abused social media created a less safe relation with their child, which itself intensified the risk of Internet abuse by the child (Wojtkowska et al., 2023, p. 59).

Research purpose and focus

Literature review on Internet addiction and mental health disorders in young adults shows the complexity of the problem. Therefore, the subject matter of this research is situated in an interdisciplinary context, both psycho-pedagogical and clinical.

The aim of the pilot study was to determine the relationship between the subjective feeling of being addicted to the Internet and the occurrence of depression, anxiety and stress symptoms in young adults. The cognitive objective was to broaden scientific knowledge on the relationship between Internet addiction and mental health of young adults. Having determined the main research problem, the following questions were posed: Do young adults declaring their subjective feeling of being addicted to the Internet manifest depression symptoms at the same time? Is there any relationship between the subjective feeling of being addicted to the Internet and the feeling of anxiety and stress in young adults? In the course of formulating working hypotheses, it was assumed that the answer to both questions was positive.

Research organisation

The research included 117 students from three Warsaw universities (The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Maria Skłodowska-Curie Warsaw Higher School, the Warsaw Medical Academy). One of them is a state establishment, the other two are private schools. The students of the following departments were recruited: Pedagogy (full-time and part-time studies), Psychology (full-time and part-time studies) and Medicine (full-time studies). The sample included definitely more women ($n=100$) constituting 85.5% of the respondents, while male respondents ($n=17$) constituted 14.5%. The majority of the students were young adults aged 19-29 ($n=97$), i.e. 82.9% of the group, where people over 30 years of age constituted in total ($n=20$), i.e. 17.1% of the respondents. Among the respondents, there were ($n=52$) 44.4% of them still living with their parents, while ($n=65$) 55.6% of them have already moved out. 60,7% ($n=71$) of the respondents declared being in a relationship.

The tools used for the research were the authors' own questionnaire concerning the subjective evaluation of one's addiction to the Internet and a shortened version of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) by P. F. Lovibond and S.H. Lovibond, in its Polish adaptation and pre-standardisation by Makara-Studzińska et al. (2024). The research was conducted in May 2024, in the form of an anonymous electronic questionnaire. IBM SPSS Statistics programme, version 29, was used for statistical analyses.

Research results and discussion

The distribution of the DASS-21 results in scales of depression, anxiety and stress among the respondents points to high scores on clinical scales. In

order to distinguish three sub-scales of the tool, variables depicting anxiety, depression and stress levels of the subjects were created sequentially, according to the key.

The table below presents the distribution of depression levels in the researched group in the DASS 21 test.

Table 1.
Depression levels measured by the DASS 21 questionnaire

Level of depression	Frequency	Percentage of valid ones
Within normal range	39	33.3%
Average	17	14.5%
Moderate	25	21.4%
High	17	14.5%
Very high	19	16.2%
Total	117	100%

Source: own research

The levels of depression on the depression scale in the sample group were as follows: within normal range 33.3%, average 14.5%, moderate 21.4%, high 14.5%, and very high 16.2%.

The next table presents the distribution of anxiety levels in the sample group in the DASS 21 test.

Table 2.
Anxiety levels measured by the DASS 21 questionnaire

Level of anxiety	Frequency	Percentage of valid ones
Within normal range	40	34.2%
Average	4	3.4%
Moderate	25	21.4%
High	10	8.5%
Very high	38	32.5%
Total of valid ones	117	100%

Source: own research

The levels of anxiety on the anxiety scale in the sample group were as follows: within normal range 34.2%, average 3.4%, moderate 21.4%, high 8.5%, and very high 32.5%.

The table below present the distribution of stress levels in the sample group in the DASS 21 test.

Table 3.
Stress levels measured by the DASS 21 questionnaire

Level of stress	Frequency	Percentage of valid ones
Within normal range	38	32.5%
Average	10	8.5%
Moderate	21	17.9%
High	26	22.1%
Very high	22	18.8%
Total of valid ones	117	100%

Source: own research

The levels of stress on the stress sub-scale in the sample group were as follows: within normal range 32.5%, average 8.5%, moderate 17.9%, high 22.1%, and very high 18.8%.

Table 4 presents the distribution of the answers concerning the subjective feeling of being addicted to the Internet.

Table 4.
The distribution of answers to the question: "Do you think you are addicted to the Internet? (e.g. scrolling through web pages, social media, shorts on YouTube, etc.)?"

Answer	Frequency	Percentage of valid ones
Yes	67	57.3%
No	21	26.5%
I don't know	19	16.2%
Total	117	100%

Source: own research

Answering the question concerning the subjective feeling of being addicted to the Internet, 57.3% of the respondents defined themselves as Internet addicted persons, 26.5% of the students stated that the issue of Internet addiction does not concern them, while 16.2% of the respondent had no opinion on the subject matter.

Within the framework of results analysis, the correlations of variables regarding the declaration of Internet addiction and the levels of depression, anxiety and fear were also studied. The results are presented in Table 5.

The correlation analysis was performed in pairs for the variables relating to the cafeteria of own questions and depression, anxiety and stress levels.

The analysis results indicated statistically significant positive relationships between the feeling of depression, anxiety and stress and one's declaration of their addiction to the Internet in the researched group. Thus, Internet addiction

entails high levels of stress: $r=0.451$ $p\leq 0.001$; depression: $r=0.432$ $p\leq 0.001$, and anxiety: $r=0.406$ $p\leq 0.001$.

Table 5.

Correlations between variables related to the declaration of Internet addiction and levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. Calculated with the use of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Question	Level of anxiety	Level of depression	Level of stress
Do you think you are addicted to the Internet (e.g. scrolling through web pages, social media, shorts on YouTube, etc.)?	$r=0.406$ $p\leq 0.001$	$r=0.432$ $p\leq 0.001$	$r=0.451$ $p\leq 0.001$

Calculated with the use of Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Source: own research

Summarising, as for the DASS 21 test determining the state of depression, anxiety and stress, 30.7% of the students researched manifest a high and very high level of depression, 41% of them manifest a high and very high level of anxiety, and 40.9% of them manifest a high and very high level of stress. Moreover, the subjective feeling of Internet addiction is correlated to a high level of depression.

These conclusions point to an alarming phenomenon, namely the intensification of depression symptoms in students. In the last years, other researchers presented similar results (Karmolińska-Jagodzick, 2019, p. 160). Certainly, an average or moderate level of anxiety and stress is in some way incorporated in students' educational and interpersonal activity, nevertheless, a high or very high level of anxiety and stress may herald the onset of a depressive episode or co-occur with it. Comparing the results obtained with the research of 2005, when a high level of anxiety was manifested by 41.3% of students, and a high level of depression was manifested by only 15.5% of students (Marek et al., 2005, p. 217), the increased change in the level of depression in students (by almost 100%), with unchanged levels of anxiety should be particularly noted. The state of mental health of young adults as a group that begins operating in the context of their own choices (e.g. relationships, taking up professional activity, deciding on starting a family) should receive special institutional and non-institutional attention.

Similar research results regarding the relationship between depressive states and the feeling of being addicted to the Internet are presented by Kuss and Griffiths (2011, after: Modrzyński, 2021) or Lin et al. (2016, after: Modrzyński, 2021). People using social media portals such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram for more than two hours per day are more likely to have mental health problems. Statistically, these users are characterized by lack of satisfaction with

their own life, a high level of anxiety and depressive moods. The research conducted among adolescents points to the fact that the more time a young person spends in e-media, the more often they suffer from classical depression symptoms and mood disorders (Modrzyński, 2021, pp. 104-105).

Conclusions

For pedagogical practice it is vital for students to be aware of the behavioural addiction problem. Although over half of them declare that they are in the addiction mechanism, but being aware of the problem (self-diagnosis, self-criticism) constitutes a starting point to seek professional help, for example, in the area of addiction psychotherapy.

The above studies should be considered as pilot studies. Due to the feminization of the group, further studies should verify in what way depression indicators are linked to Internet addiction in men. What is more, in further studies, it is worth introducing a standardized test diagnosing Internet addiction, going beyond the declaration of one's subjective feeling of being addicted (I am/ I am not addicted to the Internet).

The findings so far lead to a disturbing statement regarding not only the alarming rise in depression statistics among young adults, but also the correlation between this rise and addiction to the virtual world. Despite implementing new reforms focusing on mental health improvement and various media campaigns on depression prophylaxis, only a joint position of the pedagogical, psychological and medical communities will make it possible to develop holistic support interventions for the new young generation.

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Problematic use of the Internet and mental health of young adults

Streszczenie

Artykuł stanowi próbę przybliżenia zjawiska problematycznego używania Internetu w kontekście jego ewentualnych powiązań z innymi problemami zdrowia psychicznego. Celem zaprezentowanych badań pilotażowych było sprawdzenie, czy istnieje związek pomiędzy poczuciem bycia uzależnionym od Internetu a występowaniem objawów depresji, lęku i stresu u młodych dorosłych. W badaniu, w którym udział wzięło 117 studentów z 3 uczelni, wykorzystano autorski kwestionariusz oraz skróconą wersję Skali Depresji, Lęku i Stresu (DASS-21). Badanie wskazało na niepokojąco wysoki poziom poczucia depresji, lęku i stresu w grupie respondentów, a także na istnienie związku pomiędzy nim a deklaracją uzależnienia od Internetu.

Słowa kluczowe: problematyczne używanie Internetu, uzależnienia behawioralne, zdrowie psychiczne, depresja, student.

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The Profile of Ego States and Experiencing Positive and Negative Feelings in the Context of Vulnerability to Cyber Threats

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Abstract

This article presents the results of the author's research, which analyzed the Ego State profiles of computer users and their tendencies to experience positive and negative emotions in the context of their potential vulnerability to cyber threats. The study employed the ACL Adjective Checklist, the SUPIN Positive and Negative Affect Scale, and a custom questionnaire designed to assess participants' susceptibility to cyber threats.

The research was conducted using the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) technique on a group of 357 adults aged 18 to 76. For the ACL analysis, 206 surveys were selected based on results from the Com (Commonness) scale.

The findings did not reveal significant or clear relationships between the participants' Ego States and their vulnerability to cyber threats. However, such relationships were observed concerning the participants' affective traits. Positive affective traits serve as a protective factor in the context of cybersecurity, whereas negative traits increase susceptibility to cyber threats.

Keywords: Transactional Analysis, ego states, affective traits, emotions, cyber security.

Introduction

The social and psychological aspects of the subject matter pertaining to cyber security are not only very important but also very hard to analyse thoroughly. Technologies develop in an extraordinarily dynamic way. At the turn of the 21st century M. Castells (2003) wrote that the pace of changes makes it very hard for scientists to explore nature, language and Internet limitations, and to explain how economy and society based on this technology work. Unfortunately, despite the years that have gone by, his opinion still holds. Any conducted research quickly becomes obsolete due to the occurrence of new technological solutions. These, on the one hand, provide the users with new opportunities in the areas of work, entertainment or communication, and at the same time generate the areas of potential threats. The so-called IoT (Internet of Things) is developing rapidly. Nowadays, the exchange of data via the global net often happens automatically, and it is initiated by devices we use on a daily basis. Most modern cars are connected to the net, which makes it possible to monitor their functioning with the help of special applications. Monitoring systems accessible from every place of the globe are gaining popularity as well. Smart watches monitor our activity and health, saving information on this subject matter in the data cloud linked with the user's account. There are many more examples, and new devices with an option of access to the Internet regularly appear on the market. As a result, there is more and more data in the web and it is often sensitive.

Man as a subject in the cyber security chain

Analysing the aforesaid subject matter and trying to diagnose its state, technological solutions in the form of appropriate hardware and software security features are often put on the first place. Meanwhile, among all, M. Dun Cavely et al. (2023) directly suggest that we should change our priorities while thinking about cyber security, not treating it as a technological problem + people, but a social one + technology. Thus, it is vital to focus on educating society in the area of cyber security, and on analyses that help to identify an individual's features impacting their vulnerability to cyber threats. S. M. Albladi and G. R. S. Weir (2017) conducted very interesting studies in this area. The results obtained by them show that important predictors of human vulnerability to cyber threats are personality features combined with such factors as users' trust, their competencies, motivation and earlier experiences with cyber threats. It was stated that diligence, being agreeable and neurotic significantly decrease the user's vulnerability to cyber threats in the context of social networking, whereas being extrovert significantly increases the probability of falling a victim to cyber attacks.

M. Bada and J.R.C. Nurse (2020) additionally draw the readers' attention to the fact that we should also analyse how society members perceive the matters of potential risk and how potential incidents linked with cyber security might impact their functioning.

From the point of view of a person as a user of new technologies, ones of the most dangerous threats in the area of cyber security are the so-called social engineering attacks. Their efficacy depends on the traits, awareness, knowledge and skills of an attacked individual. They are based on appropriately selected manipulation mechanisms which are to convince a potential victim to take a step that will consequently put them at risk. There might be various consequences – from lost data to a financial loss. In their research conducted in academic environments, E. Benavides-Austido et al. (2022) showed that students are more vulnerable to social engineering attacks than lecturers. One of many reasons given by the authors is overconfidence and lack of experience. At the same time, the research showed that persons who spend more time in front of their computer and are more tolerant towards potential risky behaviours are more vulnerable to social engineering attacks.

One type of social engineering attacks are frauds based on messages sent to potential victims, in which the sender convinces the addressee to pay a certain sum of money into their account in return for the promise of a significant profit or under the threat of disclosing compromising information. Among all, M. Ajayi (2022) conducted some research in this area. Having analysed discursive-manipulative strategies in over 200 e-mails and 50 messages in Nigeria, he identified discursive manipulating strategies such as a positive and negative false alarm, self-depreciation, language formulas, and references to theistic and religious contexts. The research concerned Nigerian society, but the issue of that type of fraud is present all over the world and works according to a similar scheme. The author of this publication also analysed this phenomenon in cooperation with M. Kurkowski, B. Gozdecki and W. Steingartner, studying the language of internet fraudsters from the angle of transactional analysis (2023). Further on, describing the results of their research, B.G. Anders et al. draw the readers' attention to the fact that users find it difficult to spot false e-mails and are not aware of consequences of careless sharing of personal information online. They also emphasise the need to employ educational strategies that aim at increasing the awareness and knowledge in users of new technologies.

Doubtlessly, apart from education, it is also necessary to introduce appropriate security at the hardware and software level. It shall be remembered though that especially in case of consumer devices, it is the user who turns on and configures a given device. Will they have enough awareness to use appropriate passwords? Will they care to update software regularly? D. Dave et al. focus on the importance of these aspects as in their conclusion from their own research ana-

lysing four main categories of threats, they identified the most important of them. These are malware attacks, social engineering attacks, network security vulnerabilities and data breaches (2023).

At the end, it is worth mentioning that among solutions that are to improve the state of cyber security there are also those that are trying all the time, often with the use of artificial intelligence, to look for all the information on potential threats in order to react to it as quickly and efficiently as possible. One of such sources of information are social media, and the publication by A. Alevizopoulou et al. (2021) gives an example of such a solution. The authors designed, implemented and evaluated a system which monitors Twitter in order to identify information on cyber threats linked with the Internet of Things.

Transactional Analysis and emotional states in the context of cyber security

One might write endlessly about cyber security, yet it seems that the aforementioned facts and publications unanimously confirm the need to draw more attention to man as a subject using new technologies. This publication attempts to analyse the impact of undertaking risky behaviours by the users of new technologies due to such user traits as their tendency to accept particular affective states and their profile of ego states understood according to the concept of transactional analysis.

M. M. Tugade and B. L. Fredrickson (2007) draw the readers' attention to the fact that experiencing positive emotions correlates positively with the inner location of control, the feeling of satisfaction with one's life or one's self-esteem. Thus, it seems it may be assumed that it shall correlate negatively with an individual's vulnerability to cyber threats. In order to take care of one's security, it takes certain energy and engagement, which demands motivation, patience and self-control from an individual. B. L. Fredrickson also writes about the broaden and build theory (2001), according to which positive emotions have long-term consequences for human development. They are tools for building social relations and bonds, build mental resilience and stimulate an individual's self-development. R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci (2000) also mention the role of positive emotions as one of the factors influencing intrinsic motivation, self-development or initiative. On the other hand, J. J. Gross emphasises the importance of knowing how to regulate emotions as that skill helps an individual to decrease negative emotions and take rational and effective decisions, acting efficiently.

Taking into account the aforesaid assumptions, it can be stated that positive emotions and positive thinking shall have a positive impact on an individual's security in the world of new technologies.

This article also takes into account ego states understood according to the concept of transactional analysis, which was created by E. Berne. Transactional analysis was developed in the 50s of the 20th century as a psychotherapeutic concept. Its indisputable advantage is simple and clear terminology, which makes it possible to understand phenomena analysed with its use also for people outside scientific circles. TA assumes the existence of three basic ego states: the Parent ego state, the Adult ego state and the Child ego state. According to the founder, Eric Berne, these are sets of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The Parent ego state consists in imitating the behaviour and feelings of parents or other important people; the Child ego state consists in recreating childhood emotions and behaviours; the Adult ego state is the reaction based on an objective assessment of a situation with the use of skills and resources at one's disposal. This division constitutes the so-called first-order structural analysis (2005). Further divisions are made if there is a need of more complex analyses. This publication uses the so-called functional analysis that distinguishes additional sub-categories within the Parent and Child ego states (Stewart & Joines, 2016):

- The Normative Parent ego state controls and sets norms.
- The Nurturing Parent ego state ensures support and care.
- The Adapted Child ego state teaches how to adapt to social expectations and norms.
- The Free Child ego state is responsible for joy, creativity and spontaneity.

The Parent ego state is not subject to further division here.

Using the concept of transactional analysis in the context of analysing the behaviour of users of new technologies is not a new idea. It can be even said that there are already certain achievements and traditions in this field. For example, the research by A. Pierzchała in which she analyses communication on internet forums, identifying, among others, the users' ego states from the level of which they send their messages (2010). The author of this publication also has got certain achievements in this field as he analysed the phenomenon of projecting the user's ego state profile on new media (Łęski, 2016). Thus, the potential of transactional analysis in this field has already been proven and this publication is the search for further areas where this concept can be applied.

Methodological assumptions

The aim of this research was determining the relations occurring between the profile of ego states studied from the perspective of transactional analysis at the level of functional analysis, and predilections for experiencing positive and negative feelings in the context of vulnerability to cyber threats understood as a predilection for undertaking potentially risky activities in cyberspace. The

research was conducted with the help of the CAWI (Computer-assisted web interviewing) questionnaire technique. It rendered 357 fully completed questionnaires.

The following research problems were formed:

1. What is the relation between the charges' ego states and their affective traits (experiencing positive and negative feelings)?
2. What is the relation between the charges' ego states understood from the point of view of transactional analysis and their vulnerability to cyber threats?
3. What is the relation between affective traits (experiencing positive and negative feelings) and the charges' vulnerability to cyber threats?

The research uses the following tools:

1. The Adjective Checklist (ACL) by H.G. Hough, A.B. Heilbrun Jr – Polish normalisation (Martowska, 2012)
2. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) by D. Watson and L. A. Clark – Polish adaptation of the scale (SUPIN) (Brzozowski 2010)
3. The Questionnaire of Vulnerability to Cyber Threats developed by the author for the purposes of this publication.

The Adjective Checklist (ACL) is a tool destined to research teenagers and adult people. The Polish normalization of the ACL was performed by the team of the Psychological Testing Laboratory of the Polish Psychological Association. The ACL serves to diagnose various dimensions of human personality, and it has its sources in the works of H. G. Gough, who, in 1952, published a list of 300 adjectives destined to evaluate some personality dimensions. The ACL contains 37 scales divided into 5 parts, and this publication uses the fourth part containing five scales constructed on the basis of the concept of E. Berne's transactional analysis.

1. Controlling Parent – CP
2. Nurturing Parent – NP
3. Adult – A
4. Free Child – FC
5. Adapted Child – AC

Additionally, the Com (commonness) scale was taken into account, which allowed for rejecting the answers that in the authors' opinion might have been provided randomly.

It is important to note that the research described in this publication was conducted in Poland using the Polish version of the ACL textbook, published in 2012. The Polish translations for the Ego States in the ACL manual did not fully align with their English counterparts. For example, the term Controlling Parent was translated as "Rodzic Krytyczny" (literally, Critical Parent), Free Child as "Dziecko Spontaniczne" (literally, Spontaneous Child), and Adapted Child as

“Dziecko Uległe” (literally, Submissive Child). In 2016, with the publication of the Polish edition of *Transactional Analysis Today* by S. I. Stewart and V. Joines (*Analiza transakcyjna dzisiaj*), these translations were revised to reflect the original English terminology. This publication adheres to the standardised terminology introduced in 2016.

The ACL consists of 300 adjectives ordered alphabetically. All the adjectives together with the instruction are placed on one A4 sheet of paper, both sides. The task of a charge is to choose adjectives which in their opinion relate to them the most.

The reliability of the tool within the analysed scales for women ranges from 0.67 (CP) to 0.78 (FC). For men, the alpha values range from 0.61 (CP) to 0.79 (NP). Sten standards are developed separately for women and men aged 15-69.

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) is a tool that serves to measure the intensification of positive and negative emotions. It has four different versions and is destined to measure both current emotional states (versions S20 and S30) and stable affective traits (versions C20 and C30). This study uses C30 version consisting of 30 entries and serving to study relatively stable affective traits.

The PANAS version used in this research consists of two scales:

PA-15 – positive feelings

NA-15 – negative feelings

Both of the above scales consist of 15 adjectives each, placed on one-A4 sheet of paper, and the charge’s task is to relate to each adjective at a five-score scale from *slightly or not at all* (1) to *very much* (5), according to the instruction that says, “Read every word and think how you GENERALLY or USUALLY feel. Then, tick the right answer.”

The reliability of the tool in its C30 version is high. Cronbach’s alpha equals 0.89 for the PA scale, and 0.95 for the NA scale for the group of women, and for men it is 0.86 for PA and 0,94 for NA respectively. Sten standards are developed separately for women and men.

The Questionnaire of Vulnerability to Cyber Threats is the author’s tool developed for the purposes of this publication. It consists of 16 statements referring to potentially risky behaviours on the Internet or rules concerning cyber security. The questionnaire was drawn in such a way so as to have a possibility to correlate each statement separately, and also as one scale rendering a general result of vulnerability to cyber threats. Cronbach’s alpha equals 0.7 for this scale. It should be emphasised that this tool has an experimental form and shall be improved during further research conducted by the author.

The charges were also asked about their age, sex and education, and their self-esteem in the area of operating new technologies was checked too.

The report on research results

As mentioned, the research was conducted using the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) questionnaire technique. Among the 357 fully completed questionnaires, 276 were completed by women and 81 by men. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 76, with the highest number of responses from those at the younger end of this range. The average age of respondents was 28.5 years, with a median age of 23. A total of 167 respondents held higher education degrees, while 190 had completed secondary education. The majority assessed their skills in using new technologies as very high (94 respondents) or high (131 respondents). An average skill level was reported by 99 respondents, while low and very low skill levels were reported by 26 and 7 respondents, respectively.

The ACL analysis, based on grouping by frequency (number of selected adjectives) and results on the Com (Commonness) scale, was conducted on 206 questionnaires completed by respondents aged 19 to 76 (average age of 29, median age of 23). This group included 167 women and 39 men. In terms of education, 95 respondents in this group held higher education degrees, while 112 had completed secondary education. Regarding their self-assessed technological skills, 43 rated them as very high, 81 as high, 59 as average, 20 as low, and only 3 as very low.

Given the nature of the conducted research and the distribution of the data in the studied population, the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was employed to explore potential relationships between the variables. This non-parametric method was chosen due to its suitability for data that do not meet the assumptions of normal distribution. While the results of the analysis revealed few statistically significant and clearly observable correlations, they do highlight certain noticeable trends. These trends provide valuable insights and suggest directions for future, more in-depth analyses.

Analysing the correlation between the charges' ego states and their affective traits, there was only one significant correlation coefficient whose value points to a slight yet noticeable correlation where $r=0.226$; $p=0.001$. It is the coefficient illustrating the correlation between positive affective traits (the PA scale) and the Adult ego state (A). Due to the implementation of the ACL list to determine the respondents' ego states, the analysis was carried out on the sample of $N=206$.

The Adult ego state in transactional analysis is responsible for rational, logical thinking, objective and adequate understanding of reality and decision taking based on reliable and objective analysis of available information. Currently we also talk about the Integrated Adult ego state that is able to use all the individual's ego states in a harmonious way. Z. Wieczorek (2017) was one of the authors writing about the integration of the Adult ego state, while G. Žvelc introduced the concept of the Mindful Adult (2010). The positive correlation ob-

served here points to the fact that persons using the Adult ego state more often, at the same time have a tendency to think positively about themselves and others. As it has been mentioned in the previous parts of this article, positive thinking offers strength and motivation for self-development. And the outcome of this self-development is a well-formed Adult ego state.

Unfortunately, there have been no clear and significant correlations observed between the respondents' ego states and their vulnerability to cyber threats. The result in relation to the scale of vulnerability that contains all the statements of the questionnaire is statistically insignificant. It is similar in case of pairing with particular statements of the questionnaire. There is one exception, namely a correlation between the Controlling Parent ego state and the statement, "The computer that I work on is always equipped with up-to-date security software (antivirus, firewall, etc.)." In this case $r=0.186$; $p=0.007$. As it can be seen, the result is statistically significant at the level of 0.05 accepted for social sciences, but the value of the correlation coefficient is very low and points to a very weak correlation (J. F. Hemphill, 2003, writes more about various approaches to the interpretation of the value of the correlation coefficient in psychometrics). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that this correlation in this very place seems expected and most certainly justified. The Controlling Parent is based to a large extent on standards and rules, and regular security software upgrade is one of the most important rules which are repeated in the context of cyber security.

There were also two more statistically significant results – the correlation between the statement, "In social media I like showing my friends regularly what I do, where I go, what I watch, etc." and the Adult and Free Child ego states. The coefficients equalled there $r=0.15$; $p=0.03$ and $r=0.142$; $p=0.04$ respectively. The value of the coefficients is even lower here than in the case described above and likewise it can at most testify to a very weak correlation. While in the case of the Free Child ego state this correlation might have been justified (spontaneity, willingness to share impressions, acting under the influence of impulse – not necessarily thought over, etc.), it is puzzling in the case of the Adult ego state. Of course, it could be written that due to the low value of the coefficient it can be assumed that the result is not bounding and it should not be analysed any further. Nevertheless, it is statistically significant. It seems that it might point to the need to work on that statement in further research projects or to the necessity of its analysis together with other variables. Sharing every moment thoughtlessly in social media constitutes a serious threat to an individual's security and very often not only cyber security. At the same time though, it can also concern, for example, only the area of interests and omit sensitive and potentially dangerous content. It can also focus only on the user's job. Finally, it can be subject to different rules that minimize potentially negative outcomes. For example,

caring to include in the group of friends that have access to such information only those that are really known to the user and trustworthy, or an appropriate selection of information and the choice of dates on which particular pieces of information are published. In other words, in fact we deal here with two types of users, which was not fully taken into account while developing the research tool. On the one hand, there are those that from the level of the Free Child ego state post a lot of information on themselves, not even thinking where these messages go and how they may be used. On the other hand, there are those who purposefully and knowingly, from the level of the Adult ego state, promote certain content and post new messages with the care about the rules concerning cyber security.

The next question posed in the methodological part of this article regards potential correlations between affective traits of the respondents and their vulnerability to cyber threats. With regard to the scale of vulnerability that comprises all the statement of the questionnaire, the correlation coefficients both with the scale of positive feelings and the scale of negative feelings are statistically significant. In case of positive feelings (PA) $r=-0.175$, $p=0.001$. In case of negative feelings (NA) $r=0.195$, $p=0.0001$. Thus, as it can be seen, in both cases we deal with slight correlations, while the PA scale correlates negatively and the NA scale positively. The obtained results confirm the considerations contained in the earlier sections of this paper, saying that experiencing positive emotions can act protectively against cyber threats. A statistically significant negative correlation between positive affective traits and vulnerability to cyber threats suggests that persons with a higher level of positive emotions may be less vulnerable to such threats. It is consistent with the aforesaid broaden and build theory by Fredricson (2001) that emphasizes that positive emotions contribute to developing mental resilience and building social bonds, which, as a result, might impact an individual's ability to manage risk effectively. As for the positive correlation between negative affective traits and vulnerability to cyber threats, it confirms the earlier theses suggesting that negative emotions might decrease motivation to act in the area of cyber security, which increases vulnerability to threats. The results fully correspond with the earlier research that points to the importance of emotions and emotional regulation in the context of cyber security. They confirm the theoretical assumptions that positive emotions and the ability to regulate them are key to ensure better protection against cyber threats, whereas negative emotions might foster greater vulnerability to such threats.

Analysing the correlations between the tendency to feel positive and negative emotions and particular statements allowed for observing a few interesting results, which confirm the conclusions mentioned above even more strongly. They are all presented in Table 1.

Table 1

A summary of significant correlations between the PA and NA scales and the statements linked with potential vulnerability to cyber threats

Statements:	PA	NA
The computer that I work on is always equipped with up-to-date security software (antivirus, firewall, etc.).	0.115*	-0.046
Before I click on the "OK" button on the screen, I always read and check what I will confirm in this way.	0.109*	-0.047
I distinguish messages that might be a form of Internet fraud or contain malware.	0.211**	-0.127*
I can effectively search for and select information on the Internet.	0.254**	-0.151**
In my Internet comments I happen to react with anger and aggression.	-0.110*	0.232**
If I get an e-mail message, e.g. from the Polish Post with the information that I shall click on the link within to confirm that I want to receive a package, I will simply click on it.	-0.156**	0.122*
Inviting people I have never met to the group of friends/ followers on social media portals is in fact OK.	-0.072	0.198**
I try to use good passwords, containing combinations of various signs, different for every important service I use.	0.162**	-0.098
In social media I like showing my friends regularly what I do, where I go, what I watch, etc.	0.059	0.159**

* Significant correlation at the level of 0.01

** Significant correlation at the level of 0.05

Source: own research

Although the obtained values of correlation coefficients point to weak correlations, clearly there is a consistency and a recurring pattern here, according to which positive feelings foster activities improving the respondents' cyber security, and negative feelings increase the risk of vulnerability to cyber threats. Clearly, this trend is evident when we take into account the statements concerning one's ability to spot messages that might be a form of Internet fraud, the declaration about one's ability to effectively search for and select information, one's tendency to react with anger and aggression in their online relations. In each of the cases above there were statistically significant results with mutually opposing values (positive versus negative).

Summary and conclusions

This article aimed at the attempt to look at the issue of an individual's vulnerability to cyber threats from the perspective of their tendency to experience

positive or negative feelings and people's ego states in the context of transactional analysis. The results obtained are satisfying, looking from the perspective of affective traits. The author's assumptions deriving from scientific texts concerning the impact of positive and negative emotions on human functioning and development, stating that positive emotions shall positively correlate with activities increasing security, contrary to the negative ones have been confirmed. At the same time, the research did not show any clear and significant correlations that could be related to the influence of the respondents' ego states on their vulnerability to cyber threats. One would expect positive correlations between activities improving security and the Adult ego state, but unfortunately no such correlations have been proven. A question that one should pose at this moment is whether it means that there are no such correlations or a methodological mistake was made. It seems worth considering some further studies in this area but with the use of a different tool than the ACL. The ACL is a very complex questionnaire, offering the possibility of analysis on many different scales. The CR (Critical Parent) scale has a rather low reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient equals 0.61) and the textbook suggests excluding it from individual diagnosis. In fact, the minimum acceptable value in social and psychological studies is 0.7, while for clinical studies and individual diagnosis it is at least 0.8 (see e.g. Nunnally, Bernstein, 1994, pp. 264-265). Meanwhile, in the research in question, as for the area of ego states, most of the respondents obtained the highest result just in the area of the Critical Parent (CP) ego state, which, taking into account the abovementioned value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, calls into question the reliability of the whole analysis concerning the respondents' profile of ego states. What is more, in the future it is worth considering a search for more complex correlations, where ego states can have a function of intermediary variables.

The observed correlations are particularly interesting and valuable, as they indicate an increasing cybersecurity risk with higher levels of negative affect, while positive affect plays a significant protective role in this context. Maintaining cybersecurity requires positive emotional states, such as engagement, motivation, and initiative. This seems to be an important yet underestimated aspect of ensuring cybersecurity. Therefore, alongside training focused specifically on cybersecurity skills and competencies, greater emphasis should be placed on workshops that develop social skills and the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, particularly among the younger generation.

In conclusion, these studies have confirmed the importance of positive affective traits with regard to care about one's own security. At the same time, they have not confirmed the correlation between vulnerability to cyber threats and the profile of the respondents' ego states, at the same time showing the

direction of further research and analyses, not dismissing the potential that the concept of transactional analysis brings in this regard.

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Profil stanów ja a przeżywanie uczuć pozytywnych i negatywnych w kontekście podatności na cyberzagrożenia

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule opisano wyniki badań własnych autora, w których dokonano analizy profilu stanów Ja użytkowników komputera oraz jego tendencji do przeżywania uczuć pozytywnych i negatywnych, w kontekście jego ewentualnej podatności na cyberzagrożenia. W badaniach wykorzystano listę przymiotnikową ACL, skalę uczuć pozytywnych i negatywnych SUPIN oraz kwestionariusz autorski do weryfikacji podatności badanych na cyberzagrożenia.

Badania prowadzone były techniką ankietową CAWI na grupie 357 osób dorosłych w wieku od 18 do 76 lat, przy czym do analizy przy pomocy listy ACL, na podstawie wyników w skali Com (Typowość) wytypowano 206 ankiet.

Uzyskane wyniki nie wykazały istotnych i wyraźnych zależności pomiędzy stanami Ja badanych a podatnością na cyberzagrożenia. Zależności takie zaobserwowano jednak w odniesieniu do cech afektywnych badanych. Pozytywne cechy afektywne są czynnikiem chroniącym w kontekście cyberzagrożeń, podczas gdy cechy negatywne zwiększają podatność badanych w tym zakresie.

Słowa kluczowe: analiza transakcyjna, stany Ja, cechy afektywne, emocje, cyberbezpieczeństwo.



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Educational Needs of Young Pedagogues in the Light of Transactional Educational Hungers and in Relation to Their Professional Personality Types

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of research relating to the educational needs of young pedagogues in relation to their professional personality types. The research was conducted using the Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE) and the Holland Occupational Personality Test. Students of pedagogy at the Humanitas Academy in Sosnowiec and students of pedagogy, psycho-prevention and psychological support at the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa were involved in this research. The KPE study showed a high level of student indications of hunger for recognition and stimulation. When analysing the students' research with the Holland Occupational Personality Test, results were obtained that clearly indicated a dominant social personality. A statistically significant relationship was observed between realistic style and hunger for stimulation, where the stronger the realistic style, the more stimulation it needs; artistic style and hunger for stimulation, where the stronger the artistic style, the more stimulation it needs; conventional style and hunger for structure, where the stronger the conventional style, the more structure it needs. Research into the individual differences of prospective pedagogue within their personality traits, coupled with an examination of their educational needs, can provide solutions to many educational problems, as well as pointing the way to better pedagogue education.

Keywords: transactional educational hungers, pedagogue, educational needs, professional personality.

Introduction

Catering for children's needs enhancing their educational success has become the priority of modern education. Undoubtedly, it is valuable to draw the readers' attention to satisfying the needs of students of pedagogical faculties who shall become a leading force in educating future generations. Paying attention to the needs of prospective pedagogues staff, we have an impact on shaping the quality of this education. Satisfying needs that are called educational hungers in Transactional Analysis terminology may become a key to ideal preparation of prospective pedagogues who are about to teach children.

The impact of a given teacher's personality on the student's functioning in the classroom is certainly interesting. In their research on students' functioning in the classroom assessed by teachers of various personalities, J. Miecznik-Warda and I. Kovalčíková (2022) concluded that teachers' personality types undoubtedly influence the process of education and how students of different disposition are perceived. W. J. Kenney and B. F. Lyons (1979, after: Jagieła, 2017) also analysed teachers' behaviours, trying to determine if their functioning is of a personal nature or if it is rather stable, or maybe it depends on a situation. The conducted research encourages to take a closer look at this phenomenon.

Taking into account the cognitive educational paradigm based on the modern approach to students' individual development, it can be assumed that "there is no physical feature, behavioural pattern or mental trait that would not introduce differences among people" (Andrukowicz, 1998). Thus, the research concerning individual differences of prospective pedagogues within their personality traits linked with analysing their educational needs may constitute a solution to many educational issues, and show the way to educating prospective educators staff in a better way.

The concept of educational hungers according to E. Berne

The Dictionary of Transactional Analysis reads as follows, "Needs are described in Transactional Analysis as hungers. At early development stages, hungers function at the biological level, surfacing at the psychological level later on. Hungers are most frequently divided into:

- hunger for stimulation – need to experience feelings and stimuli;
- hunger for recognition – need for support and others' acceptance;
- hunger for time structure – need to order experiences in time" (Jagieła, 2012, pp.76).

If the aforesaid needs are not satisfied, it may lead to a certain discomfort in functioning in the educational process. E. Berne stated that "most people feel

very anxious when they face lack of structure” (1991, pp. 41 after: Widawska & Pierzchała 2020). The author claims that satisfying hungers allows for appropriate and effective realization of the educational process.

— hunger for stimulation

Hunger for stimulation refers to a great extent to an individual’s feelings and stimuli or rather lack of them. In the educational process, hunger covers lack of stimuli in the area of an individual’s mental and physical needs during organized didactic situations (Steiner, 1982; Cornell, Graaf de, Newton, Thunnissen, 2016).

— hunger for recognition

Hunger for recognition is tightly linked with human reactions as it is satisfied by contact with another human being. Berne determined a unit of recognition calling it a stroke, referring to physical cuddling that a child receives in their early childhood (Berne, 1966). A stroke is defined as “A unit of interpersonal recognition and support being in its nature each act of recognizing one’s presence and being noticed by other people” (Jagieta, 2012, pp.75). When it comes to the educational process, we deal with satisfying hunger for recognition by a student contacting a teacher or a student contacting another student.

— hunger for time structure

Hunger for time structure or order is an individual’s need to function against the background of clear and transparent rules. In case of the educational process, these needs will be linked with access to information on what we shall study, what the rules are, time limits and expected results or the results that we expect (Newell & Jeffery, 2002; Widawska & Pierzchała, 2020).

Types of professional personality according to Holland

Holland’s theory presents the structure of professional preferences and the relations between an individual and the environment that offer an opportunity of choice and professional development. Professional preferences are depicted here in the form of six professional personality types that vary in the way of perceiving information about professions, its accumulation or understanding. Their choice is simultaneously a diagnosis of an individual’s professional personality. There are six types to be distinguished: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional (Holland 1992, pp. 25). Holland also depicted preferences of various professional environments, which are characterised by certain personality types, appropriate behavioural patterns or problem solving approaches and characteristic paths of professional development. Thus, in certain environments, like in case of personality types, a characteristic preference profile dominates (Bajcar et al., 2006).

Holland drew attention not only to an individual's right choice of their professional environment, but also to the demands of this professional environment towards a candidate for a given profession. The unanimity of an individual's and the professional environment's preferences can be called a match. In this case, an indicator of matching should be an extent to which both an individual and the environment recognize the aforementioned demands (Syroka, 2003).

Therefore, there is a regularity in which a given professional environment with uniform preferences is matched with appropriate types of professional personality, also with similar preferences.

Holland distinguished the following types of professional personality:

- investigative type – depicts a type of people whose main activity is investigating, researching, observing and analysing. They choose jobs that consist in problem solving with the help of strict scientific methods. These persons are analytical, inquisitive, accurate, logical, rational.
- artistic type – it is a type of professional personality with artistic preferences, characterized with clarity of emotions, sentimentalism, expressiveness. These persons are creative, innovative, sensitive and extraordinary. They choose creative activities, where they are encouraged to think outside the box, develop their talents in artistic fields: arts, music, literature, etc.
- social type – it is a type of person who likes working among people. People with such personality traits like reading, educating, raising, helping, training. They prefer working for the benefit of others, they love to spread good. They are tactful, empathetic, sympathizing. They are also generous, sociable, cooperating and understanding.
- enterprising type – it describes a type of person who knows how to manage others, has general managerial skills, knows how to lead and give advice. These people are energetic, extrovert, striving to achieve their goal, knowing how to influence others, delegate tasks, control. They are geared towards career and profit. They can publicly present themselves and their actions.
- conventional type – it is a type of person who prefers working with data, i.e. statistics, analyses, calculations, bills. These people work methodically, are accurate, systematic, practical. They like clear instructions, recipes, rules and directives. In the eyes of others, they pass as cautious, conformist, enjoying material goods.
- realistic type – these people are good at sport, designing things, manually talented. They are perceived as logical, matter-of-fact, practical, frank and straightforward. In their job they prefer contact with nature or machines. They like designing, building, DIY activities. At the same time, they aim at achieving substantial material profits in these areas.

Moreover, Holland also distinguished working environments most optimal for a given personality type. These are the following environments: investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional and realistic. He evaluated the compatibility of a given personality type and environment with the help of the Hexagon Model he created himself (Dworzańska, 1998).

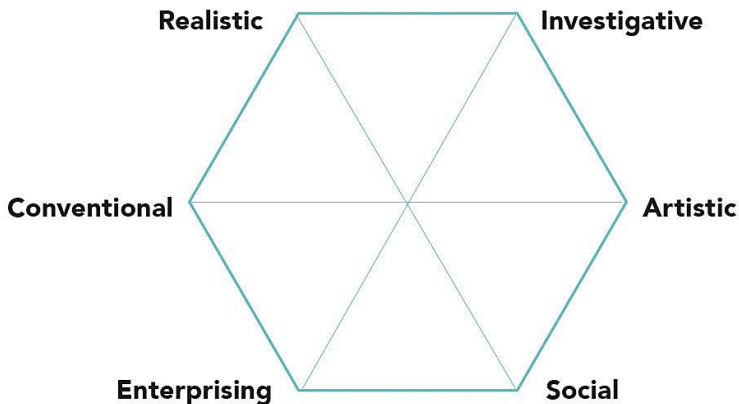


Figure 1

Holland's Hexagon Model: RIASEC

Source: E. Papanis (2017).

The author states that the compatibility in the hexagonal model above reflects the distances between particular angles of this figure. It is an indicator of compatibility of one's professional personality and their working environment. Thus, neighbouring personality types and environment types corresponding to them are compatible to the largest extent.

Research methodology

A point of departure for the research in question was the main research problem included in the following question:

- What are educational needs of young pedagogues in relation to their professional personality types?

Detailed subject matters encompassed the following questions:

- What are educational needs of pedagogy students?
- What type of professional personality characterises pedagogy students?

The research was conducted on the premises of two Silesian higher education institutions hosting the faculty of pedagogy: the Humanitas Academy in Sosnowiec and Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa. The main criterion for choosing the above was their willingness to cooperate in the field of carrying the research out. From a selection typology point of view, it was an accessible and partially intended choice.

The study covered 101 female and male persons studying pedagogy, specialising in the fields of pre-school and early-school education, from the Humanitas Academy in Sosnowiec, and those specialising in pedagogy, psychoprophylaxis and psychological counselling from Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa. The study was conducted in May and June 2024.

Tools and procedures

The Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE) and the Holland Occupational Personality Test were used in the research.

Questionnaire of Educational Needs

The Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE) serves to measure the intensity of educational needs according to previously discussed E. Berne's concept of hungers. The questionnaire involves 75 questions regarding activities that help the charges in their learning and teaching process, divided into 25 questions referring to each type of hunger: structure, stimulation and recognition. All the questions are closed questions. The respondents refer to the statements with the help of 5-level Likert scale, where "no" means "it does not help me at all", "rather not" – "it rather does not help me", "I do not know" – "it neither helps me nor does not help me", "rather yes" – "it rather helps me", and "yes" – "it helps me very much" (Widawska & Pierzchała, 2020).

Holland Occupational Personality Test

The Holland Occupational Personality Test serves to determine the respondent's personality type in relation to six professional personality types described above. It consists of 90 closed questions. The respondents choose the answer "yes" or "no". The interpretation of results is conducted on the basis of the table of answers to particular questions, matched with personality types. The highest sum of positive indications in a given range points to a given professional personality type. The remaining high results are accepted, which corresponds to the mixed type. The test is regarded as the most popular one in the field of professional counselling.

Data analysis and results

A. The assessment of students' educational needs with the use of the Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE)

The results of the studies in question were subject to analysis based on normalization with the use of stens and intensity degrees. The sten scale was used here, consisting of 10 items, covering three standard deviations from the mean. The indications corresponding to particular hungers range from 10 to 50. They were given the following intensity degrees: high, medium and low (Widawska & Pierzchała, 2020, p. 22). Table 1 presents the data obtained from the analysis of research results with the help of the Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE).

Table 1

Structure of choices made by the students analysed by the Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE) (N=101)

Hunger types	Intensity degree (number of indications)		
	High (sten 7-10)	Medium (sten 5-6)	Low (sten 1-4)
hunger for structure	28	46	27
hunger for recognition	54	29	18
hunger for stimulation	45	34	22

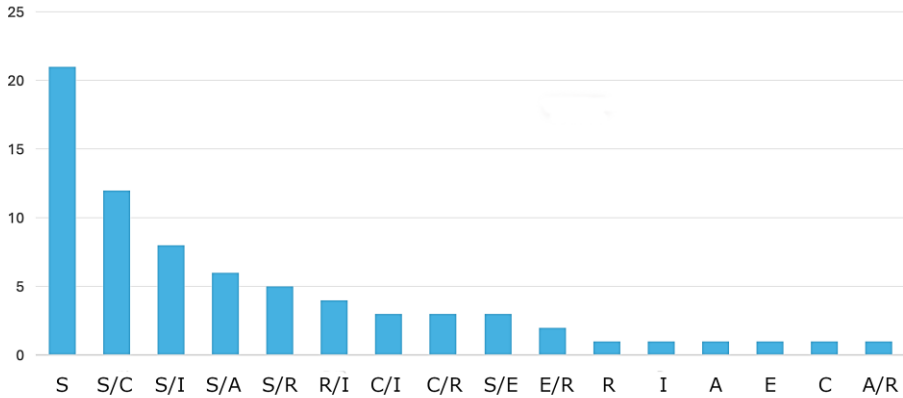
Source: own research

The results of the research conducted with the help of the Questionnaire of Educational Needs (KPE) clearly demonstrate a high level of hunger for recognition (N=54) indicated by the students. Analysing further choices of the students according to their number and level of intensity, hunger for stimulation with the result of 45 indications (N=45) draws our attention. There was a medium intensity degree of hunger for structure indicated by the students.

B. Analysis of Holland's professional personality types

The distribution of dominant personality types of the students taking part in the research is presented in Graph no 1.

Analysing the students' results with the help of the Holland Occupational Personality Test, the dominance of the social personality type is clearly noticeable. This personality type was shown in a significant number of the charges (N=21). What is more, it is the most frequent personality type among the mixed ones, i.e. socio-conventional (N=12), socio-investigative (N=8), and socio-artistic (N=6).



Graph no 1.

Numerical graph of Holland's personality types dominant among the respondents.

Legend: Holland's personality types: R – realistic, I – investigative, A – artistic, S – social, E – enterprising, C – conventional; / – mixed types

Source: own research

C. Analysing professional personality types with regard to the students' educational needs

The relations between professional personality types and educational needs of pedagogy students were measured with the help of Pearson correlation coefficient.

The conducted research shows the correspondence between:

- realistic style and hunger for stimulation, where the stronger the realistic style, the more stimulation it needs (Pearson's 'r' correlation $r=0,2$, $p<0,05$),
- artistic style and hunger for stimulation, where the stronger the artistic style, the more stimulation it needs (Pearson's 'r' correlation $r=0,3$, $p<0,05$),
- conventional style and hunger for structure, where the stronger the conventional style, the more structure it needs (Pearson's 'r' correlation $r=0,2$, $p<0,05$).

Discussion

The results of the conducted research show that the social type is the dominant occupational personality type. The social type scored the highest both as the choice of high-level intensity and in the structure of mixed types. Therefore, future educators are characterised by empathy, they are caring and willing to

cooperate. They like learning, teaching, helping others. These are ideal features of future pedagogues. The dominant occupational personality style in the research results corresponds to the research results of other researchers (Jones & Youngs 2012; Jones & Jones, 2012). It was assumed that the social environment together with the social personality type is characteristic for people studying at faculties of pedagogy. And faculties of pedagogy should be destined for people whose personality type has a high level of social competencies.

The results of the research concerning educational needs point to the dominant tendency of the occurrence of hunger for recognition in people studying pedagogy. Therefore, there is a strong educational need in this environment of contact with another human being, of developing relations between students and teachers, students and students. Another strong educational need, i.e. hunger for stimulation deserves our attention. In their educational process, the students of pedagogy need various types of stimuli having an impact on their mental and physical needs. Hunger for time structure manifested in their need for clear and transparent rules operating in the educational process was at a medium level of intensity.

Studying the relationality of Holland's occupational personality types and the students' educational needs, certain correlations were noticed. Realistic and artistic personality types manifest hunger for stimulation. What is more, the stronger these personality traits are, the stronger hunger for stimulation is. The conventional personality type manifests hunger for time structure, order in the area of educational needs. The social personality type dominating among the charges does not have clearly defined educational needs in the area of a particular hunger.

Summarising the results of the aforesaid research, it can be attempted to outline recommendations for universities educating future educators. Clearly defined needs of the charges related to hunger for recognition should shape the university's actions supporting the development of interpersonal relations by various integrating activities, group work or mentoring. Using varied forms of classwork, including the use of interactive tools would correspond to the need of stimulation signalled in the research. Thus, while organising the didactic process, we should take into account varied expectations and needs of pedagogy students, deriving from their personality types, ensuring flexibility and clearly defined rules at the same time.

The presented research results confirm that future educators possess personality features and educational needs facilitating their development in the area of pedagogy. Universities should keep supporting these features and adjust their didactic and organisational activities to their identified needs.

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Potrzeby edukacyjne młodych pedagogów w ujęciu transakcyjnych głodów edukacyjnych i w odniesieniu do typów osobowości zawodowej

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań odnoszące się do potrzeb edukacyjnych młodych pedagogów w odniesieniu do ich typów osobowości zawodowej. Badania przeprowadzono Kwestionariuszem Potrzeb Edukacyjnych (KPE) oraz Testem Osobowości Zawodowej Hollanda. Objęto nimi studentów pedagogiki Akademii Humanitas w Sosnowcu oraz studentów pedagogiki, psychoprofilaktyki i pomocy psychologicznej Uniwersytetu Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Badania KPE wykazały wysoki poziom wskazań studentów w zakresie głodu rozpoznania oraz stymulacji. Poddając analizie badania studentów Testem Osobowości Zawodowej Hollanda, otrzymano wyniki jednoznacznie wskazujące na dominantę osobowości społecznej. Zauważono istotny statystycznie związek pomiędzy stylem realistycznym a głodem stymulacji, gdzie im mocniejszy styl realistyczny, tym potrzebuje więcej stymulacji; stylem artystycznym a głodem stymulacji, gdzie im mocniejszy styl artystyczny, tym potrzebuje więcej stymulacji; stylem konwencjonalnym a głodem struktury, gdzie im mocniejszy styl konwencjonalny, tym potrzebuje więcej struktury. Badania dotyczące różnic indywidualnych przyszłych pedagogów w obrębie ich cech osobowościowych w powiązaniu ze zbadaniem ich potrzeb edukacyjnych mogą stanowić rozwiązanie wielu problemów edukacyjnych, a także wskazać drogę do lepszego kształcenia kadr.

Słowa kluczowe: transakcyjne głody edukacyjne, pedagog, potrzeby edukacyjne, osobowość zawodowa.



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Characteristics of Adults' Dreams in the Perspective of the Concept of Passivity in Terms of Transactional Analysis

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The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleonor Roosevelt

Abstract

The text is a report from the author's research concerning adults' dreams in the light of the concept of passivity in terms of transactional analysis. The aim of the research was to define a potential relationship between dreams (their types, approach to them, perceiving them as fantasy/ goal) and passive strategies. The research is quantitative in nature and it shows how real, according to the respondents, realizing their dream is.

Keywords: dreams, passivity, transactional analysis, passive strategies, dream categories.

Introduction

Dreams constitute the source of strength and motivation to act, that is why it is crucial to deepen our knowledge about them. Many people caught up in the

daily rush of life forget about their dreams, cutting themselves off from them. As a result, it makes realizing their dreamed goals difficult. It is the reason to talk about dreams more often than it happens nowadays. Discussions about dreams may not only inspire but also remind us about their important role in life. An open conversation about one's dreams may also help to overcome barriers and anxieties, which keep people from realizing them. The more aware we are of our own dreams, the easier it is to design a plan to make them come true, which may bring about a bigger feeling of fulfillment and life satisfaction.

Theoretical bases of the research

Dreams are things we imagine and desire, reflecting human goals and aspirations. All people in the world, regardless of their social status, age, beliefs or sex, have the right to dream. According to J. C. Maxwell (2014), dreams are the image of future life, which allows for waking the mind and emotions and gives strength to people to do everything they can to make that image real. It is thanks to a fulfilled dream that an individual can reach their desired goal and desire. Dreams have tremendous power which lets an individual become a unique human being in the world (Maxwell, 2014). According to A. Kałużna-Wielobób (2011, p. 161), "a dream is the concretisation of our general desires." Human desires help to form dreams. When a man realises these desires, they achieve self-realisation at the same time. Dreams make human motivation grow, which gives us strength to overcome the events we find difficult. According to T. Nowacki (2010), dreams let people find their path to happiness. It happens because dreams teach us how to strive for our goals. The author also emphasizes the fact that people devote half of their lives to dreaming, and the other half to realising these dreams as it is dreams that motivate people to find life's meaning. A. Adler (1986, p. 220) saw dreams as "an individual part of one's lifestyle." People have very different dreams that let us see their character and who they really are. The author focused on the fact that it is a life goal that characterizes a given individual.

Passivity in transactional analysis is defined as "behaviours consisting in non-solving problems, or, in other words, a way of non-solving different matters or not solving them efficiently" (Stewart, Joines, 2020, pp. 239-240). This concept was created by the Schiffs. It is thanks to them that the subject matter of passivity resurfaced in famous journals devoted to transactional analysis (Schiff, 1971 after: Pierzchała, 2013, p. 213). The authors of "passivity" decided to create its two definitions. The first one says that "passive behaviours are both internal and external activities used by people in order to avoid an autonomous reaction to stimuli, problems and alternatives of choice, to satisfy needs and re-

alise plans within the framework of an unhealthy symbiotic relation” (Schiff, 1975, p. 10 after: Pierzchała, 2013, p. 86). Passivity can be noticed in another person as their passive behaviour distorts the way one looks at reality from the perspective of the Adult ego state, and its origin can be already sought from the level of the Child ego state (Pierzchała, 2013). The other definition offered by the authors of the concept explains that “passivity is a situation in which an individual stops performing certain activities or performs them non-actively” (Schiff, 1975, p. 5; Stewart, Joines, 2009, p. 173 after: Pierzchała, 2013, p. 87). It is worth emphasizing that passivity is more than the passivity definition known and used by everyone. In passive performance, an individual decides to act but they do it in a way that does not bring any effects. J. Jagieła (2012 p. 141) defined passivity as “lack of taking responsibility for one’s thinking, acting and feelings. It is characterized by doing nothing or doing something ineffectively accompanied by providing no information about oneself.” This concept is strongly linked with the thought that a human being tries to hide the truth about themselves from the world. An individual is not in tune with the environment that cheats as they offer improper information about themselves and their needs.

Within the framework of transactional analysis, four passivity strategies were developed by the Schiffs and their co-workers. They studied patients with mental issues, focusing on the analysis of their passive-aggressive behaviours and their predilection for addiction. The following strategies were singled out:

- Passivity – an individual does not undertake any substantial activities which would help them to solve a problem;
- Over-adaptation – an individual adapts to the existing conditions, which makes them forget about their needs and priorities, and even abandon them;
- Agitation – an individual repeats continuously the same activities which do not put them any closer to solving the problem, and what is more, they are devoid of any sense;
- Incapacitation and violence – this strategy occurs when the feeling of anxiety is not controlled at the right time. In case of incapacitation, an individual often freezes motionless. As for violence, there might be outbursts of anger not controlled by an individual.

The author decided to conduct the research that focuses on dreams and passive strategies in the light of transactional analysis. It will be examined whether there is any relationship between the aforesaid variables. Thanks to it, the author will be able to draw conclusions that make it possible to show how people perceive their dreams. The respondents’ answers shall demonstrate which is the dominant passive strategy used by a given individual.

Methodology of own research

The leading topic of the author's research is the characteristics of adults' dreams from the perspective of passivity in the light of transactional analysis. A hundred and five respondents over 18 took part in the research, including 88 women and 17 men. The analyses were to give the answers to three research problems:

- P1. What is the relationship between passive functioning and the respondents' dream categories?
- P2. What is the relationship between the feeling of agency in realizing one's dreams and functioning in passive strategies?
- P3. What is the relationship between perceiving one's dream in the categories of fantasy/ goal and functioning in passive strategies?

The research is also of an exploratory nature as it constitutes the second stage in dream characteristics in the context of the transactional analysis assumptions. The first stage of the analysis was to single out dream categories in order to analyse them qualitatively from the perspective of their relationship with the concept of ego states in terms of functionality and functioning in passive strategies (Oracz, Tworzowska, Jędrczyk, Pierzchała, 2022). In the second stage, the author shall use the tool developed within the framework of transactional analysis – "The teacher's reality" Questionnaire (Pierzchała, 2013, pp. 344-347). The tool was adapted for the activities planned and its scope of analysis shall be broadened, going from the area of education to a broader social context. The original tool addressed the questions to teachers and concerned their work and relations with students. In the adapted tool the questions were transformed into the ones that will test the passivity of all the people. The research was conducted in the group of adult participants.

The research was conducted with the help of a questionnaire whose aim was to determine how real, according to the respondents, realising their dreams is. In order to broaden the group of respondents and obtain credible results, it was decided to conduct the research with the help of an electronic questionnaire system Lime Survey from Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa. A questionnaire for the survey was drawn. The first part of the research tool concerned dreams, i.e. their categorization (Oracz, Tworzowska, Jędrczyk, Pierzchała, 2022), their importance in life, their perception as a goal or fantasy and motivation measures. Semantic differentiation was used to study dreams as life goals or fantasy, while the following questions in that part were analysed by Likert scale. The second part used in the survey's questionnaire is an adaptation of the tool "The Teacher's Reality" by A. Pierzchała (2013). The tool consists of thirty questions based on Likert scale.

The analysis of the research results

Passive functioning and dream categories

The research conducted in cooperation with K. Tworzowska, P. Jędrczyk and A. Pierzchała (2022) on adult persons' dreams was the author's motivation to conduct the studies in question. The authors wrote an article that was to be the first stage of dream characteristics with the use of transactional analysis. They decided to ask the respondents open-ended questions in which they were supposed to determine what they dream about the most. Thanks to their responses, they could distinguish 6 categories of human dreams. For research purposes, these categories were coupled with passivity strategies.

Table 1.
Dream categories and passivity strategies (n=105; p<0,05)

	Non-passive	Passivity	Over-adaptation	Agitation	Incapacitation	Violence
material things	-0.12	0.23	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.27
passion	0.04	-0.10	0.01	0.12	0.03	-0.06
personal development	0.20	-0.07	0.05	0.16	0.07	-0.03
family	0.29	-0.00	-0.01	-0.15	-0.22	0.02
health	0.26	-0.09	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04	-0.05
happiness	0.14	0.08	0.10	0.13	0.01	0.05

Source: own research

Studying the table above, one can draw a conclusion that there is some relationship between dreams about material things and passive strategies such as passivity and violence. People functioning in the passivity strategy more often have dreams linked with material things. It derives from the fact that passive people do not put any effort into achieving their goals. Such goals, in comparison with other categories mentioned above, are more down-to-earth and concrete. However, to make such dreams come true one must find a stable source of income which a job gives. People characterized by passivity depend on others or take up a job only for a short time as they get discouraged and quit fast. Lack of a stable job or frequent job changing make making money impossible, that is why passive people, due to lack or not enough wealth, orientate their dreams in that direction.

People using the violence strategy also dream about material things more often than about the goals mentioned with other categories above. It is because their negative emotions occurring due to failures in achieving their dreams lead to activities which do not render desired results. A strong desire to get money

and failure in that area makes one lose their enthusiasm and control over one's behaviour. As a result, these people might be shunned by their family members, friends, and they might face difficulties at work. M. Hyatt said, "If you have a clear vision, you will eventually attract the right strategy. If you don't have a clear vision, no strategy will save you" (Maxwell, 2014, p. 49). That is why it is worth thinking first about one's goal in life before one starts to act as ill-considered decisions can lead to a series of failures.

People characterized by non-passive behaviours dream to a greater extent about personal development, health and family. Such attitudes foster dream realization as these people are motivated to achieve their goals and believe in their abilities. Such people use available resources to realise their dreams, which puts them closer to fulfilling them. In the area of personal development, they are motivated to get a promotion and achieve success, not stopping but consistently striving for the sense of self-realisation. Dreams about family and health might refer to one's own well-being as well as to one's nearest and dearest. These people think not only about their needs but also about others' needs. Dreams about family can concern starting one's own family or ensuring happiness and safety for one's family members, while dreams about health might regard both one own health and others' health.

The table also shows that there is a correlation between the strategy of incapacitation and dreams about a family. The more an individual is willing to act in accordance with the strategy of incapacitation, the more their dreams about a family diminish. Past failures linked with realizing one's dreams might lead to discouragement, which makes it impossible to go on to further stages of striving for one's goals. Starting a family means a lot of responsibility and life-long obligations. Not everyone feels responsible enough to tackle this task. In case of attempts to start a family, each failure might cause more discouragement and giving up on realizing that dream.

There is a noticeable relationship between dream categories and dominant passive strategies in an individual. Persons who function in the passivity or violence strategy dream more often about material goods. In case of the incapacitation strategy, there is a noticeable decrease in dreams about a family. Persons who do not use any passivity strategies dream most often about health, family and personal development.

Feeling of agency in dream realisation and passivity strategies

The analysis made it possible to show the relationship between the feeling of agency in dream realisation and functioning in passivity strategies. Depending on how the respondents perceive what their dreams' realization depends on, whether it is on themselves, people surrounding them, fate or circumstances, their approach is linked with different passivity strategies.

Table 2.
Relationship between dreams and passivity strategies (n=105; p<0.05)

	Non-passivity	Passivity	Over-adaptation	Agitation	Incapacitation	Violence
on oneself	0.34	-0.04	-0.12	-0.05	-0.11	-0.08
on people around	-0.06	0.13	0.10	0.06	0.13	0.13
on fate	-0.09	0.22	0.19	0.21	0.14	0.10
on circumstances	-0.20	0.19	0.21	0.24	0.17	0.14

Source: own research

Persons displaying non-passive behaviours believe that realising their dreams depends solely on themselves. They take responsibility and engage in realizing their goals, thinking that thanks to hard work and perseverance they can realise their dreams. As a result, they believe that circumstances do not impact the realization of their aspirations. There is a relationship here that states that the more non-passive behaviours an individual shows, the less significance is attributed to circumstances in the context of dream realization.

Dreams whose realisation depends on fate were picked by persons functioning in such strategies as passivity, over-adaptation and agitation. It derives from the fact that these persons do not take responsibility for their own lives and do not see that it is their determination that could lead to dream realization. They accept the status quo and do not want to question it as it would require changing their deeply-rooted habits. Such a step would be linked with discomfort that they do not want to experience. It is more comfortable for them to believe that their actions do not depend on them but on fate. Likewise, they do not want to fully control the realization of their dreams. Treating fate as an external factor absolves them of responsibility for their own actions, and they find it much easier to admit that not realizing their dreams is caused by fate they have no influence on.

Persons thinking that fulfilling their dreams depends on circumstances operate in the strategies of over-adaptation and agitation. Circumstances can be usually perceived as occasions that are linked with special, ceremonial events. That shows that for these persons dream realization is not something which is available every day but something special, rare, kept for a special occasion. Treating dreams in such a way offers a comfortable excuse to pursue them less often. In the strategy of over-adaptation, an individual is not motivated to realise their dreams as these dreams do not belong to them, they were taken over from other people. As for the strategy of agitation, an individual does not believe in their capacities, that is why they shoulder their responsibility for dream realization to circumstances.

Dreams as fantasy or a goal

The research shows that people with dominant passive behaviours, i.e. passivity, over-adaptation, agitation, incapacitation or violence treat their dreams as fantasy.

Table 3.

Dreams perceived as fantasy/ a goal and passivity strategies (n=105; p<0.05)

	Non-passivity	Passivity	Over-adaptation	Agitation	Incapacitation	Violence
Fantasy and a goal	0.49	-0.35	-0.32	-0.26	-0.35	-0.22

Source: own research

It is caused by the fact that people are afraid to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. Nor being ready for this, they often shoulder their own obligations to others. According to Maxwell, "If your dream depends to a large extent on a stroke of luck, you have got a problem. If it entirely depends on a stroke of luck, you live in the world of fantasy" (2014, p. 71). It shows that a person who perceives their dreams as unreal fantasies will never find motivation to fulfil them. Such people rely entirely on luck, believing that dream realisation is like a lottery – it will either bring success or failure. For them, living in the world of fantasy becomes reality.

People characterised by non-passive behaviours treat their dreams as a goal which is possible to achieve. Such people are fully disciplined and they also focus on the path that leads to the established goal. They desire to realise their dreams thanks to their hard work. They generate energy that favours striving for action and teamwork. What is more, they are fully responsible for themselves and their actions. The more an individual functions in the domain of passive strategies, the less they shall perceive their dream as a goal possible to achieve. However, if an individual is characterized by non-passive behaviours, they shall perceive their dreams as something possible to achieve.

Summary

The conducted research made it possible to study the relationships between dreams and passive strategies in the context of the passivity concept, adopting the perspective of transactional analysis. Thanks to the relationships observed, one can draw conclusions on how people perceive their dreams. The respondents' answers show which passive strategy dominates in each case. Such a strategy makes achieving one's goal impossible.

The research analysis shows that the biggest number of people demonstrate non-passive behaviours as far as their dreams are concerned, and they are followed by those demonstrating such passive strategies as over-adaptation, agitation, passivity, incapacitation and violence. The results also prove that there is a relationship between passive functioning and a dream category as persons functioning in passivity and violence most often dream about material goods, whereas persons with the strategy of incapacitation dream about a family much less frequently. On the other hand, persons characterized by non-passive behaviours dream to the largest extent about health and personal development. Thanks to the research the relationship between the feeling of agency in dream realization and functioning in passive strategies came to light. For persons demonstrating passive behaviours, dream realization depends solely on themselves, while for the respondents showing over-adaptation or agitation fulfilling their dreams also depends on external circumstances. The result analysis also provided the answer to the question regarding dream perception in the category of fantasy/ goal and functioning in passive strategies. Persons acting in the passivity strategy perceive dreams as fantasy whereas those non-passive ones perceive dreams as goals. Moreover, for people using different passivity strategies such as over-adaptation, agitation, incapacitation or violence, dreams are also more likely to take the shape of fantasy.

These studies may be useful in therapy, especially in the context of overcoming passivity. In this case, talking about dreams can have a healing effect, helping to counter passive behaviours. The research results may be also precious for people who do not believe their dreams can come true, helping them to understand the reason behind it. What is more, they are useful for psycho-prevention specialists and therapists running group therapy because if certain relationships can be identified, using dreams in therapy can support fighting with passivity.

The presented research constitutes the second stage of exploration based on the assumptions of transactional analysis. It reveals the relationship between adults' dreams and their passive functioning, which is confirmed by particular dream categories linked with passivity strategies. The existing relationships lead to the conclusions showing how people perceive their dreams.

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Charakterystyka marzeń osób dorosłych w perspektywie koncepcji pasywności w rozumieniu analizy transakcyjnej

Streszczenie

Tekst jest raportem z badań autorki dotyczących charakterystyki marzeń osób dorosłych w perspektywie koncepcji pasywności w rozumieniu analizy transakcyjnej. Celem eksploracji było określenie potencjalnego związku pomiędzy marzeniami (ich rodzajem, sposobem podejścia do marzeń czy postrzeganiem w kategorii fantazja/cel) a strategiami pasywnymi. Poniższe badania mają charakter ilościowy i wskazują na to, jak bardzo realne według respondentów jest zrealizowanie przez nich swojego marzenia.

Słowa kluczowe: marzenia, pasywność, analiza transakcyjna, strategie pasywne, kategorie marzeń.



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Emotional Intelligence and Reflexivity vs. Passivity in the Perspective of Transactional Analysis: A Research Report

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Abstract

The article constitutes a report on the research looking for relationships between emotional intelligence as understood by P. Salovey and J. D. Mayer and reflexivity understood as a cognitive style, and passivity in the light of the transactional analysis assumptions. The results show that emotional intelligence in the area of comprehension, acceptance and emotional control favours the reduction of passive behaviours in all their manifestations. Empathy, on the other hand, may intensify passive activities in the area of incapacitation understood as making oneself incapable of acting via psychosomatic symptoms. In case of reflexivity, there is a negative correlation with passivity in the area of caution, and a positive one in case of lack of self-assurance. The research was conducted with the use of CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) questionnaire technique on the group of 423 adult persons. The conclusions point to the possibility of using the assumptions of transactional analysis for building resources based on emotional intelligence and self-assurance. These, consequently, have a chance to reduce the area of passive behaviour, fostering effectiveness in the face of a problem situation.

Keywords: transactional analysis, passivity, emotional intelligence, reflectiveness.

Introduction

The ability of acting efficiently while faced with a problem, finding solutions and making decisions skilfully as well as understanding the ambiguity of interpersonal relations are key competencies that determine the effectiveness of action in the modern world. The strategies implemented by an individual faced with a difficulty, their operating methods and emotions occurring in this context determine their effectiveness. This article presents the results of the research determining potential correlations between emotional intelligence as understood by P. Salovey and J. D. Mayer (1990) and reflexivity understood as a cognitive style (Kagan, 1965, 1966), and passivity seen from the perspective of the transactional analysis assumptions (Schiff & Schiff, 1971; Schiff, et al., 1975).

Theoretical assumptions

First attempts to understand emotional intelligence focused solely on the analysis of its cognitive dimension. Pioneer attempts to broaden its definition were made by Thorndike in the 20s of the 20th century. He distinguished three equal groups of skills: abstract intelligence, deciding on how an individual deals with the world of concepts and ideas, technical intelligence, showing one's ability to function in the "world of things", and social intelligence defining one's ability to understand people and function in interpersonal contacts (Nęcka, 2003). The last one points to mental predispositions determining behaviour, including predispositions of an emotional nature, i.e. an ability to understand emotions and feelings of other people, which is the first step linking this approach to the construct of emotional intelligence (Pracka, 2021). The term "emotional intelligence" occurred in the 60s of the 20th century, in the article by H. Leuner *Emotional intelligence and emancipation* (Leuner, 1966, after: Śmieja, Orzechowski, 2008). However, it was Salovey and Mayer (1990), who could be called pioneers as far as the scientific analysis of the concept of emotional intelligence was concerned as they drew its definition and listed its components. Furthermore, it was D. Goleman (1997) who wrote about the importance of shaping emotional intelligence, possibilities of its development and improvement, its relations with life success. He was also the scientist who undoubtedly made the concept well-known. He distinguished five main components of emotional intelligence. These are: self-awareness determining knowledge about one's own experiences, preferences and possibilities; self-regulation in the context of controlling one's emotions; motivation to act; empathy as an ability to read others' emotional states and needs; social skills.

Therefore, emotional intelligence means one's abilities to process emotional information constituting the foundation of developing competencies that let us manage emotions effectively and deal with social situations and various tasks. It is also a set of abilities to read emotional meanings and take them into account while analysing and solving problems (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005). Emotional intelligence has a hierarchical structure and consists of a certain number of particular skills that are related only to some extent (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005). A basic model, important from the point of view of this study, is the model by Mayer and Salovey (1997) showing the existence of four main components: an ability to notice and express emotions, an ability to assimilate emotions in the course of cognitive processes, an ability to understand and analyse emotions, and an ability to manage emotions – control and regulate them.

Numerous studies point to the links between emotional intelligence and selected areas of human functioning. Competencies in the emotional-social area positively correlate, among others, with a need to enquire and curiosity (Żmuda, Sękowski & Szymczak, 2021), management and leadership skills (Przybylska, 2006; Sękowski & Sitko, 2018), or acting under pressure (Laborde, S., Lautenbach, F., Allen, M.S., et al., 2014). The competencies in this area, influence, among other things, interpersonal relations – the way a given person is perceived and evaluated by their social surroundings, their popularity and acceptance in the group as well as their predisposition towards antisocial and aggressive behaviour towards other people (Knopp, 2020), or human mental resilience (Wyszogrodzka & Woźniak-Prus, 2020). There is also a correlation between emotional intelligence and the occurrence of mental disorders, e.g. depression (Downey, L.A., Johnston, P.J., Hansen, et al. 2008; Żuchowicz, Skiba, Gałęcki & Talarowska, 2018; Obeid, S., Haddad, C., Fares, K. et al., 2021). Similarly, scientists also distinguish between female and male emotional intelligence (McKinley, S. K., Petrusa, E. R., Fiedeldej-Van Dijk, et al., 2014; Pracka, 2021).

The second theoretical construct constituting the foundation of this research is reflexivity. It is understood as a cognitive style, i.e. fairly stable tendency to think, perceive and process information (Perkowska-Klejman, 2019; Matczak, 2001). Reflexivity is often contrasted with impulsiveness. The first author who described reflexivity vs. impulsiveness as a cognitive style was J. Kagan (1965, 1966). This style can be defined as cognitive pace which comes to light in problematic situations. What counts here is both the speed of finding solutions and how correct they are. An impulsive person finds solutions and gives answers pretty fast, but they show the tendency to make mistakes. A reflexive person would ponder on a given solution or answer for a long time and would not make mistakes as they would look for accurate, detailed information needed to solve a problem (Perkowska-Klejman, 2019). Generally, it is agreed that reflexivity is

a more efficient strategy for problem solution than impulsiveness. It does not mean though that in certain situations reflexivity (especially very intensified) might turn out less beneficial than impulsiveness. In their experimental studies, Moritz, Siemsen and Kremer (2014, after: Matczak & Jaworowska, 2020) show that both very short and very long thinking time are less beneficial than moderate one.

It seems that both emotional intelligence and reflexivity may be important as far as disclosing human passive behaviours is concerned. Transactional analysis assumes that passivity is primarily non-efficacy in the face of a problematic situation and a way of thinking and acting that allows an individual to avoid their autonomous reaction in the face of a problematic situation (Schiff & Schiff, 1971; Schiff et al., 1975; Rogoll, 1989; Rawson, 2006; Stewart & Joines, 2009; Pierzchała, 2013). Passivity understood in this way can manifest itself through several strategies such as: doing-nothing, over-adaptation, agitation, incapacitation or violence. Doing-nothing is a situation in which an individual facing a problem gives up on being proactive and seeking a solution, hoping that the problem will solve itself or someone else will be found to overcome it. Over-adaptation is a strategy in which an individual facing a problem tries to guess what is expected from them, not focusing at the same time on their own needs and emotions. Thus, they realise external goals, *de facto* leaving out themselves. Agitation occurs in a situation when the level of tension in the face of difficulties rises to such an extent that it is necessary to discharge it quickly. In this context, an individual undertakes the activities reducing the tension yet not leading to problem solution. These are substitute activities such as doing extreme sports or reaching for stimulants. However, when the level of tension is very high, a strategy having two opposite dimensions – violence or incapacitation – might occur. The mechanism of strategy occurrence is identical here, but the direction of its manifestation is different. When the energy vector is directed outwards, an individual gets aggressive towards something or somebody in their surroundings. However, when the same energy is directed inwards, it generates incapacitation that is a peculiar kind of incapacitating oneself through psychosomatic symptoms or even a suicidal act in extreme cases.

Methodological assumptions of the research

The aim of the research is to determine potential correlations between the aforementioned passivity in all its manifestations, emotional intelligence and reflexivity. The research was conducted with the use of CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) questionnaire technique on the group of 423 adult persons, but due to various reasons (e.g. incomplete data, the response scheme used), in

case of analysing the results concerning emotional intelligence the data was reduced to 381 cases.

The research uses three questionnaire tools. Firstly, the authors used *the Popular Questionnaire of Emotional Intelligence (Popularny Kwestionariusz Inteligencji Emocjonalnej /PKIE/)* developed by A. Jaworowska, A. Matczak, A. Ciechanowicz, J. Stańczak, E. Zalewska (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005). This tool was based on the concept of emotional intelligence developed by P. Salovey and J.D. Mayer. It consists of 94 statements formed in the first person singular. The answers given are based on the 5-point scale. The questionnaire entries make up 4 scales and additionally make it possible to calculate the general result. There are the following questionnaire scales: 1) Accepting the expression and use of one's own emotions in action /AKC/; 2) Empathy, i.e. understanding and identifying other people's emotions /EMP/; 3) Control, also cognitive one, over one's emotions /KON/; 4) Understanding and realizing what one's emotions are /ROZ/. The general result encompasses all the entries included in the questionnaire. The overall reliability of the PQEI is high – Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.90. In particular scales, it oscillates around the value of 0.80 (in the group of adults).

The other tool used in the research is the *Reflexivity Questionnaire (Kwestionariusz Refleksyjności /KR/)* developed by A. Matczak (Matczak & Jaworowska, 2020). The KR allows for evaluating reflexivity as an activity linked with task-based motivation and trust in one's own possibilities, and reflexivity understood as cautiousness deriving from fear of failure and lack of self-confidence. The questionnaire consists of 75 sentences, formed in the first person singular, describing various behaviours, tastes and preferences. A given respondent evaluates the truthfulness of each sentence with regard to their own person, describing them as true or false. The questionnaire entries form two scales: 1) lack of self-confidence /NS/ and 2) Caution /ROZ/. The reliability of the tool is high. Cronbach's alpha coefficient equals: for the NS scale 0.89 for the respondents aged 18-37, and 0.84 for the respondents aged 40-78; for the ROZ, it is 0.88 for the respondents aged 18-37, and 0.83 for the respondents aged 40-78 accordingly.

The last tool used in the research was developed by the author. It is the *Passivity Questionnaire (Kwestionariusz Pasywności /KP/)* that includes 5 scales (30 items) making it possible to define one's functioning in passive strategies. The respondent's evaluation is based on the 5-point scale, with the use of which the respondent says how true the aforesaid statements are with regard to their own person. The tool is currently undergoing the standardization procedure. Theoretical accuracy was verified by three competent judges. Similarly, the questionnaire's reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was determined too. It has the following values for the scales in question: doing-nothing /BIER/ 0.72, over-adaptation

/NAD/ 0.78, agitation /NPH/ 0.76, incapacitation /NZD/ 0.85, violence /AGR/ 0.85. For passivity in its general dimensions Cronbach's alpha is very high and it exceeds 0.90.

Report on research results

While analysing the data of the research, a comparison was made between the results obtained by the respondents in the area of emotional intelligence and reflexivity, and passive strategies. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine a potential correlation between the variables. The research data analysis showed several interesting correlations. First of all, it is worth looking at the results combining the general dimension of emotional intelligence and passive strategies.

Table 1

The correlation of the general result of emotional intelligence with passive strategies

PASSIVE STRATEGY	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – general result
	The Pearson correlation coefficient (r)
Doing-nothing	-0.41**
Over-adaptation	-0.42**
Agitation	-0.39**
Violence	-0.38**
Incapacitation	-0.25**

Source: own research; N=381

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

The data above shows that there is a significant negative correlation between the general dimension of emotional intelligence and passivity in all its manifestations. It means that a high level of emotional intelligence protects an individual against destructive passive behaviours. The general result in the PKIE questionnaire indicates emotional intelligence understood as a set of cognitive skills thanks to which an individual uses their own emotions for problem solving. These are the skills linked with realizing what one's own emotions are, understanding their cause and effect. High emotional intelligence also favours the ability to show one's emotional states and to control them at the same time when required. The aforesaid skills foster effectiveness to a great extent and what follows, they prevent employing destructive forms of functioning in the face of a problem, as seen in the light of the transactional analysis assumptions. A par-

ticularly strong relationship ($r > 0.4$) was shown in the case of the gentlest strategies – passivity and over-adaptation. Nevertheless, the remaining strategies also show a negative and significant correlation. Thus, it is worth finding out which dimensions of emotional intelligence mentioned in Salovey and Mayer's concept particularly favour effectiveness.

Table 2
The correlation of emotional intelligence dimensions with passive strategies

PASSIVE STRATEGY	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE			
	The Pearson correlation coefficient (r)			
	AKC	EMP	KON	ROZ
Doing-nothing	-0.38**	-0.06	-0.47**	-0.46**
Over-adaptation	-0.44**	-0.05	-0.46**	-0.47**
Agitation	-0.30**	-0.02	-0.55**	-0.49**
Violence	-0.21**	-0.01	-0.61**	-0.38**
Incapacitation	-0.24**	0.12*	-0.51**	-0.31**

Source: own research; N=381

AKC – Accepting the expression and use of one's own emotions in action

EMP - Empathy, i.e. understanding and identifying other people's emotions

KON - Control, also cognitive one, over one's emotions

ROZ - Understanding and realizing what one's emotions are

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,001$

Passive strategies correlate negatively with the dimensions of emotional intelligence in the area of accepting the expression and use of one's own emotions in action, understanding and realizing what one's emotional states are, and also in the area of emotion control. The dimension of empathy is an exception. In its case, there was no correlation shown with the majority of the strategies. On the other hand, as far as incapacitation is concerned – next to violence, the most destructive passive strategy – too much empathy may even strengthen it.

Accepting one's emotions and allowing them to participate in decision taking counteracts over-adaptation particularly strongly as far as the way of acting is concerned. It means that an individual who is capable of showing their emotions and does it in a consistent and relevant manner, accepting the fact that their emotions are very important for decision taking, shall be a person who is more inward looking and does not subject to external pressure. Facing a problem, they will, first of all, think what is good for them and what they feel as a result, and in such circumstances they will take a decision concerning their operating strategy. Accepting one's emotions also counteracts inertia and fosters effectiveness, protecting an individual against the compulsion to act on other passive strategies.

Understanding and being aware of one's own emotions is particularly protective in case of more gentle and less destructive passive strategies, which are doing-nothing, over-adaptation and agitation. As for emotion control, it decreases the extent to which one resorts to the most destructive strategies – once again agitation and most of all, violence and incapacitation. Thus, it is worth looking at the result distribution in the context of particular strategies. In case of doing-nothing, it turns out that it correlates to almost the same extent with controlling one's emotions, comprehending them and being aware of them. Accepting one's emotions has a slightly smaller significance here. Over-adaptation, on the other hand, correlates to a similar extent with all the three constructs of emotional intelligence. Also in this area, there were no correlations with empathy. However, it is crucial to emphasise that for more destructive strategies, i.e. agitation, violence and incapacitation, the ability to control and manage one's own emotions shall be particularly important. It is a factor that in case of more gentle strategies turned out to be less significant. The results point to the possibility of employing the assumptions of transactional analysis in order to develop emotional competencies, which shall increase the effectiveness of acting in the face of a problem, which shall be demonstrated further in the text.

An important conclusion from the research in question is the one pointing to a weak correlation between empathy and passive behaviours. It turns out that this dimension of emotional intelligence does not correlate with the majority of passive strategies. Nevertheless, in case of incapacitation, there was a weak positive correlation. It means that taking a too empathetic approach towards other people's emotions might in some cases lead to incapacitating oneself via psychosomatic symptoms, triggering one's ineffectiveness. Taking into account the value of the correlation coefficient in question, this conclusion should be subject to more thorough studies.

The other theoretical construct whose correlations with passivity were sought was reflexivity. Also in its case interesting results were obtained.

Table 3
The correlation of reflexivity with passive strategies

PASSIVE STRATEGY	REFLEXIVITY	
	<i>The Pearson correlation coefficient (r)</i>	
	Lack of self-confidence	Caution
Doing-nothing	0.53**	-0.09
Over-adaptation	0.51**	-0.10*
Agitation	0.38**	-0.20**
Violence	0.21**	-0.25**
Incapacitation	0.36**	0.00

Source: own research; N=423

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

The data included in Table 3 shows in the most general way that passivity is supported by lack of self-confidence, whereas its selected areas might be levelled by caution to some extent. It means that persons with high results of reflexivity linked with lack of self-confidence react with passivity more often. It derives from their fear of making a mistake, which they compensate with prolonged decision time. At the same time, it does not guarantee spotting all possible solutions as fear of failure might induce actions which in transactional analysis are called discounting (Meller & Schiff, 1975; Schiff, et al., 1975; Belanger & Laube, 1979; Matkowski, 1993; Macefield & Mellor, 2006; Pierzchała, 2011). It means that these persons find it difficult to spot all possible solutions, which generates problems with decision taking, and further on they ponder on these decisions (the so-called counterfactual thinking) (Matczak & Jaworowska, 2020). Acting in such a way decreases effectiveness and triggers the occurrence of all passive strategies in all their dimensions.

The protective factor in the context of passivity in the area of over-adaptation, agitation and violence is caution. Persons obtaining high results in the ROZ scale act effectively while faced with a problem thanks to their tendency for caution, whose source is cognitive motivation and the need of cognitive control. Longer time needed to take a decision does not derive from fear of failure but from strong achievement motivation and high standards of cognitive and task functioning. They are characterized by curiosity and readiness for intellectual effort (Matczak & Jaworowska, 2020). Due to this fact they do not render to social pressure and have courage to seek their own solutions, best for themselves. They are able to tolerate tension accompanying difficult situations.

Conclusions and summary

The article presents the correlations between emotional intelligence and reflexivity, and passivity seen from the perspective of transactional analysis. The latter one is manifested as ineffectiveness in the face of a problem situation. A passive person acts in such a way so as to avoid responsibility for decisions concerning operational strategy and to pass it on to their environment. They become dependent on the environment, at the same time feeling incompetent and devoid of any other option to act. The research results demonstrate the correlations between transactional passivity and emotional intelligence and reflexivity. There is a negative correlation pointing to the value of emotional intelligence development to counter passive behaviours. However, empathy constitutes an exception here. It may foster passivity in the area of incapacitation. In case of reflexivity, its dimension linked with caution has an especially protective

character, while reflexivity deriving from lack of self-confidence strengthens passive behaviour.

It should be emphasised that the concept of transactional analysis proposes methods that enhance the development of emotional intelligence and self-confidence, which constitutes a foundation of reflexivity based on caution. First of all, the aim of developmental support should be strengthening one's personality in accordance with the assumptions of the concept, via supporting the integration of the Adult ego state and removing contaminations (Temple, 1999; 2004; Barrow, 2015; King & Temple, 2018). The next area is developing autonomy understood here as the capacity for awareness, spontaneity and intimacy (Noma, 2006; Stewart & Joines, 2009; Cook, 2022; Heath, 2022). Awareness means perceiving oneself, people and the world via all the senses as objectively as possible. Spontaneity is manifested by an ability to react to the world from the levels of all ego states, using one's own resources. Thanks to that, one has at their disposal a wider scope of possible behaviours, feelings and thoughts. Intimacy is an ability to be in a relationship with another person, as close and open as possible, without resorting to any psychological games. Getting rid of discounting, i.e. omitting certain aspects of reality important in the context of looking for solutions to a problem situation, is also a very important ability (Mellor & Schiff, 1975). Basing the assumptions of the paper directed towards development on the aforesaid areas and using operating methods based on transactional analysis aims at developing the ability to read one's own emotions and feelings, building an adequate self-image based on real capabilities and skills, developing critical thinking, independence and self-determination, practising communication skills, developing creativity, shaping an attitude of openness and tolerance, and as a result developing skills to deal with difficult situations. An example of using these methods effectively is a programme developing social competencies in pre-school and early-school children, the *Little Professor University* (Pierzchała, 2018; 2019). The programme evaluation shows that using operating methods consisting in activating children's Adult ego state and caring about the integration of the ego state while making use of all its resources renders desired effects. On the one hand, it increases the participants' self-awareness as far as analysing and controlling their emotions is concerned. On the other hand, there is a decentralization effect understood as increased capacities of analysing other people's emotional states. It means that using the assumptions of transactional analysis while working with children supports the development of emotional intelligence, which constitutes the foundation serving to eliminate or significantly limit human behaviour in the area of destructive passive strategies.

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Inteligencja emocjonalna i refleksyjność a pasywność w ujęciu analizy transakcyjnej. Raport z badań

Streszczenie

Artykuł stanowi raport z badań poszukujących związków pomiędzy inteligencją emocjonalną w rozumieniu P. Salovey'a i J.D. Mayera i refleksyjnością rozumianą jako styl poznawczy a pasywnością zgodną z założeniami analizy transakcyjnej. Wyniki wskazują, że inteligencja emocjonalna w obszarze rozumienia, akceptacji i kontroli emocjonalnej sprzyja redukowaniu zachowań pasywnych we wszystkich ich przejawach. Empatia z kolei może intensyfikować działania pasywne w obszarze niezdolności rozumianej jako uniezdalnianie siebie do działania poprzez objawy psychosomatyczne. Z kolei w przypadku refleksyjności ujawniono ujemną korelację z pasywnością w zakresie rozważań oraz dodatnią w przypadku niepewności siebie. Badania przeprowadzono techniką ankietową CAWI na grupie 423 osób dorosłych. Wnioski wskazują na możliwości wykorzystywania założeń analizy transakcyjnej do budowania zasobów opartych o inteligencję emocjonalną i pewność siebie. Te z kolei mają szansę zredukować obszar działania pasywnego, sprzyjając efektywności w obliczu sytuacji problemowej.

Słowa kluczowe: analiza transakcyjna, pasywność, inteligencja emocjonalna, refleksyjność.



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Personality Traits in the Context of Transactional Analysis and Emotional Intelligence in Young Adults: A Research Report

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between the personality structure according to Transactional Analysis (TA) theory and emotional intelligence. Within TA, personality is divided into three ego states: Parent, Adult, and Child, which reflect different ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Emotional intelligence, on the other hand, refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. The adopted model of emotional intelligence assumes the existence of four main components: the ability to perceive and express emotions, the ability to assimilate emotions in cognitive processes, the ability to understand and analyse emotions, and the ability to manage emotions. The conducted research indicates that the Adult ego state, characterized by an objective assessment of the situation and logical thinking, correlates positively with empathy, understood as the ability to recognize and understand the emotions of others. This described relationship is helpful in understanding the process of development and integration of the Adult ego state and underlines its crucial role in a well-developed personality.

Keywords: Adult ego state – adult, integrated Adult ego state, emotional intelligence.

Introduction

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a theory that continues to develop and evolve. Since Eric Berne first introduced the concept of ego states in 1956 (Stewart

& Joines, p. 392) to the present day, new threads and new areas for application have been emerging. The publication of the book "Games People Play" in 1964 did both good and bad for TA; on the one hand, there was a widespread popularization of the concept, and on the other hand, TA began to function overly simplified, as part of mass culture. "The ego state model suffered the most. In place of Berne's original version of the model, in which the Parent and Child are reflections of the past, and only the Adult is fully grounded in the present, most media accounts presented a more simplified version [...] (Stewart & Joines, p. 394). Scientific publications on TA that have appeared in recent years concern both the practical use of the theory and basic research. This gives hope that transactional analysis will remain in the field of researchers' interest. This study is a return to thinking about the Adult ego state as a reflective structure that manages our personality and allows us to function flexibly (James & Jongeward, 1994, pp. 304-323). The ACL and PKIE questionnaires (Martowska, 2012; Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005) were used in the conducted research.

Theoretical Assumptions

In transactional analysis, using a structural description, personality is divided into three main ego states: Parent, Adult, and Child, which are responsible for three different ways of thinking and acting. The Parent is the most primal, normative state, the Child is the emotional state, and the Adult should be objective and responsive to the needs of practical actions. The essence of the theory is the assumption that ego states have considerable autonomy and, in interaction with other people, activate the appropriate ego states in the interlocutor. This model is, of course, sometimes an oversimplification, as clearly indicated by Stewart and Jones (2016, p. 25), and sometimes works to the disadvantage of the theory's proponents. Detailed descriptions use a more elaborate model that structurally includes the so-called sub-ego states. Structurally, in each ego state, there are equivalents of the other states, i.e., in the Parent ego state, there is Parent in Parent, Adult in Parent, and Child in Parent, and analogously in the other states. In practice, however, the most commonly used division is functional, relating to observable behaviours, and distinguishes substates that characterize our behavior model. These states have been named differently during the development of the theory. The controlling or critical Parent is now most often called the normative Parent. The nurturing Parent can be divided into positive or negative. The Child state is divided into free, sometimes called spontaneous, and adapted, also called compliant substates. In this substate, a state called the rebellious child was sometimes distinguished. The Adult state is usually not divided. A flexibly functioning personality should be able to react using

different ego states, depending on the interaction being conducted (Solomon, 2003; James & Jongeward, 1994, pp. 41-61; Stewart & Joines, pp. 13-40).

Emotional intelligence is the second concept used in the research. There is still a lack of a single, coherent way to define this concept (Pracka, 2021, p. 14), "although the detailed ways of understanding this term adopted by creators of various theoretical concepts and authors of various practical endeavours differ significantly, a general definition would probably meet with widespread acceptance, defining emotional intelligence as a disposition that enables a person to use emotional processes to cope effectively in life, supporting in this regard the so-called rational intelligence (typically measured by the intelligence quotient). It is precisely the cooperation, not antagonism, of emotions and reason that constitutes the essence of today's views on their mutual relations" (Matczak & Knopp, 2013, p. 11). Emotional intelligence means the ability to process emotional information, which forms the basis for the development of competencies enabling effective emotional regulation and coping in social and task-oriented situations (Goleman, 1997, pp. 34-111). It also includes skills related to interpreting emotional meanings and taking them into account in the process of reasoning and problem-solving. For the purposes of further research, the basic model of Mayer and Salovey (1990, 1997) is used, which indicates the existence of four main components, i.e. the ability to perceive and express emotions, the ability to assimilate emotions into cognitive processes, the ability to understand and analyse emotions, and the ability to manage emotions. The adopted model allows for the preparation of a personality profile that includes both a general measurement of emotional intelligence and its components (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005, pp. 4-10), which will be correlated with the components of personality in TA.

It is assumed that there is a predicted link between personality structure in the TA approach and emotional intelligence. A proper personality structure in the TA approach should allow for flexible responses in various life situations and allow for diverse interactions with other people. At the same time, it should allow for achieving psychological well-being and a life stance called "winning" (James & Jongeward, 1994, pp. 23-40). Such a situation will be possible if the activation of ego states is a reflective process, subject to our control. The ego state that can manage the activation of various aspects is the Adult ego state, which is anchored in the present and can direct the process of entering into someone else's roles, adopt various perspectives, and analyse their consequences. Adopting the assumption of response subjected to constant reflection allows for integrating the structural and functional model in TA, which should facilitate understanding the basis of some of our behaviours (Wieczorek, 2016). According to James & Jongeward (1994, pp. 304-323), the Adult ego state can direct our personality, activate the Child, use the Parent, avoid psychological games, and

direct our own development. The process of such actions can be called integrating the Adult and can be tracked with appropriate tools (Wieczorek, 2016). The process of tracking changes is both diagnostic and developmental, as it supports the integrating Adult (Jusik & Wieczorek, 2024). A strong Adult ego state should positively correlate with emotional intelligence, as it is used to solve problems, express (rather than experience) emotions, and assimilate them.

The age of the participants is the final component used in the research. Assuming that we function properly and our Adult ego state integrates through gaining experience and entering into relationships with others, age should favor both the development of this state and the development of emotional intelligence (Jankowska, 2017). To divide the participants into age groups, the classification of young adulthood into stages was adopted: transition to adulthood, 17-22 years; emerging adulthood, 22-28 years; transition through the thirties, 28-33 years; settling down, 33-40 years; and transition to middle age, 40-45 years (Miś, 2000). This last stage, due to the lengthening of average life expectancy and the popularization of the idea of lifelong learning, has been extended to the age of 55 for the purposes of further research.

Research Methodology

The aim of the research was to find a relationship between personality structure in the TA approach and emotional intelligence. Two tools were used in the research. The first is *the Adjective Check List* (ACL) created by H.G. Gough, A.B. Heilbrun Jr., with Polish normalization (Martowska, 2012) – ACL. This is a tool used to analyse various personality traits. The ACL questionnaire includes 300 adjectives arranged in the alphabetical order. The task of the respondent is to indicate those adjectives that, in their opinion, best characterize them. The reliability of the tool, measured in the analysed scales, for women ranges from 0.67 (CP scale) to 0.78 (FC scale). In the case of men, the values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient range from 0.61 (CP scale) to 0.79 (NP scale). The ACL has been normalized, and the results are given in tens. Norms have been developed separately for women and men aged 15 to 69. The ACL is used both in individual personality diagnosis, for example for clinical purposes, and in scientific research. Examples of its application include the study of cultural archetypes, the analysis of stereotypes, as well as the exploration of issues related to environmental psychology and other areas of science. For the discussed research, a part of the ACL measuring the intensity of ego states in the TA approach will be used. The questionnaire uses the traditional nomenclature of functional ego states, namely: Critical Parent (CP); Nurturing Parent (NP); Adult (A); Free Child (FC); and Adapted Child (AC). To avoid terminological problems, the rest of the article will use descriptions of ego states in the terminology adopted from the ACL authors.

The second tool used in the research is the *Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire* (PKIE), developed by A. Jaworowska, A. Matczak, A. Ciechanowicz, J. Stańczak, and E. Zalewska (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005), which is based on the theory of emotional intelligence proposed by P. Salovey and J.D. Mayer. The tool contains 94 statements written in the first person singular, and responses are given on a 5-point scale. The questionnaire includes four component scales for emotional intelligence and also enables the calculation of an overall score. The overall score is the sum of the results from all questionnaire items and is characterized by high reliability – Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeds 0.90 for the overall score, and in the case of individual scales, it oscillates around 0.80 (for the adult group). The scales included in the tool are: AKC – Accepting, Expressing, and Utilizing one's own Emotions in action; EMP – Understanding and Recognizing the emotions of others; KON – Control, including cognitive, over one's own emotions; and ROZ – Understanding and Realizing one's own emotions. The Polish adaptation of the questionnaire is normalized, and the results are converted into stens separately for gender and depending on age for students and adults.

Research Results

The research was conducted using the CAWI survey technique on a group of 423 adults. 357 people completed it fully. For the Adjective Check List (ACL), additional response selection was performed, consisting of rejecting extreme results (No.Ckd scale) and rejecting results on the Typicality (COM) scale, which verify responses for lack of consistency or randomness in providing answers. Finally, responses from individuals over 55 years of age were rejected, which ultimately reduced the research sample to two hundred people. The results were classified into specific frequency groups, which allowed for an appropriate analysis of respondents who chose fewer adjectives and those who chose more. For each frequency group, and separately for age and gender, raw scores were converted into tens, which in turn made it possible to assign the respondents to be assigned to appropriate categories describing personality structure in the TA approach. Each ego state could be assigned values: very low, low, average, high, and very high. The normalized ACL results for the studied population are presented in Table 1.

Raw scores for the PKIE questionnaire for each scale and as a whole were converted separately for gender into a sten scale, which allowed for the determination of defined results for each scale as: low, average, and high. The normalized results for the studied population are presented in Table 3.

Table 1
 Personality structure in age groups, N=200

		transition to adulthood	emerging adulthood	transition through the thirties	settling down	transition to middle age
Critical parent	very low	0	0	0	0	0
	low	0	0	0	1	0
	average	31	44	5	9	26
	high	30	29	3	9	8
	very high	2	3	0	0	0
Nurturing Parent	very low	9	13	1	1	5
	low	35	39	5	7	20
	average	19	24	2	11	9
	high	0	0	0	0	0
	very high	0	0	0	0	0
Adult	very low	0	0	0	0	0
	low	20	28	2	7	8
	average	43	48	6	12	26
	high	0	0	0	0	0
	very high	0	0	0	0	0
Free Child	very low	1	1	0	1	0
	low	17	20	2	5	10
	average	45	55	6	13	24
	high	0	0	0	0	0
	very high	0	0	0	0	0
Adapted Child	very low	0	0	0	0	0
	low	2	2	1	0	0
	average	56	71	6	19	31
	high	5	3	1	0	3
	very high	0	0	0	0	0

Source: own research, 2024; The values of states that do not occur in the studied population are marked in red.

As an introduction to the analysis of the results, a compilation of age, personality structure, and emotional intelligence components was conducted, solely for informational purposes. This procedure was chosen because the questionnaires used were standardized based on the age of the respondents. However, it should be noted that the age norms of the questionnaires are not consistent within the adopted modified Levinson's division. An additional problem

is that the results in the studied population were distributed quite specifically. For example, in the Critical Parent category, very low and low results pertain to only one person. In the Nurturing Parent category, no one achieved high or very high results, and the same is true for the Adult category, where additionally no one obtained very low results. In the Adapted Child category, no one achieved very low or very high results. All of this yields a rather specific distribution in the research sample, a statistical egogram, which will certainly affect further results.

Since the results, after calculation, were transformed into an ordinal scale and the age of the respondents was divided into groups, it was decided to examine the relationship between age and personality structure using nonparametric tests. Chi-square, Kendall's tau b, and Spearman's R coefficients were calculated for the studies. IBM SPSS Statistics 29 was used for all calculations.

The first stage of the analysis was to calculate correlations between Ego States and the age of the respondents. Correlations were calculated separately for each Ego State.

While analysing the results, only one statistically significant correlation was found. A low negative correlation was found between the Critical Parent and the age of the respondents, with the following results: Kendall's tau-b = -0.15, Spearman's correlation = -0.17 with $p=0.018$. It was expected that a significant relationship would emerge between the Adult Ego State and the age of the respondents, but the obtained result is partially consistent with the assumptions adopted in the study. Since the Critical Parent decreases as the age of the respondents increases, it can be assumed that the level of a realistic approach to life, which characterizes the Adult Ego State, increases. The numerical compilation is presented in Table 2

Table 2
Critical parent and age, N=200

		transition to adulthood	emerging adulthood	transition through the thirties	settling down	transition to middle age	Total
Critical parent	low	0	0	0	1	0	1
	average	31	44	5	9	26	115
	high	30	29	3	9	8	79
	very high	2	3	0	0	0	5
Total		63	76	8	19	34	200

Source: own research, 2024.

Table 3
Emotional intelligence in age groups, N=200

		transition to adulthood	emerging adulthood	transition through the thirties	settling down	transition to middle age
Accept	low	35	34	2	10	13
	average	27	41	6	9	21
	high	1	1	0	0	0
Empathy	low	18	11	2	4	7
	average	36	56	4	14	23
	high	9	9	2	1	4
Control	low	3	2	2	2	4
	average	30	48	3	14	22
	high	30	26	3	3	8
Understanding	low	7	13	3	7	13
	average	45	56	5	11	20
	high	11	7	0	1	1
Generally	low	5	4	1	3	2
	average	53	68	7	16	32
	high	5	4	0	0	0

Source: own research, 2024

Analogous to the personality structure, the components of emotional intelligence and the age of the respondents were examined using nonparametric statistics. Dependencies were found between age and the KON scale, which determines the ability to control, including cognitive control. A person characterized by the ability to control their own emotions also knows which emotional states promote and which do not promote the effective performance of various types of activities (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005, p. 31). However, surprisingly, the correlation turned out to be negative, for this pair of variables chi-square = 17.49, with $df=8$ and a probability coefficient of $p=0.025$. Kendall's tau-b = -0.20, Spearman's R = -0.21 with $p=0.02$. Contrary to initial intuitions, for the studied population, the highest results on the KON scale were achieved by representatives of the first two age groups. The numerical compilation is presented in Table 4.

Table 4
KON scale in age groups, N=200

		transition to adulthood	emerging adulthood	transition through the thirties	settling down	transition to middle age	Total
Control	low	3	2	2	2	4	13
	average	30	48	3	14	22	117
	high	30	26	3	3	8	70
Total		63	76	8	19	34	200

Source: own research, 2024.

Similar results, namely a negative correlation, were obtained for the ROZ scale, understanding, which indicates a very good understanding of one's own emotions, the ability to name them and distinguish their intensity. It also suggests knowledge of the causes of one's own emotional states (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005, p. 31). For this pair of variables, chi-square = 18.98, with df = 8 and a probability coefficient of $p = 0.015$. Kendall's tau-b = -0.26; Spearman's R = -0.29 with $p = 0.000$. The numerical compilation is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
ROZ scale in age groups, N=200

		transition to adulthood	emerging adulthood	transition through the thirties	settling down	transition to middle age	Total
Under-standing	low	7	13	3	7	13	43
	average	45	56	5	11	20	137
	high	11	7	0	1	1	20
Total		63	76	8	19	34	200

Source: own research, 2024.

Although the negative correlations between age and the selected components of emotional intelligence are not consistent with the initial assumptions, the results should not be questioned, as there is evidence indicating that in selected populations, such a relationship does not necessarily occur (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2001, p. 21; Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005, p. 21). It can be assumed that better emotional intelligence results on the KON and ROZ scales are related to the specifics of the life period; the best results were achieved by the youngest respondents, who are either in the educational process or have just completed it, which may promote a broader perspective and self-improvement. The analyses regarding age are treated as a background for the main research.

The main part of the research concerns the relationship between personality structure and emotional intelligence. Variables were compiled, and statistical calculations were performed using the same nonparametric tests. After the calculations, only two statistically significant relationships between the variables were identified. The first of these concerns the relationship between the Adult Ego State and the EMP (empathy) scale. The chi-square test obtained a value of 6.260, with $df=2$ and a probability coefficient of $p=0.044$. Kendall's tau-b = 0.17; Spearman's R = 0.176 with $p=0.011$. The numerical compilation is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Relationship between the Adult Ego State and EMP (empathy) scale scores, N=200

		Empathy			Total
		low	average	high	
Adult	low	19	42	4	65
	average	23	91	21	135
Total		42	133	25	200

Source: own research, 2024.

Similar to the previously described analysis of the studied population, the results for the Adult Ego State are quite specific. In the studied population (Table 6), all results pertained to low and average values. This is not an unusual situation; when analysing personality in TA, an egogram is created, which is a kind of map of Ego States. The studied population has a statistical egogram in which a high Critical Parent and a low Nurturing Parent dominate, which may explain why the Adult achieves lower values (Table 1).

Despite the previously described doubts, the calculations indicate a correlation between the distribution of the Adult Ego State and the distribution of the emotional intelligence component – EMP – empathy. The rank correlation at the level of 0.17 – 0.176, according to the classification of Stanisz and Guilford, is defined as weak, but it does exist and is consistent with the initially adopted assumptions. The ability to empathize, understood as the skill to recognize and understand the emotions of others (EMP), allows for a deeper understanding of human behaviour and the precise reading of their intentions. Thanks to this ability, an individual can recognize what others are feeling, distinguish sincere expressions of feelings from insincere ones, and predict what emotions might be evoked in others by their own actions. High scores on the EMP scale indicate the ability of the respondent to easily and accurately recognize the emotions and intentions experienced by others. Such a person can notice, for example, that someone feels embarrassed, experiences fear, or is trying to draw attention to

themselves. They are also characterized by the ability to notice subtle aspects of other people's behaviour that remain invisible to most people (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005, p. 31). This corresponds to the Adult Ego State, in terms of its integrative nature, which utilizes the functionality of other states without losing its autonomy (Wieczorek, 2016). Integrating the Adult means the ability to see from another person's perspective, awareness of one's values, the ability to predict the consequences of one's actions – also in terms of interaction flow – and awareness of one's placement on the timeline. The timeline refers to the symbolic perspective of who I was, who I am, and what will happen to me in the context of the actions taken. This corresponds to Jesse Delia's concept of cognitive complexity, which is a good predictor of professional achievements (Wieczorek, 2017; Griffin, 2003, pp. 136-148). People who accurately predict the behaviour of others, know what they can afford, recognize their own emotions, and can manage them, performing better in the labour market

It is worth noting that the lack of relationship between the components of emotional intelligence and the remaining elements of personality structure supports the concept related to the integrating function of the Adult Ego State. If such relationships had appeared, it could be assumed that we would have used the Child Ego State, which largely corresponds to emotional reactions, to understand and communicate emotions. The second possibility is that the Nurturing Parent would be significant in, for example, providing support. The absence of these relationships suggests that the Parent and Child states serve more for automatic, situation-forced reactions, while the Adult state is responsible for the actual recognition and understanding of emotions, as well as for building empathic reactions. This is important for understanding the mechanisms of personality functioning and significant as an element of basic research.

The second potentially statistically significant relationship is the connection between the Adult Ego State and the KON (control) scale. In this case, a statistically significant result was found in the chi-square test of independence, with a value of 6.458 at $df=2$ and $p=0.04$. However, no statistically significant correlations were found, and for this reason, no further analyses were performed.

Conclusions and Summary

This article presented the relationships between personality structure in terms of transactional analysis and emotional intelligence. As a backdrop to these considerations, the age of the respondents was taken into account, namely the so-called young adulthood in Levinson's classification, which may have a potential relationship with the discussed topic. The presented research results indicate a relationship between the Adult Ego State and the empathy

scale, and they also indicate a correlation between age and selected areas of personality, as well as selected areas of emotional intelligence.

Transactional analysis is most often used as a theory that allows for a better understanding of what happens in interpersonal relationships, hence the enormous popularity of, for example, the concept of psychological games or transactional dependencies. Theoretical descriptions, however, are based mainly on theoretical assumptions and observations, and the conclusions drawn cannot always be empirically confirmed. For this reason, for the development of the TA concept, research conducted using standardized tools should be considered very valuable.

The dependence observed in the research fits into the understanding of both empathy and the functioning of the Adult Ego State. Both the correlations that were confirmed and those that did not appear are significant, as they testify to the key role of the Adult Ego State in the process of building emotional intelligence. The analysis of the research findings also showed a certain flaw in Eric Berne's concept. A good understanding of personality structure is not always sufficient to understand human functioning in a holistic way. We can comment on the intensity of a given Ego State, but describing what their proportions mean is more complicated. TA works best when we use its individual components separately, such as game analysis, script analysis, or personality analysis to create an egogram.

For practical applications, additional concepts are created, which are a kind of overlay on the core of the theory, referring to other theories or classifications. One such theory is the description of functioning from the perspective of personality adaptations (Ware, 1983; White, 2004; Stewart & Joines, 2014-236). Personality adaptations are a set of six consistent ways of coping based on what worked best in the family, supported by terminology from the DSM classification. There is a chance that developing the concept of the integrating Adult in conjunction with other psychological classifications will, in the long term, allow for the creation of an analogous, practically useful classification. This is a perspective that encourages further research and exploration of the topic of personality structure.

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Cechy osobowości w ujęciu analizy transakcyjnej a inteligencja emocjonalna młodych dorosłych. Raport z badań

Streszczenie

Artykuł analizuje zależność między strukturą osobowości według teorii analizy transakcyjnej (AT) a inteligencją emocjonalną. W ramach AT osobowość jest podzielona na trzy stany Ja: Rodzic, Dorosły i Dziecko, które odzwierciedlają różne sposoby myślenia, odczuwania i zachowania. Inteligencja emocjonalna odnosi się natomiast do zdolności rozpoznawania, rozumienia i zarządzania własnymi emocjami oraz emocjami innych osób.

Przyjęty model inteligencji emocjonalnej zakłada istnienie czterech głównych komponentów zdolności do spostrzegania i wyrażania emocji, zdolności do asymilowania emocji w przebiegu procesów poznawczych, zdolność do rozumienia i analizowania emocji oraz zdolności do kierowania emocjami. Przeprowadzone badania wskazują, że stan Ja Dorosły, charakteryzujący się obiektywną oceną sytuacji i logicznym myśleniem, koreluje pozytywnie z empatią, rozumianą, jako umiejętność rozpoznawania i rozumienia emocji innych. Opisany związek jest pomocny w rozumieniu procesu rozwoju i integracji stanu Ja Dorosły i podkreśla jego kluczową rolę w prawidłowo rozwiniętej osobowości.

Słowa kluczowe: Ja Dorosły, inteligencja emocjonalna, zintegrowany Dorosły.

ON THE BORDER
NA POGRANICZU DZIEDZIN



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Socio-Psychological Contexts of Taking on the Role of Employee by Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

This article presents the social and psychological conditions of entering the role of an employee by people with intellectual disabilities. The social and legal-organisational barriers to entering employment by this group are presented. The psychological aspects of becoming an employee, especially on the open labour market, are also analysed. Attention is drawn to the importance of work in the process of maturation of personality and identity and in the pursuit of autonomy.

Keywords: people with intellectual disabilities, role of the worker, determinants of adulthood, autonomy, identity.

Introduction

Human adulthood is a key concept considered in the field of social sciences. Whether analysed in academic discourse or in relation to everyday practice, it is currently considered an ambiguous and complex phenomenon (Malewski, 2013), especially when it concerns people with disabilities, especially women and men with intellectual disabilities (ID). This is due to the stereotypical perception of this social group through the lens of cognitive deficits (including the 'perpetual children' syndrome) (Cytowska, 2012).

The development and maturation of people with ID is the result of a continuous interaction between problems arising from their dysfunction and environmental barriers, especially those related to social attitudes (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, ratified by Poland in 2012). Therefore, their adulthood is entangled in a complex socio-cultural context and should not be judged in terms of developmental tasks ascribed to typical adults in the community. A growing body of research portrays this period of life for people with ID as a time of developing many of the social skills and competences that they failed to acquire in school and adolescence (cf. Cytowska, 2012; Southward and Kyzar, 2017; Strandova, Evans, 2015; Wolska, 2015).

One of the most important indicators of adulthood is entering paid employment. For every person, work is an important aspect of life because it allows them to experience their own development, increased self-esteem and social usefulness, independence and effectiveness in decision-making – necessary to achieve full independence and expanded social contacts. For people with ID, the benefits of work are similar and are most often observed in three areas: existential - maintaining and meeting the needs of daily existence; social - participating in a work group and building new interpersonal relationships; psychological – meeting higher-order needs such as self-realisation and self-development. Moreover, professional work shapes a person's socio-professional identity (cf. Cytowska, 2012; Krzemińska, Lindynberg, 2012).

The aim of this paper is to show the social and psychological determinants of the process of adults with ID entering the workforce.

The social context of work for people with intellectual disabilities

Work is an important area of adult functioning. It determines people's daily existence, but it also opens space for the realisation of dreams, ambitions and aspirations for improvement. People with disabilities (as well as their loved ones) are constantly trying to prove that work has a rehabilitative dimension for them, and therefore its existential significance is limited. In the case of people with ID, this is particularly evident, as their daily needs are most often met within the biological family, so that the earnings from work do not necessarily serve to support themselves and their loved ones but are merely an addition to the family budget. This attitude indicating that the efforts of people with ID are undervalued and even belittled is one factor in their discrimination (Barnes and Mercer, 2008, p. 59).

Others result from the impact of yet other external environment barriers - negative social attitudes reinforced by stereotypes and prejudices; inadequate

preparatory education for young people with ID; inadequate, outdated legislation; limited access to the labour market.

Among the social barriers faced by adults with ID on their journey towards employment, the negative attitudes of those around them, both those closest to them and those further afield not directly related to them, are significant.

Drawing conclusions from research conducted in 2011 on social attitudes towards people with ID, Zdzisław Kazanowski noted that the majority of respondents show the so-called *effortless tolerance* - they accept these people, but do not want to get involved in relations with them (Kazanowski, 2011), which may indicate an ambivalence of attitudes towards this social group, so despite the increase in acceptance resulting from better knowledge of them, we are still, as a society, shying away from undertaking activities that involve proximity with these people (interpersonal contacts, relations, direct support). People with ID "(...) have to face, above all, entrenched patterns of opinion about them, which become a fundamental barrier to the development of life activities. They can be said to define their life situation" (Erenc, 2008, p. 37).

Social attitudes, especially negative ones, are perpetuated by stereotypes and prejudices against a given social group, which correlate with superstition. Significantly, these three phenomena strongly affect the attitudes of people who are not in contact with the social group in question, so they cannot verify the stereotypes they have heard, triggering prejudice and fear resulting from superstition (Buchnat, 2008). Relating these correlations to stereotypes, prejudices and triggering superstitions towards people with ID, it is important to acknowledge that nowadays direct contact with these people is more frequent, almost daily. However, it only becomes possible to dispel stereotypes when one gets to know this group better, their capabilities, their needs, but also their weaknesses. Thanks to the fact that more and more people with ID are working, also in the open labour market, their potential is being recognised and the thinking about their incapacity, lack of stamina, fatigue, aversion to effort, etc., is being verified. Research on the employment of people with ID, particularly with employers and co-workers, supports the findings that those social groups that hang out with people with ID dispel unpleasant myths and stereotypes about them (Cytowska, 2008). Thus, the opening up of work, local, and previously school environments to work, leisure, and study together may contribute to a slow change in attitudes towards the population of people with ID and a more willingness to enter into relationships with them.

Negative societal attitudes combined with still strong stereotypes triggering prejudice are indirect barriers to discrimination against people with ID in the labour market. The direct cause of their poor participation in employment is inadequate vocational preparation and labour market constraints.

Preparation for work

As of 2017, preparation for occupation and work for young people with ID has been shifted to two forms of education: 3-year lower secondary trade schools and 3-year special preparatory schools - intended mainly for young people with more profound ID (Journal of Laws 2017, item 60). Pupils with mild ID can learn together with their peers in mainstream first-level branch schools (inclusion and integration branches) and in segregated school environments, i.e. in special first-level branch schools (Journal of Laws 2019, item 639).

Special lower-secondary vocational schools can prepare for the following professions: assistant carpenter, assistant catering worker, assistant hotel service worker, assistant mechanic, assistant tailor (Journal of Laws 2019, item 316). It should be noted that this list is quite limited, and the change compared to the previous group of professions intended for graduates of primary schools with a recognised intellectual disability (e.g. tailor, cook, confectioner) is that the qualifications acquired are limited to auxiliary activities in the profession. On the one hand, it can be agreed that this takes into account the limited possibilities of people with ID, but on the other hand, today's young people with a milder form of ID have higher aspirations, more similar to the contemporary labour market, they would like to work at a computer, in an office, in childcare institutions or for seniors, and such opportunities are not given to them (Cytowska, 2012; Woynarowska, 2020).

For young people with profound ID, special schools for work experience are organised. They are three years long and their programme, modified in 2019, emphasises independence, creativity, social communication and, above all, greater involvement of the student in the implementation of the work placement (Journal of Laws 2019, item 639). Schools can use the assisted practice model with a teacher-trainer (Antecka et al., 2018) along the lines of a job coach - the main element of supported employment, which will be discussed later in this article. The innovation of supported practice, the authors of the concept argue, is to implement elements of an effective supported employment method into education in order to give students the opportunity to gain practical work experience during their school education on the open labour market. In preparatory schools, the currently preferred system of apprenticeships is usually carried out on the school premises in thematic workshops. Such artificial conditions are not conducive to young people getting to know the realities of the labour market, the atmosphere of the workplace, the requirements of the job.

Graduation from a specialised vocational school of the first degree or from a special preparatory school is unfortunately not a sufficient achievement to open the labour market to graduates of these institutions. Unemployment among people with ID is very high, although hidden in the data for all non-working people with disabilities over the age of 16. (80% economically inactive). For

example, the employment rate for people with disabilities in 2020 was 16.7 % (for 10 years this has only increased by 2.3 percentage points), which is three times less than the rest of the population (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, 2021, p. 29). However, these figures come from Job Centres, so based on them we can talk about overt unemployment and formal employment, ignoring hidden unemployment, i.e. unemployment not reported to the Job Centre, and the shadow economy of employment, in which, unfortunately, there can be unlawful actions by employers – exploitation and even violence against employees with disabilities, and among them people with ID are the most vulnerable.

The employment of this group was particularly adversely affected by the period of political transformation, although at that time unemployment plagued the entire adult population. In 1991, a solution emerged for graduates of special vocational schools and preparatory classes who could not find work either in the sheltered or, even more so, the open labour market. It was then that the first occupational therapy workshops (*warsztaty terapii zajęciowej* – WTZ) were organised, and the 1997 Act on Social and Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (Dz. U. 1997, No. 123, item 776) specified the scope of their activity, classifying them as forms of professional and social rehabilitation. Among the main goals of WTZs is the acquisition by persons with disabilities of independence and skills and qualifications enabling them to take up employment. WTZs implement many forms and techniques of occupational therapy, thanks to which participants learn activities of daily life and personal resourcefulness, as well as develop psychophysical fitness and basic and often specialist vocational skills.

More than 25 years of operation of WTZ in the system of socio-vocational rehabilitation reveals some inconsistencies with the requirements of the Act. First and foremost, for many adults with ID, especially when they have a combined disability, the WTZ turns out to be a destination because they do not have the opportunity to take up employment.

WTZs have been criticised on several occasions, especially in the context of the prevalent practices of control, the implementation of obedience and politeness, the excessive focus on artistic activities, regardless of whether someone has talent or not, the detachment from reality by organising events and games that are supposed to counteract boredom, but do not foster social maturation and, on the contrary, perpetuate passivity and an attitude of acceptance of the proposed solutions (Cytowska, 2013; Żółkowska, 2011).

Legal and organisational possibilities of employing people with intellectual disabilities

Regardless of whether the direction of vocational education was correctly chosen, whether the young person is satisfied with the choice made earlier (un-

fortunately, often limited by many factors, such as health, psychophysical capabilities, availability of a school with a specific vocational profile, pressure from the environment – parents, teachers, colleagues), when completing vocational education, he or she faces a serious barrier in the form of unpreparedness of the modern labour market to accept an employee who requires more care from the employer than the average trainee.

In Poland, the employment of persons with ID is regulated by the already mentioned Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (*ustawa o rehabilitacji zawodowej i społecznej oraz zatrudnianiu osób niepełnosprawnych*) of 1997, as amended. Currently, the work of this social group can be based on competitive conditions on the open labour market - the same rules apply to every candidate for a given position – and on special conditions on the protected labour market – organised workplaces, selected and adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities (Journal of Laws 2023, item 100).

Different solutions are proposed in both systems. On the sheltered labour market, there are sheltered workshops (*zakłady pracy chronionej – ZPCH*) and increasingly popular – occupational activity workshops (*zakłady aktywności zawodowej – ZAZ*). Without going into the ins and outs of their functioning, it is worth noting that both forms, according to legislation increasingly adapted to the requirements of the European Union, should only be a transitional stage to employment in companies on the open labour market.

Vocational activation of people with disabilities in the open labour market is to be supported by the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 13 December 2007 on providing assistance to employers (Journal of Laws 2007, item 240), which provides for a compact system 'forcing' their employment. Companies with twenty-five or more full-time (or full-time equivalent) employees are obliged to take on at least 6% of their workforce with disabilities. If they meet this condition, they can count on subsidising the costs incurred for employing an employee with a certain degree of disability. The situation is similar for smaller companies, which are not forced to make the presented organisational moves. When a person with intellectual disabilities, visual disability, epilepsy or mental disorder is hired, the amount of the subsidy increases. It should be emphasised that the employer is obliged to take measures to adapt the workplace and the circumstances of employment. The subsidy programme for employers willing to employ people with certified disabilities (significant, moderate, light) automatically entails disciplining those who are resistant by imposing fees transferred to the State Fund for Persons with Disabilities (*Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych – PFRON*) (Cytowska, 2013).

Helping people with disabilities to be employed and remain economically active in the open labour market can involve the following forms (Cytowska & Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, 2013):

- Supported employment - according to the Act on Social Employment (*zatrudnieniu socjalnym*), means providing support of a counselling and financial nature in maintaining professional activity which makes it possible to undertake employment or socially useful work, establish or join a social cooperative or undertake economic activity (**Journal of Laws 2011 No. 43, item 225**).
- Supported employment - is defined by the World Association for Supported Employment (WASE) as: "gainful employment in an integrated environment in the open labour market, with ongoing support provided to the disabled worker. Gainful employment means the same payment for the same work as for a non-disabled worker" (Majewski, 2009, p. 15). In Poland, a preliminary definition of supported employment (in line with the EUSE – European Union of Supported Employment - approach) was proposed in May 2011: "providing support to persons with disabilities or other groups at risk of exclusion in obtaining and maintaining paid employment on the open labour market" (Cytowska & Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, 2013, p. 22). Supported employment has developed on the basis of the 'training through work' method for people with intellectual disabilities, taking into account their individual needs. The hitherto existing traditional model of train – place has been changed to a model: place – train – maintain (Gorący, 2011, pp. 134–137). Supported employment includes the assistance and support of a so-called job coach or job assistant (job coach), whose activities are two-pronged (aiming to employ the person with ID and for him/her to keep the job) and aim to provide the most targeted support possible. The person of the coach combines the functions of a vocational teacher, vocational counsellor, occupational therapist and support person.

Supported employment appears to be the most inclusive; it addresses the pressing problems of unemployment and inactivity in a population of people with ID who have vocational potential. Unfortunately, it has still not been formalised and job coach is not included in the list of professions. This system of employment is implemented by design, hence giving rise to a number of uncomfortable situations for people with disabilities and, in particular, restrictions on the continuity of employment.

In Poland, the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities of 1997 (**Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 127, item 721**, as amended), which has already been cited several times, still treats disability too one-sidedly, as 'permanent or temporary inability to fulfil social roles due to permanent or long-term impairment of the organism's functions, in particular

resulting in inability to work' (art.2, point 10), thus shifting the burden of responsibility for the said incapacity to causes inherent in the individual, ignoring barriers located in the social and material environment. The greatest weakness of the Act and the definition of disability given therein should be emphasised, namely the failure to take into account the strengths of a person with a disability (even if only as an effect of compensating for impaired functioning) and thus to emphasise his or her individual capacity to undertake work.

Among special educationalists - theorists and practitioners - there is also a perception that people with ID have limited work opportunities. Although this group is very diverse, there is still a stereotypical thinking about the work activities they can undertake: they must be uncomplicated, repetitive, schematic. Even if this is the situation for contemporary employed people with ID, considering the pragmatic considerations of Richard Sennett (2008), routine and exercise play a positive role in the work of a professional who can always call upon the capabilities of his or her body. By giving meaning to even the simplest actions and activities, he derives dignity from them; he takes pride in his work. If one is proud of one's work, doing it brings more satisfaction.

Taking up work as an important step towards autonomy and fuller development personality and identity

From a psychological point of view, the most important marker of adulthood is the ability to satisfy all needs, especially those of a higher order, which makes it possible to become fully independent and self-reliant. Personality integration and the formation of an identity and world view take place, thanks to which a person becomes responsible for him/herself, can take responsibility for another person, is able to control his/her emotions, copes with difficult situations, and has the readiness to self-determine and decide for oneself (Oleś, 2011). These aspects of adulthood are developed to varying degrees by people with ID, some are able to achieve full independence or function with little accompaniment from loved ones or a social worker, others are almost entirely dependent on assistance or even care (e.g. people with profound ID). Thus, there is a group among this population with a formed self-awareness, able to make decisions independently or with support, and this ability entails the development of responsibility (Settersten, Ottusch & Schneider, 2015). However, many people with ID find it difficult to achieve psychological maturity, which may be a result of – on the one hand – social barriers and, on the other hand, their own barriers, often secondary ones being the aftermath of negative experiences from social interactions and relationships (Brzezinska et al, 2011; Pisula, 2008; Woynarowska, 2020).

Autonomy is one of the most important human needs, the pursuit of autonomy is inscribed in the challenges of adulthood. Synonyms of autonomy are independence and self-determination - these concepts are associated with freedom, self-realisation and individual dignity (Tylewska-Nowak, 2015). Achieving full independence is difficult and actually impossible, as we are always or feel dependent on someone or something. Autonomous living does not necessarily mean living on one's own or performing daily activities independently. Rather, it should be understood as the freedom to make choices and exercise control over one's own lifestyle and daily affairs (Zakrzewska, 2021).

Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities includes this as one of the principles of the States Parties' agreement: 'respect for the inherent dignity, autonomy of the person, including freedom of choice, and respect for the autonomy of the person'.

For people with ID, a number of personality and identity development factors are relevant to achieving independent living.

Table 1

Personality determinants of the development of autonomy of a person with ID

Cognitive determinants	Self-awareness
	Self-acceptance
	Self-esteem
	A sense of confidence
Instrumental determinants	Social skills:
	— empathy
	— communication
	— social insight
	Coping skills:
	— search for information
	— direct action
— refraining from - acting	
— asking others for help	
	Skills to use support:
	— emotional
	— of information
	— instrumental

Source: A. Zawiślak (2008, pp. 43–44)

Undoubtedly, entering into the role of a worker represents the development of the personal determinants of autonomy. The individual becomes increasingly aware of his or her own capabilities and limitations, accepts himself or herself, which fosters a greater sense of confidence, but also an understanding that everyone needs help and can always ask for it. Through varied social contacts, he or

she has a better insight into social arrangements, is increasingly open in communicating with others, and this develops empathy.

Erik Erikson, together with his student Jams Marcia, show two alternating phases of identity formulation: exploration – exploratory actions ('rehearsal' actions), making a commitment – making choices among possible alternatives, making decisions, committing to chosen roles and tasks, and taking responsibility for the near and far consequences of one's decisions. Such a commitment is undoubtedly taking on a job. Gathering exploratory experiences and making commitments fosters the development of self-knowledge and self-awareness, which forms the basis for the formation of a sense of identity. By observing one's own behaviour and its consequences, by following other people's behaviour and comparing oneself with them, one obtains direct information, which allows one to create social categories related to the awareness of belonging to specific social groups and to have insight into one's own personality (Trzebinska, 1998). Identity therefore has a relational dimension; it is the relationship with others that enables the development and subsequent continuous existence of the skills and abilities necessary for autonomous functioning.

The environmental context of independent living for people with ID is also important. From the earliest years, their lives are under strict control and protection, which both homemakers and educators explain by the well-being of the individual, their safety. Such educational attitudes are not conducive to the formation of independence, which is the basis of autonomy. The concern of caregivers and educators need not be a barrier to the development of self-determination for people with ID. The very fact of treating a person with ID subjectively implies consent to the development of his or her autonomy. Consequently, a person with ID should be created in such a way that he or she is able to decide about himself or herself and his or her life, supported in making decisions by providing information about the consequences of choices. Gathering experiences has a significant impact on the formation of personality and thus autonomy (Cytowska, 2012; Woynarowska, 2020).

In conclusion

The social attributes of adulthood are determined by an individual's ability to enter gainful employment and perform social roles, which requires them to develop a sense of duty and an understanding of social rules and norms.

Entering the role of an employee (especially on the open labour market) creates opportunities to build up one's self-image as an independent, capable, responsible and competent person. Through employment, a person both develops and improves and feels useful. Research shows that employment, especially in

a diverse work environment, has a positive impact on the daily functioning of people with ID. Among other things, they perceive the positives and negatives of employment, relate to their personal experiences, become more critical, but also understand the dilemmas of their working parents or other relatives (see: Cytowska, 2012; Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz and Morrison, 2009; Nota, Ginevra and Carrieri, 2010; Woynarowska, 2020).

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Spółeczno-psychologiczne konteksty podjęcia roli pracownika przez dorosłe osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną

Streszczenie

W artykule ukazane zostały uwarunkowania społeczne i psychologiczne wchodzenia w rolę pracownika przez osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Przedstawiono bariery społeczne i prawno-organizacyjne utrudniające podjęcie pracy przez tę grupę. Poddane zostały analizie również psychologiczne aspekty uzyskania statusu pracownika, w szczególności na otwartym rynku pracy. Zwrócono uwagę na znaczenie pracy w procesie dojrzewania osobowości i tożsamości oraz w dążeniu do autonomii.

Słowa kluczowe: osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną, rola pracownika, wyznaczniki dorosłości, autonomia, tożsamość.



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Between Parents and Teachers? – A Pilot Study with Directors of Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers on the Educational Transition of Children with Disabilities

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Abstract

This article describes a pilot study on the inter-system change of educational institutions from the perspective of families with children with disabilities. The theoretical section includes a review of literature on parental involvement, institutional changes, and the support provided by psychological and pedagogical counselling centers. The research problem is identical to the primary problem of the main study: What are the experiences of families of children with disabilities regarding inter-system changes in educational institutions? The aim of the interviews with directors of counselling centers was to identify specific issues, which the author addresses by analyzing the research material based on the categories identified: limited choice, school resistance, support, priorities, emotions, and parental attitudes. In conclusion, the author expands on the significance of the identified specific issues in the context of advanced analyses of the main study.

Keywords: family, qualitative research, disability, inclusion, education.

Introduction

These considerations concern a pilot study on the actions and motivations of parents regarding inter-system (inclusion/integration/segregation) changes of educational institutions for children with disabilities and the cooperation between parents and educational institutions. The study was conducted in May 2023 through interviews with the directors of counseling centers. Following its analysis, the main study commenced, which expanded upon the initial assumptions and is still ongoing. Given the progress of research and analysis in this area, the pilot study conducted with the directors of psychological-pedagogical counseling centers will be described from the perspective of the initial research process assumptions and through the lens of subsequent research stages.

Conducting qualitative research requires the researcher to be open and flexible in their actions, allowing them to examine the issue from various perspectives. In the constructivist paradigm, the reality being studied is constructed transactionally and relationally (Guba & Lincoln, 2009, pp. 283-285). The emerging categories during preliminary analyses led the author to shift from the initially planned single-stage qualitative research based on interviews to simultaneous sequential qualitative research, where subsequent components allow for a multifaceted understanding of the issue (Morse & Niehaus, 2009, p. 9). The sequential nature of the study allowed for increased researcher engagement in the subsequent stage, resulting in a paradigmatic shift—from a constructivist to an activist perspective (Cresswell, 2009, p. 35). The pilot study and the first sequence of research were constructed within the constructivist paradigm. The second sequence of research takes a participatory approach.

The research project, whose pilot phase is the main topic of this article, initially focused on two issues: parental involvement and the change of institutions by children with disabilities. In the literature on the subject, the analysis of the situation of families with children with disabilities over the years reflects a paradigmatic shift in special pedagogy (Krause, 2010). Initially, the focus was mainly on parental crises, social isolation, and coping mechanisms (Twardowski, 1991; Sekułowicz, 2013). In the early 21st century, researchers began to also focus on the positive consequences of experiencing a child's disability by family members, referring to the phenomenon of post-traumatic growth (Baker et al., 2005; Mines, 2015; Byra & Parchomiuk, 2018). In practice, early developmental support, as a consequence of a holistic view of the child and their inseparability from the family, established the process of empowering parents as the optimal way to support the child (Bartóg, 2019; Twardowski, 2016). Enhancing parents' soft skills and their relationship with the child makes them more conscious caregivers, changing their expectations and attitudes in the process of collaboration with the psychological-pedagogical support team. Goodall and Montgomery (2014)

also indicate a change in perspective on parental involvement, creating a model of the parental involvement continuum. The authors describe a shift from parental involvement to parental engagement, which simultaneously represents a transition:

- from involvement in school life to engagement in education;
- from unilateral information transmission to information exchange;
- from complete school agency to shared agency between the school and family.

A parent of a child with a disability who is knowledgeable and competent appears to be a completely new partner for the school. Significant in this perspective can also be the experiences of parents in cooperation with a kindergarten/school assigned to a specific educational system (inclusion/integration/segregation), especially in situations of changing educational institutions. The researcher's interest in the topic of transferring a child between institutions was inspired by B. Gumieny's (2021) studies, which analyzed the situation of transferring students with intellectual disabilities to rehabilitation-educational centers. Conducted according to constructivist grounded theory, these studies revealed the phenomenon of "disabling" students with disabilities. The author also described the phenomenon of resistance among students with disabilities, highlighting their neglected needs. The researcher focused on the situation of students rather than the family and narrowed the study group based on the type of disability and the specific transition pattern (students moving to rehabilitation centers). These studies are inspiring as the situation of changing institutions by a student with disabilities creates a sufficiently broad research field to also be the subject of this research.

Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers as the Site of the Pilot Study

In designing the study on the systemic change of institutions by students with disabilities from the perspective of the experiences of the student's entire family, it was crucial to create comprehensive and multi-dimensional interview guidelines for parents. To avoid omitting any significant issues, a pilot study was first conducted through interviews with the Directors of Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers, which are indicated as places of "contact" or specific bridges between the family of a child with a disability or special educational needs and teachers (Skatbania, 2010). Supporting the student and their parents, as well as teachers in working with the student and their family, is the task of PPPs, as regulated by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 1, 2013, on the detailed principles of operation of public psychological-pedagogical counseling centers, including public specialist counseling centers. Counseling centers also play an advisory role in the choice or change of educa-

tional institutions (Journal of Laws of 2013, item 199). By providing parents and teachers with knowledge about the individualization of the child's educational path, counseling center employees can imply parental involvement in their child's educational process at school (Popławska & Sierpińska, 2001, p. 79). The activities of employees can also be interventionist due to difficulties reported by teachers or parents (Korbelak & Lizak, 2017). B. Skałbania (2014, pp. 111–112) describes Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers as a kind of "extension" supporting the school, indicating its sensitivity to changes affecting the school, both systemic and paradigmatic. The author also emphasizes the duality of counseling center actions—both blocking and creating changes, which I interpret as an implication of both the institutionalization of Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers and their orientation toward the welfare of the child and family.

International research authors on counseling emphasize its multi-contextuality. In the perspective of the designed research, three issues seem significant:

1. The meanings attributed to parental actions in the context of supporting development.

The quality of advisory or support actions involving a child with a disability is conditioned by a holistic view of the child and recognizing their inseparability from the family (Mamman, 2007). Recognizing the systemic connections of family members expands the scope of support actions from the student alone to their family system (Ozozu, 2005; Okeke, 2001).

2. The relationship between institutional employees and the student's parents.

A. Sundas et al. (2023), based on studies on parental attitudes towards intellectual disability and its impact on family relationships among parents of children with intellectual disabilities, point to the significance of support provided to the family. The coordination of family actions and emotional support is indicated by the authors as a response to difficulties in positive attitudes towards children with intellectual disabilities resulting from a lack of acceptance of the disability. The researchers' indication of a nurse as the person who should support the family stems from the interventionist nature of their work in the child's home environment. The study's conclusions postulate building a sense of security among supported individuals, which seems challenging in the perspective of institutionalized and formalized counseling center actions.

3. The significance of counseling center employees' actions for the family's situation, decisions, and the process of supporting the child's development.

H. Myers (2005) describes an ethnographic study of Elementary School Counselors operating since 1993 according to the principles of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA 1993; 2003), supporting students with disabilities. The scope of advisory activities has common areas with the actions of Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers employees in Poland but does not include diagnosing and adjudicating, while the area of actions related to sup-

porting the situation of students with disabilities in the classroom is expanded. Counselors deal with: advocacy, planning institutional change, advising parents, referring to specialists, increasing the quality of student functioning in school and peer groups, working in a school interdisciplinary team, consultations for parents and teachers. In the perspective of the considerations, planning institutional change seems significant (although not extensively described in the article), as it significantly expands the practiced recommendation of a suggested institution in Poland. The main conclusion of the study, however, was the need for greater knowledge of counselors regarding the specifics of working with students with disabilities due to the significant diversity of this group in terms of their abilities and needs (Myers, 2005, pp. 442-449).

Pilot Study Methodology

Based on the literature analysis and considering the pilot nature of the designed research, a study was constructed based on a qualitative approach aimed at understanding the process of systemic changes in educational institutions by children with disabilities in the context of their "inseparability" from the family system. The research problem is the same as the main problem of the target studies: What are the experiences of families of children with disabilities in the area of systemic institutional changes? The goal of this study was to identify significant issues in this thematic area and outline specific problems. The research aim was to identify significant family experiences in the situation of a child's institutional change from the perspective of psychological-pedagogical counseling center employees. The selected research method was a partially structured interview. The research sample consisted of the Directors of public Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers. The sample selection was based on availability and willingness to participate in the study, following the principles of convenience sampling (Hogan, Schulkin, Power, & Loft, 2009). An inquiry regarding the study was directed to 25 counseling directors operating in Poland, of whom only two directors from large cities agreed to participate. The study was conducted in May 2023. The process of changing educational institutions by children involves multifaceted approaches, including Comer's process, hierarchical linear models, collaborative inquiry, and principles of systemic change (Saravanabhavan & Johnson, 2001; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1988; Wagner, 1998; Halpern, 2013; Goldspink, 2007).

Analysis of the pilot study

Drawing on the ontology of the constructivist paradigm, the analysis of the research material is grounded in a relativistic approach to the process of decon-

struction, wherein the construction and reconstruction of "reality" are locally contextualized, and meanings are contextually determined. (Guba & Lincoln, 2009, p. 286). Significant for the emergence of categories are both urbanization (the surveyed directors manage counseling centers in Gdańsk and Warsaw), institutionalization (the scope of Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers employees' activities is precisely defined by law), the emphasis on educational inclusion (as a consequence of the ratified UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Journal of Laws of October 25, 2012, item 1169)), and the socio-cultural model of disability. For the purpose of the pilot study, which is to construct specific problems for the main study, it was important not only to identify categories but also to understand the connections and dependencies between them. The connections and correlations between the identified categories are presented in the following diagram.

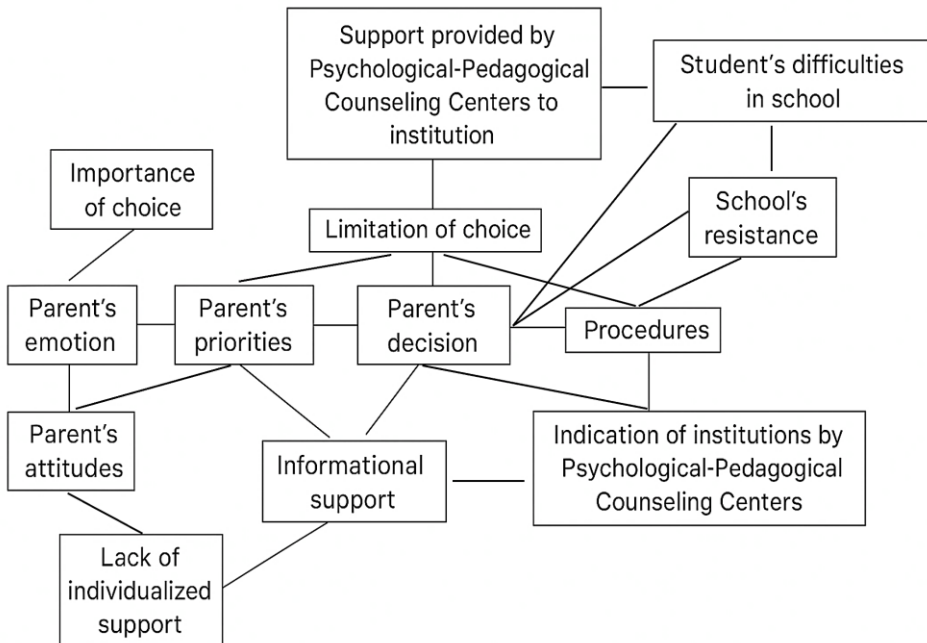


Fig. 1.
Analytical categories.

Source: own elaboration

The category of **parental decision** is placed at the center of the diagram because it is crucial for the analyzed situation of a child's institutional change from the perspective of their family's experiences. It is a category that directly or indirectly relates to all other categories. **Parental choice** of an institution is legally

guaranteed – resulting from procedures and often preceded by **information support** from a Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers employee, who also indicates the appropriate type of institution. Parents may follow the recommendation of the counseling center, but they are not obliged to. Due to systemic limitations, Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers **support is not individualized** and tailored to the needs of a given family, which determines various **attitudes, emotions, and actions of parents**, and consequently affects their choice. **Parental decision** depends on **parental priorities** (e.g., focus on therapy or social inclusion), which have a multifactorial basis, but key seem to be attitudes toward the child and the quality of acceptance of the disability. **Parental attitudes** and emotions are also associated with **the importance of choice for the parent**, both in terms of their autonomy and responsibility. **Parental decision** is often conditioned by a **limited choice**. According to the law and accepted procedures, only the local school is obliged to accept the child. Other institutions (including special schools) must have a place for the child and may refuse the parent. The obligation to accept a child with special educational needs may cause **resistance from the school**. Negative attitudes toward the student with a disability or the additional tasks arising from these needs may be both a consequence and a cause of the **student's difficulties in school**. Thus, parental decision is often influenced by systemic conditions and implies the student's situation in a systemically conditioned school.

The relationships between the categories will be illustrated by the statements of the respondents in reverse order to the above argument to show the dynamics of factors, processes, and their impact on the parental decision.

The difficulties encountered by the student affect their functioning in the school environment, which can directly influence the parent's decision to change the institution. One of the surveyed directors pointed to social or cognitive issues as key factors in parents' decision-making about changing the institution.

D2: Because either the child is not learning, right? Not acquiring the knowledge we think they should. Or they feel bad because they don't have friends, they don't have peers, right? Generally, if in school... because for me, there are two things in school: first, the child should feel good there, and second, they should acquire some knowledge, right? At their level, right? If one of these things is not met, then it is evident, right? The child either does not learn because it is too easy and they get bored, which sometimes reflects in their behavior, or everything is too difficult for them, which also manifests in somatic or behavioral ways. If the child feels bad, doesn't have friends, is lonely, then it qualifies for a school change.

The same respondent points out the differences in the difficulties faced by students with special educational needs or disabilities at different educational stages. Early education, in this context, allows for less stigmatization or differentiation of students.

D2: Because at the 1-3 stage, theoretically, most classes are with one teacher, children have their classroom, and they also play a lot during breaks. They don't just talk all the time; they also play. There are things that our children can keep up with in peer contact. But then, well, children disperse. The curriculum becomes so difficult and implemented at such a pace that they drop out because of it. They don't have friends, don't have peers. The longest friendships are maintained by children who are well-developed verbally. On the other hand, the curriculum starts, and in the Polish school system, there's no... the Polish school is still at the stage where a child, whether disabled or with a teacher or without a teacher, has to join what the group of healthy, normative children is doing. There's no flexibility in the Polish school at all. We have gotten used to having children with disabilities in school, but for the school to change something so that the child could function, like working in a group, project method, or something like that, or doing experiments, that doesn't happen. Children sit in three rows and work with a book and notebook.

In the second part of the above statement, the issue of the Polish school's lack of adaptation is highlighted (which also strongly resonates in other parts of the interview with the respondent). The lack of individualization or universal design leads to discrimination against students with special educational needs and stigmatizes their difference. None of the interviews addressed the difficulties of students in special schools; however, the actual adaptation of methods and approaches to individual student needs and the optimization of their social functioning also in this system seems an important research area. Especially since the planned (at the time of the pilot study) research group was to include families of students changing institutions inter-systemically – both from mainstream to special schools and from special to inclusion.

Student difficulties in the local school (to which the student is entitled to attend regardless of their functional specifics) cause, according to the first respondent, forced adaptation of the teacher, and according to the second, resistance.

D1: You know, I think there is no longer resistance because the management and teachers are aware that, as I said, the decision belongs to the parent. There are specialists, but the teacher is not always able to work, for example, with a child with autism in a class of 30, right? When the parent exerts some pressure because there are special needs, and the regular teacher, being one person, if there's no support teacher, cannot work exclusively with that child. So, in that sense, I think there are more such problems. There's no resistance; it's just difficult because the child is admitted to the class. However, there are more problems related to direct work with that child.

D2: Recently, I had a situation at the end of last year where I wanted to transfer a girl with Down syndrome to the local school. The school principal told the mother that he has to accept the child because it is his district, and he will accept her, but he doesn't have the conditions, he can't provide, he won't do it, unfortunately, she has to manage on her own. Of course, he will look for an additional teacher, but he won't act because there are no conditions. Of course, he will accept the child because he has to, but the mother called and said they wouldn't go there. He has to accept her. He says he has to. If the mother insists, he will accept her because he has to. They know they have to, but there is no willingness, and no. Not everyone is willing to accept these children. Moreover, schools have limited options to select students for classes, even those with disabili-

ties. Sometimes, there is an integrative class that should have up to five students, but the local authority wants five, and these are difficult children. Adding one more difficult autistic child means there's no possibility. They are simply exhausted. However, these children also need some... We have some general rules, for example, that a child with ADHD or autism cannot be in the same class as a blind child. We have certain... specialists can see which children do not fit together. They cannot be placed together, right? I was once in a class where a child with autism would simply hit a child in a wheelchair. That was the first thing they did upon entering the classroom, right? And it was impossible to explain this to the autistic child. We constantly had to restrain the autistic child, right? The child in the wheelchair would sit and cry, and they also needed to be held. It makes no sense at all.

The above statements from the respondents suggest a reflection on the quality of teachers' "forced" actions and the underlying resistance. Does this resistance represent a fight for the welfare of the students, or is it a manifestation of discrimination against their needs? This also raises the issue of systemic inefficiency, which prevents the creation of appropriate conditions for all students. From this perspective, it seems appropriate to refine the main research problem with the question:

What are the experiences of families regarding the education of their child in:

- a. **mainstream schools?**
- b. **integrated schools?**
- c. **special schools?**

The choice of school – whether it is the first or a change – according to the law, depends on the parents, while the employees of the counseling centers perform only advisory functions, as described by the interviewed directors.

D2: In fact, when it comes to students with disabilities, in our counseling center, when issuing a statement where we have to indicate the type of school, we try to choose the most appropriate school for the child, the one that would be the best. However, officially, whatever we write down and whatever we say, the choice belongs to the parent.

D1: We also have the obligation to indicate all possible schools because, in reality, the decision belongs to the parent, right? Even if the child is intellectually disabled, it does not necessarily have to go immediately to a special school because the parent decides.

Procedures outline the scope of actions of Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers employees in recommending the optimal school for the child diagnosed at the counseling center. The lack of decision-making power on the part of the counseling centers diminishes the significance of the informational support provided to parents, even though it is not limited to indicating a school in the statement or opinion.

D2: Sometimes they ask. Sometimes they do ask, right? So, we explain to them what education looks like, for example, in a general access school, in an integrated school, and in a special school. And here, in the city of Gdańsk, we know these schools, so we also advise the parent on schools both in terms of proximity to the place of residence and the

resources that the school has because we also know whether it is more or less open, right? So, we are guided not only by official knowledge but also by subjective knowledge gathered from work experiences. We suggest such a school to the parent.

Finding the optimal school for the student and ensuring a place for the student in it requires additional actions by the PPP employee – their involvement, soft skills, and knowledge of the environment. The systemic limitation of support actions directed at the student's family is evident in the following interview fragment.

B: Is there any process of conversation or psychological support for the parent, or is there no space for that?

D1: There is not always space for that. That means if a parent comes in, then it is clear from the interview, right? What is happening? Then the child is examined. And indeed, if it seems to us that the best situation for the child would be, for example, I don't know, in an integrated school, right? Or in a Youth Sociotherapy Center (MOS), due to various behavioral difficulties, then, of course, we talk to the parent, but it is a conversation presenting all the pros and cons. That is usually the availability of the staff, right?

The respondents did not mention experiences related to emotional support for parents; however, the choice or change of school for a child with special educational needs is very significant for the quality of their functioning and involves great parental responsibility. Therefore, the second detailed research problem was formulated: **What are the possibilities of supporting families in the process of constructing the child's educational path?**

The category of support in making decisions is associated with limiting the choice of school. D2, in the further part of her statement, describes the specifics of such advising at subsequent educational stages: recommending an appropriate kindergarten is mainly based on information about the child provided by the parent; advising on the child's primary school is easier due to knowledge from parents and teachers about the child's experiences in kindergarten; suggesting a school after primary school appears in the respondent's statement as the most difficult due to the limited choice of schools and often already defined needs, capabilities, and interests of the student. The limited choice was mentioned several times in the statements of the interviewed directors.

D2: And sometimes even when we recommend a special school, there are no places in special schools because they are, so to speak, full, colloquially speaking, so the parent, whether they want to or not, goes to the school that we do not recommend, right? Because what we recommend and decide is one issue, and another issue is whether the parent can find a place there.

D1: There is always a place for the child in the district school. However, non-district schools may not accept the child, right? And special schools, if there are no places, may also not accept the child. (...) So, there are situations where the city supports us, and we use their help because there are not so many places.

D2: There are students who, for example, need a small school because they are so auditorily hypersensitive that in large schools, although they are close, it is too loud for them,

too many children, too many classes. The school is too big, right? So, we look further to find a small school. In a small school, there may be no place, right? So, there are such situations, right? Or we don't want them to go to that school because we know the school from such subjective feelings that they are not open, not friendly to disabled children, and at the first slip-up of a disabled child, there will be such a fuss, right? That we no longer direct the child there, right? We say no. Not here. This school looks good, but here, better not. So, we have such thoughts. So, there are many difficulties.

Given the specific needs of children with disabilities, especially those with multiple disabilities, choosing the optimal institution seems very challenging and sometimes impossible. However, the priorities of parents are interesting and important. From the perspective of the surveyed directors, they are mainly focused on supporting the child's development and social inclusion.

D1: I think there are differences [in parents' priorities] caused by, I don't want to say the severity of the disability, but actually the severity of the disability and the problems parents face and their experiences with other institutions. If they didn't get something or the child didn't get certain classes. I think parents of children with special needs like dyslexia are more focused on additional classes with a teacher, but it seems like a lighter issue. On the other hand, the needs of parents of children with spectrum disorders or special school children are greater. They expect more classes, more support for their child.

D2: Parents want the best for their children. Some parents say that if they don't try inclusion or integration, they will regret it. They think, 'I have to try, even if it doesn't work out.' They want their child to be smart, to have a chance in life, to get a job, and not be rejected because they are different. So, they direct their decisions that way. Often, they tell me that they understand my point but want to try elsewhere because they couldn't live with themselves if they didn't give their child a chance. That's why many children start with inclusion, even though we suggest a special school, to give it a try.

In the statements of the respondents, issues related to the functioning or needs of the family system, which is affected by the school (such as its distance and the need to transport the child or the attendance of siblings at the same institution), did not appear. Therefore, it seems important to delve into this issue in the main study by attempting to answer specific problems: **What factors are significant when choosing and changing an institution? What are the needs of the family of a child with a disability attending school?** The second specific research question also connects with the emotions and attitudes of parents in the context of their parenting, acceptance of the child's disability, and experiences in the relationship with the school.

D2: There are also lost parents. There are parents who, when you explain how the education system in Poland works, are very happy. I have a boy who went to X [name of a specific special institution]. When I explained to his mother that there is a special school for children with mild intellectual disabilities, she immediately went there after the meeting and called the next day saying she had secured a place. She didn't know there were such schools. She just went to the local school and knew nothing more. She didn't even know there were special schools. No one told her. Because she's a parent who

needed to be told. The child is in a special institution, moving from integration. He's a very nice boy.

D1: Parental attitudes vary greatly depending on whether some concern of the parent is confirmed in the research or not. Attitudes range from anger to despair, but also full understanding and relief, that finally, they know the child's capabilities and that they can expect support and help in a specific institution.

In the perspective of the analyzed research material, the parental choice of an educational institution for their child is legally guaranteed even in the situation of changing the institution. At the same time, it is systemically limited due to the lack of places in institutions or their adaptation to diverse educational and social needs. The parental decision is often preceded by incomplete support, dependent on the involvement and competencies of psychological and pedagogical counseling centers employees. This support is mainly informational. The parent's decision impacts the student's functioning in the school environment, which also determines the situation of the given class system and the teachers working in it and may involve their resistance. Changing the institution may be guided by the counseling center's suggestion. However, emotions and parental attitudes are also significant. In the context of these dependencies, the parent's action involves great responsibility and can have consequences in various dimensions. Therefore, the question seems important: **What meanings do parents attribute to changing institutions?** In the pilot study, this issue was not directly addressed, but the importance of the ability to choose an educational institution by the parent of a child with intellectual disabilities is evident in one of the statements of the surveyed Psychological-Pedagogical Counseling Centers directors.

D2: The mother of my student, aged 41, once said when we started that she would choose a special school for her intellectually disabled daughter but would like to feel that she has a choice. Because having that choice makes her feel valued as a parent or valued as a person. Once, there were mandates; you got a special school certificate and that was it for life. But now, you talk and discuss with the parent. So maybe they have that choice.

Conclusions and implications

The initial analysis of the pilot study was conducted to refine the first sequence of the research and identify specific issues regarding the experiences of families related to inter-system institutional changes by children with disabilities. At this stage, focusing on the family environment, the researcher did not yet see the need to expand the research field to include the school and understand the teachers' perspective. The re-analysis of the pilot study was carried out during the writing of this article, at the end of the second sequence of the study (focused on teachers' critical reflection on relationships with the parents of students). In this perspective, understanding the meanings attributed to stu-

dent difficulties and the phenomenon of resistance from teachers' perspectives seems significant. Meanwhile, the institutionalization of school actions, which appears to be an inseparable element of the analysis of experiences related to school, already resonates in the statements of the surveyed counseling directors. The identified research problems in the perspective of the two sequences of the main study already conducted seem to have broader significance:

- The research problem concerning the possibilities of supporting parents in choosing an institution is associated with issues of parental awareness and organization, as well as their empowerment in their parenthood (Twardowski, 2016).
- The research problem concerning the family's experiences in mainstream/integrative/special institutions is not only connected to the student's functioning but also their class and the teacher's engagement and comfort in their work. The student's experiences in a given educational institution are linked to the parent's engagement and actions to support the child's development and situation in school.
- The research problem concerning supporting families in the process of constructing the child's educational path in the first sequence of the study concerned expected and experienced support. In the sequence conducted with teachers, it concerns the awareness of the needs of the family in the teaching staff and the willingness, possibilities, and resources that determine supporting parents.
- The research problem concerning significant factors in choosing and changing institutions is related to the competencies and resources of the family and their experiences in relationships with teachers/therapists.
- The research problem concerning the meanings attributed to changing educational institutions is related to the issue of institutional resistance and the teachers' reflectiveness and competencies and their relationships with the parents of students.

In this analytical perspective, it seems necessary to show or signal the subsequent stages of the research process, which are significant for the considerations of an engaged researcher. The described and analyzed pilot study was the beginning of a research process that is still ongoing and is increasingly rich in meanings related to the inter-system change of educational institutions by children with disabilities. The empirical focus on the subject of institutional change: searching, transferring, "pushing out," and "pulling in" allowed for uncovering the topic of relationships between teachers and parents. These relationships depend on the competencies and resources of teachers and parents and seem to respond to difficulties in cooperation, which can be oppressive and imposed. Conducting simultaneous sequential qualitative research allows for constructing subsequent components enabling the understanding of the research field from

another perspective and noticing new dimensions of the phenomenon. The following diagram presents the successive "layers" of the uncovered and revealed phenomena and processes, allowing for an understanding of the process of relationships between parents and teachers.

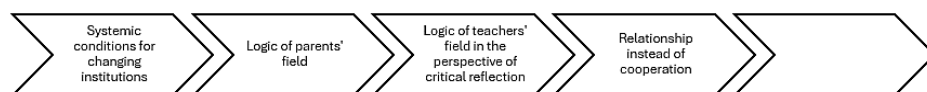


Fig. 2.

Phenomena and processes revealed during subsequent stages of the conducted study.

Source: own collaboration.

The element "Systemic conditions of institutional change" concerns the analyzed pilot study. The institutional change experienced and reported from the perspective of the directors of the institution supporting this process allowed for identifying micro-fields requiring further research exploration: the needs and priorities of parents, systemic limitations of choice, school resistance, the specificity of family and student support.

The analysis of the first stage of the study (which, along with subsequent stages, will be the subject of considerations in a separate publication) is related, among other things, to P. Bourdieu's concept of fields (2001), referring to which we can describe the actions of teachers and parents of children with disabilities as carried out according to certain rules of the game in defense of a given capital. In the perspective of the logic of the parents' field, the differences between inclusive, integrative, or special institutions are commensurate with the differences in the priorities and needs of students with disabilities and their families. In the context of the analyzed material, the success of the student does not have to depend on the type of institution they attend. However, significant is the capital of the parent and the teacher, which has dominant importance in their educational process. The reconstruction of the logic of the parents' field contributed to constructing another research goal – to understand the logic of the teachers' field and then uncover the points of contact between the fields of the studied social groups, understand the rules of the game according to which teachers/parents act, and understand what constitutes capital in the field of practice.

The next sequence of the study marks a methodological shift towards an activist paradigm (Cresswell, 2009, p. 35). Workshops on critical reflection were conducted using an adapted tool constructed by J. Fook (2012) and a collective interview. Emerging categories during preliminary analysis allow for uncovering the oppressive process of cooperation and a shift towards building relationships between parents and teachers. Analytical actions and theoretical searches guide

the conceptualization of further research explorations towards Ubuntu philosophy (Mutanga, 2023). However, the last arrow in the diagram remains empty, awaiting in-depth analyses after the second sequence of studies is completed. The researcher's "journey" from the pilot study presented in this article continues.

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Pomiędzy rodzicami a nauczycielami? – o badaniu pilotażowym z dyrektorami poradni psychologiczno-pedagogicznych dotyczących zmiany placówek edukacyjnych przez dzieci z niepełnosprawnością

Streszczenie

Artykuł opisuje badania pilotażowe w temacie międzysystemowej zmiany placówki przez dziecko z niepełnosprawnością w perspektywie doświadczeń jego rodziny. Część teoretyczna obejmuje dokonany na podstawie analizy literatury tematu opis zagadnień związanych z zaangażowaniem rodzicielskim, zmianami placówek, a także wsparciem udzielanym przez poradnie psychologiczno-pedagogiczne. Problem badawczy jest tożsamy z problemem głównym badań docelowych: Jakie są doświadczenia rodzin dzieci z niepełnosprawnością w obszarze międzysystemowych zmian placówki edukacyjnej? Celem przeprowadzonych wywiadów z dyrektorkami poradni było wyznaczenie problemów szczegółowych, czego autorka dokonuje podczas analizy materiału badawczego, na podstawie wyłonionych kategorii: ograniczonego wyboru, oporu szkoły, wsparcia, priorytetów, emocji i postaw rodziców. W podsumowaniu autorka rozszerza znaczenie wyntonionych problemów szczegółowych w kontekście zaawansowanych analiz badania docelowego.

Słowa kluczowe: rodzina, badania jakościowe, poradnie psychologiczno-pedagogiczne, inkluzja, edukacja.



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Disability in the Perception of Students. Results of Research on Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities

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Abstract

The aim of the presented paper is to reveal selected results of research on the perception of people with disabilities and attitudes toward this group as declared by students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical fields of study.

The presented research was conducted with a group of 110 persons, divided into two equal subgroups: 55 students from pedagogical programs and 55 students from non-pedagogical programs. The diagnostic survey method and questionnaire technique were used, utilizing a survey questionnaire. The pilot study presented, allows for the following conclusions: 1. The majority of the surveyed students have a positive perception of individuals with disabilities and exhibit positive social attitudes towards them, with ambivalent attitudes being significantly less frequent. There are also a few negative declarations, but these are relatively rare. 2. The differences between students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical programs regarding their attitudes towards individuals with disabilities are relatively minor and generally not statistically significant. Statistical significance was only found in one case, concerning the emotional and volitional components of negative attitudes (specifically the belief that individuals with disabilities are a "burden" to family and society). This situation requires further analysis. 3. It can be assumed that the attitudes declared by the students towards individuals with disabilities are related to various other factors that influence their overall social perception, internalized patterns of interpersonal behaviour, and, most importantly, direct interactions with people with disabilities.

Keywords: attitudes toward people with disabilities, students of pedagogical fields, students of non-pedagogical fields.

Introduction

Nowadays, in the lives of societies worldwide, „intense social changes related to the processes of globalization and systemic transformation are evident. Alongside progress, these changes often reveal their unintended consequences (...). They show various aspects of human functioning in countless areas of life, on many levels of organization, highlighting previously unknown phenomena and processes occurring within them” (Segiet, 2015, p. 35). One of the significant aspects that continually stimulates research is disability, which is currently not viewed as an issue affecting only the individual or their immediate family environment but also is perceived as an important social issue.

Understanding and social perception of disability have significantly changed not only throughout human history but also over the last few decades of the 20th century. This is particularly evident in the social model of disability, which views it as an issue for society as a whole. Although it directly affects the individual, it is considered in a social dimension as a factor conditioning the development of society towards equalizing developmental opportunities for all its members (Kirenko, 2007, pp. 5–6). This model assumes a specific approach to the rights of people with disabilities and implies a realization of social attitudes towards this group and various problems, which many authors emphasize as „a tendency to establish interpersonal relationships. This generates the need to shape appropriate social attitudes, which, on one hand, will promote inclusion and, on the other hand, eliminate stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination” (Kazanowski, 2015, p. 34).

People with disabilities are a significant part of society, and statistics show that approximately 15% of the world's population faces challenges or limitations in performing daily activities due to disabilities (Chan & Zoellick, 2013, p. 9). Although disability does not define a person nor strip them of their dignity or human rights, it does mean that the functioning of this group is influenced by both the social perception of disability and societal attitude toward people with disabilities and their issues.

Research in this field has been and will always be particularly important, as the changing reality requires continuous updates in both the perception of disability and the declared and especially the enacted social attitudes. This article presents a selected section of pilot research on the perception of disability and social attitudes towards people with disabilities among a group of students who, at the beginning of their adulthood, are not only pursuing their own life plans but also becoming creators of social life. They constitute the generation that often already has or will have, after completing their education, a significant impact on shaping the living space for themselves and others, including people with disabilities. This is especially relevant for students in pedagogical fields of

science, who will become teachers, educators, or caregivers for people with disabilities, as well as their assistants or facilitators in daily life. During the student years, views on life are formed, personal roles in the social world are defined, and attitudes towards others, including people with disabilities, are solidified. Therefore, addressing this topic seems particularly important.

Perception of disability and its determinants

Each person uses perception to form a subjective image of reality in their consciousness—a result of individual experiences, attitudes, and current emotional states. Perception is active and creative, so individuals not only register but also actively process the information they receive, selecting and interpreting it according to the data stored in memory about their environment. At the same time, this process allows individuals to remember and use information to form judgments and make decisions about social reality (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1997, p. 167). The role of schemas is also crucial, as they enable the classification of not only events, actions, and their sequences but also people and their attributes, which is particularly important when discussing the social perception of individuals with disabilities.

Among the determinants of the perception of disability are sociocultural and ideological conditions of the era, as indicated by the mentioned transformations. Personal dispositions (such as being open-minded, reflectiveness, empathy, and lack of prejudice) are also significant, as they are closely related to generationally transmitted attitudes of parents. It is widely believed that children replicate and reinforce their parents' behaviour patterns and beliefs. The attitudes and actions of teachers are also important, as the trust and authority of a teacher are strong predictors of students' attitudes. Additionally, media messages have a crucial role, especially in the present day, because information, campaigns, and television and radio programs are significant opinion-forming factors. Social perception of disability is also largely influenced by familiarity and direct contact with people with disabilities, as confirmed by both literature on the subject and observations and research by the author.

From a pedagogical perspective, similar to a sociological approach, the concept of attitude is understood as "a relatively stable emotional or evaluative relationship to an object, or a disposition to have such a relationship" (Mika, 1972, p. 65). The concept of social attitude is very complex. Authors, especially psychologists, identify three interrelated aspects: the "cognitive, emotional, and motivational (volitional) components. The cognitive component involves comparing the individual with accepted standards and patterns and making an evaluative assessment. The emotional component has a positive or negative sign

and is associated with pleasant or unpleasant experiences. The motivational component directs behavior 'away from' or 'toward' the object of the attitude" (Marszałek, 2007, p. 340). Discussions on social attitudes toward people with disabilities reveal that both historically and nowadays, these attitudes are diverse. It is also important to note that attitudes are not static and change over time. Factors determining these changes, both historically and today, include: prevailing social norms, beliefs, social policy, cultural levels, and economic conditions shaping people's quality of life. The way society views people with disabilities often stems from stereotypes, customs, beliefs, ideologies, and politics. This remains true today, as evidenced by substantive analyses aimed at revealing societal attitudes toward people with disabilities (Gazdulska, 2008, p. 287).

There are two opposing types most commonly identified among the attitudes toward people with disabilities: positive (supportive) and negative (unsupportive). The accepting attitude is characterized by a realistic assessment of the abilities and limitations of people with disabilities, acceptance, a willingness to understand, natural and friendly interaction, and being ready to cooperate and assist. The negative attitude is associated with negative feelings, incorrect assessments, and downgrading the abilities of people with disabilities, as well as fear, opposition, or aversion toward their participation in society (Sękowski, 1994; Ostrowska, 2015). Additionally, there are also intermediate attitudes—indecisive—such as sympathy, pity, indifference, curiosity, and observational interest (Larkowa, 1970, pp. 17-20).

Table 1.

Characteristics of the components of social attitudes toward people with disabilities

ATTITUDE	COMPONENT	CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES
POSITIVE	intellectual	recognition, respect
	emotional	kindness, sympathy
	volitional	acceptance, willingness to maintain contact
AMBIVALENT	intellectual	curiosity, interest
	emotional	compassion, pity, indifference
	volitional	observation, admiration
NEGATIVE	intellectual	negative evaluation of traits
	emotional	aversion to the sight of disability
	volitional	avoidance of contact

Source: own elaboration based on literature: Larkowa 1970, pp. 17-20; Gazdulska, 2008; et al.

It is worth emphasizing the "planned process initiated in the early 1990s aimed at integrating people with disabilities into the mainstream of social life by removing various barriers to their participation. This process covered many as-

pects of life and functioning—education, work and employment, access to culture, realization of civil rights, communication, and environmental accessibility" (Ostrowska, 2015, p. 323). Although this has led to an increase in positive attitudes toward people with disabilities (the percentage of such evaluations increased from 38.0% in 1993 to 49.0% in 2013), CBOS data (2007, p. 3) show that: the majority of Poles (48.0%) believe that the attitude of Poles toward people with disabilities is negative, although nearly half of the respondents (45.0%) view it as positive.

Thus, the present continuously demonstrate that disability and the issues faced by people with disabilities are still perceived in diverse ways within the social and public life. In reality, the true attitude and internal, not necessarily verbalized, attitudes toward people with disabilities are often marked by irrational fear or aversion. It is characteristic that these negative attitudes are mostly commonly presented by individuals who have not had direct contact with people with disabilities and who lack knowledge about disability. Given that the sources of negative attitudes are mainly a lack of information and experience in interacting with people with disabilities, it is a reasonable conclusion that systematic expansion of knowledge about the functioning of people with disabilities in all areas of their lives is necessary. This is especially important as it has significant practical implications and can aid in designing actions to support the development of people with disabilities by institutions addressing their issues, educators, and social activists. It undoubtedly contributes to modifying attitudes toward people with disabilities in the spirit of genuine, rather than declared, social inclusion.

Methodological assumptions of the research

Current academic education increasingly emphasizes the holistic development of individuals. Thus, it is crucial to highlight the "need to develop a belief in the dignity of every person, respect for their rights, and democratic participation in economic and social life" (Tomczyszyn, Pańczuk, Szepeluk, 2022, p. 37). Effective implementation of educational activities at the higher education level promotes, or at least should promote, the reduction of behaviours such as intolerance, stigmatization, and social exclusion to which people with disabilities are vulnerable.

The aim of the presented paper is to reveal selected results of research on the perception of people with disabilities and attitudes toward this group as declared by students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical fields of study. The variable of study program (pedagogical vs. non-pedagogical) is considered potentially significant for identifying differences in the perception of disability and attitudes toward individuals affected by it.

The choice of topic was motivated by the fact that students in pedagogical programs are inherently preparing to work with children, adolescents, or adults. They acquire competencies for working in various educational and non-educational institutions, with diverse forms and social groups, including a significant number of individuals with disabilities due to the increasing widespread adoption of inclusive education. Certainly, their future work will require a professional attitude towards both individuals with disabilities and their issues. Therefore, an in-depth examination of their social perception and attitudes toward people with disabilities is crucial. Thus, it was investigated whether and how the perception of disability and students' attitudes differ depending on their field of study.

The presented research was conducted with a group of 110 persons, divided into two equal subgroups: 55 students from pedagogical programs (including: correctional pedagogy with social prevention, and educational care pedagogy) and 55 students from non-pedagogical programs (political science, international relations, management). The diagnostic survey method and questionnaire technique were used, utilizing a survey questionnaire.

The students participating in the study expressed their views on the social perception of disability and attitudes toward people with disabilities by responding to statements related to three identified types of attitudes: positive, ambivalent, and negative. Each statement was detailed and included the mentioned components of attitudes: cognitive, emotional, and volitional.

The list of statements was developed based on extensive discussions with students (during classes conducted using the "brainstorming" method), during which various statement variants defining possible attitudes toward the issue were generated. These statements were analysed and categorized into groups corresponding to the three types of social attitudes toward people with disabilities identified in the literature: positive, ambivalent, and negative. The organized statements were then presented to the students, who were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with them (using a seven-point scale to measure the degree of agreement: strongly agree, agree, rather agree, neither agree nor disagree, rather disagree, disagree, strongly disagree).

Due to the limited scope of this article, only selected results will be presented, which relate to the three previously mentioned types of attitudes and include statements addressing:

- Positive Attitudes: These concern to positive feelings toward people with disabilities, willingness to establish contact with them, and the readiness to offer help when needed.
- Ambivalent Attitudes: These involve feelings such as compassion, curiosity, and fears about contact that may lead to avoiding it.
- Negative Attitudes: These are expressed through discomfort nearby people with disabilities, avoidance of contact, and beliefs that they are a burden to others, or making these feelings clearly understood.

Student attitudes toward people with disabilities – results of pilot research

The obtained results (presented in the tables and in the graphs in the following parts of the article) highlight differences in this area between students from pedagogical programs and those from non-pedagogical programs. Due to the necessity of a concise presentation and analysis of the research findings, it seems that this will address the research problem and achieve the aim of the study, which is to understand the students' declarations regarding their attitudes toward people with disabilities and to identify any potential differences based on their field of study.

Positive attitudes toward people with disabilities in the declarations of students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical programs

It was assumed that positive perceptions and attitudes of the surveyed students toward people with disabilities could be indicated by their agreement with the following statements:

- *I have positive feelings toward people with disabilities and am willing to engage with them* (Table 2, Figure 1).
- *When needed, I consider how I might help a person with a disability and provide assistance* (Table 3, Figure 2).

Positive attitudes toward people with disabilities are characterized by their acceptance, experiencing positive emotions, willingness to maintain contact with these individuals (emotional components of the attitude), and being ready to offer help depending on the need (volitional components of the attitude). It turned out that the significant majority of the respondents declare such attitudes.

Table 2.

Positive attitudes of students from educational and non-educational disciplines towards people with disabilities - emotional components

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS				Overall	
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		N	%
	N	%	N			
POSITIVE	47	85,45	38	69,09	85	77,27
AMBIVALENT	6	10,91	15	27,27	21	19,09

Table 2.
Positive attitudes of students from educational... (cont.)

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS				Overall	
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
NEGATIVE	2	3,64	2	3,64	4	3,64
Sum	55	100,00	55	100,00	110	100,00

Chi2 = 4,81, df=2, p=0,090 - The difference is significant at the statistical trend level.

Source: own research.

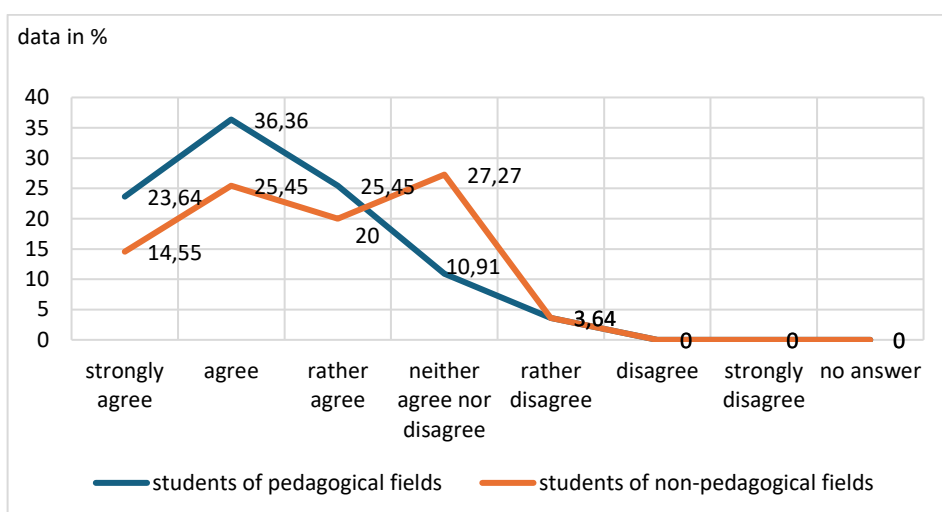


Figure 1.

Students' positive feelings towards people with disabilities and willingness to engage with them in survey responses

Statement: *I have positive feelings toward people with disabilities and am willing to engage with them.*

Source: own research

The results presented above indicate that the vast majority of surveyed students, both from pedagogical (85.45%) and non-pedagogical (69.09%) programs, express positive feelings towards people with disabilities and are keen to establish contact with them. Respondents agree to varying extents with the provided statement, with students from pedagogical programs slightly more often indicating agreement (strongly agree, agree, or rather agree). However, the Chi-square test revealed that the difference between students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical programs may be considered significant at a statistical trend level ($p=0.90$).

These results are promising, and the minor differences in the degree of agreement with the statement (Figure 1) may suggest that pedagogical students have more experience in interacting with people with disabilities or engage in coursework that promotes interpersonal skills, fostering greater openness towards others, including those with disabilities.

Some respondents find it difficult to clearly identify with the statement, and students from non-pedagogical programs are nearly three times more likely to struggle with making a definitive declaration (10.91% of pedagogical students and 27.27% of non-pedagogical students chose "neither agree nor disagree"). This is likely related to the mentioned reduced opportunity for direct contact with people with disabilities.

It is also important to notice that some respondents declared that they rather do not have positive feelings towards people with disabilities and are not eager to establish contact (3.64% in both groups). Although this declaration indicates a negative attitude (and was classified as such in this part of the study), it serves as a clear signal for further in-depth analysis in the continuing project.

Positive attitudes towards people with disabilities are characterized by their acceptance and willingness to maintain contact. Although, if these answers be genuine and not only declarative, but they should also involve a willingness to provide assistance when needed. It appears that the majority of respondents declare their readiness to help people with disabilities, when necessary, as demonstrated by the data below.

Table 3.

Positive attitudes of students from educational and non-educational fields towards people with disabilities - volitional components

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS				Overall	
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		N	%
	N	%	N	N		
POSITIVE	53	96,36	52	94,54	105	95,45
AMBIVALENT	2	3,64	1	1,82	3	2,73
NEGATIVE	0	0,00	2	3,64	2	1,82
Sum	55	100,00	55	100,00	110	100,00

Chi2 = 2,34, df=2, p=0,310 - The difference is not statistically significant.

Source: own research

It is highly encouraging that almost all respondents, regardless of their field of study, express a willingness to help a person with a disability, especially when there is a need. The differences between respondents based on their field of study are minor and statistically insignificant.

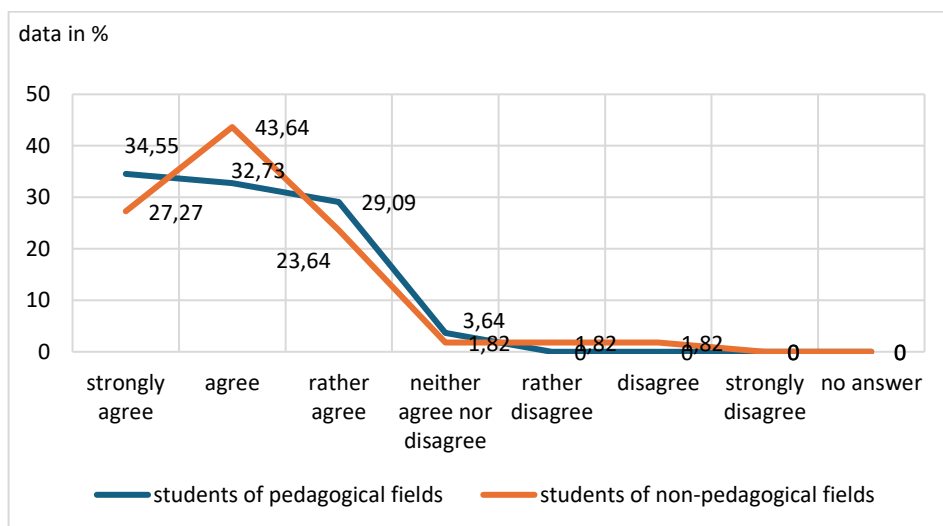


Figure 2.
 Students' Declarations Regarding Providing Assistance to People with Disabilities

Statement: *When needed, I consider how I might help a person with a disability and provide assistance.*

Source: own research.

It is worth noticing that while no negative declarations were revealed among students from pedagogical fields (none rejected the statement about providing help to a person with a disability), there were individuals in the group of non-pedagogical students who did not agree or rather did not agree with the statement (1.82% of the total respondents). However, it should be clearly stated that such a result would require in-depth analysis, as it does not necessarily imply a negative attitude toward people with disabilities. It may simply indicate that they would not undertake helping a person with a disability due to a lack of skills or knowledge on how to do so. In such cases, it could be considered an ambivalent attitude, similar to a few individuals (2.73% of the total respondents) who declared that they find it difficult to say whether they would be ready to help a person with a disability in case of need.

Ambivalent attitudes towards people with disabilities in the declarations of students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical fields

Social attitudes towards people with disabilities, as discussed in the introduction, are a complex and varied category. Therefore, between positive and

negative attitudes, a third type is discussed—ambivalent (or intermediate) attitudes. This is justified because perceptions and individual attitudes towards people with disabilities are not always purely positive or extremely negative. As noted by the authors, it sometimes happens that "society, whether consciously or unconsciously, prevents people with disabilities from actively participating in personal and professional life, which somewhat depreciates them. In such cases, interaction with people with disabilities is motivated by compassion and pity, which lead to a positive manifestation, namely the desire to help these individuals" (Gazdulska, 2008, p. 286).

In the research, it was assumed that ambivalent attitudes would be indicated by a high degree of agreement with statements containing emotional components, such as: compassion, curiosity, as well as volitional components, such as avoiding contact (Table 1.). These are as follows:

- *I feel compassion for people with disabilities and wonder what caused their disability* (Table 4., Chart 3.).
- *I admire people with disabilities, but I do not know how to behave around them, so I avoid them* (Table 5., Chart 4.).

Table 4.

Ambivalent attitudes of pedagogical and non-pedagogical students towards people with disabilities: emotional components

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS				Overall	
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		%	%
	N	%	N	N		
POSITIVE	23	41,82	27	50,00	50	45,87
AMBIVALENT	14	25,45	13	24,07	27	24,77
NEGATIVE	18	32,73	14	25,93	32	29,36
Sum	55	100,00	54	100,00	109	100,00

$\chi^2 = 1,12$, $df=2$, $p=0,657$ - The difference is not statistically significant.

Source: own research.

The research results showed that a significant part of the respondents has an ambivalent attitude. This is evidenced by the fact that 32.73% of students from pedagogical fields and 25.93% of students from non-pedagogical fields identify to with the statement of expressing compassion towards people with disabilities and curiosity about their causes. This type of response is characteristic of the emotional component of an ambivalent attitude according to the literature (Table 1.). Nearly a quarter of respondents indicated that it is difficult to say definitively whether they identify with the presented statement. In both cases, the choices made by the respondents suggest an ambivalent attitude.

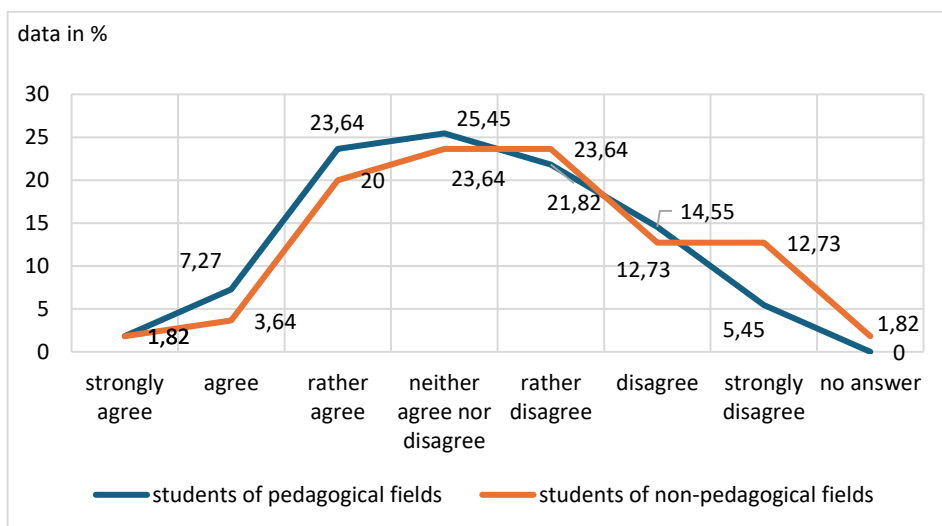


Figure 3.

Compassion Felt Towards People with Disabilities in Students' Declarations

Statement: *I feel compassion for people with disabilities and wonder what caused their disability.*

Source: own research

However, it is important to note that such an attitude is sometimes classified by some authors as negative. Nevertheless, compassion does not necessarily carry negative connotations. It can also be a sign of solidarity with someone and goodwill towards them. In this case, it takes on a more positive attitude, especially if it correlates with taking specific actions to support the person and is close to empathy.

It is also worth noticing that while there are some differences in this regarding on students depending on their field of study (pedagogical or non-pedagogical), these differences are minor and are not statistically significant.

Table 5.

Ambivalent attitudes of students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical fields towards people with disabilities - volitional components

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS					Overall
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		%	
	N	%	N	N		
POSITIVE	1	1,85	5	9,62	6	5,66
AMBIVALENT	6	11,11	10	19,23	16	15,09
NEGATIVE	47	87,04	37	71,15	84	79,25
Sum	54	100,00	52	100,00	106	100,00

Chi² = 4,82, df=2, p=0,090 - The difference is significant at the level of statistical trend.

Source: own research.

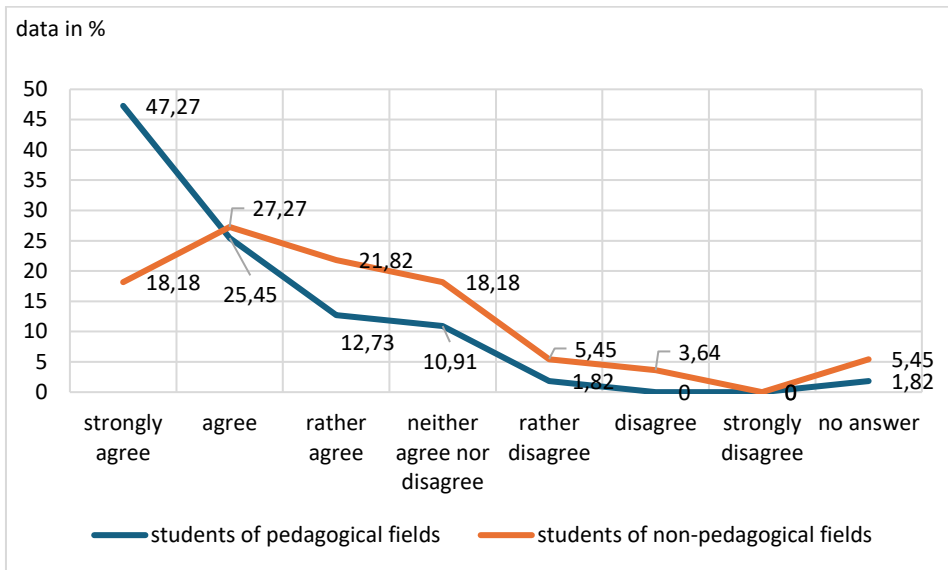


Figure 4.

Admiration for people with disabilities in the declarations of surveyed students

Statement: *I admire people with disabilities, but I do not know how to behave around them, so I avoid them.*

Source: own research

In this part of the study, volitional components of ambivalent (intermediate) related to the sphere of contact between the surveyed students and people with disabilities attitudes was analysed. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with another statement that included information about difficulties in behaving appropriately towards people with disabilities, leading to avoiding contact with them (avoiding "just in case").

The research showed that most of the surveyed students, slightly more often those from pedagogical fields (87.04%) than non-pedagogical fields (71.15%), identified to varying degrees (strongly agree, agree, rather agree) with the statement that despite their admiration for people with disabilities, they do not know how to behave around them and therefore avoid contact. This avoidance of contact, although classified here as a symptom directly indicating a negative attitude, requires deeper analysis. These data probably reflect a low level of knowledge among the respondents about disabilities, and perhaps also a certain lack of interpersonal skills that are necessary for interactions with others, especially people with disabilities.

Among non-pedagogical students, there were also almost twice as many as among pedagogical students who could not clearly respond to the statement presented to them. This situation seems to confirm the above assumption, given

that pedagogical students certainly have more opportunities to acquire knowledge about disabilities and develop skills that help engaging in interpersonal contacts and relationships, including these with people with disabilities.

The revealed differences among the surveyed students, considering the independent variable of their field of study (pedagogical vs. non-pedagogical), can be considered significant at the level of statistical trend ($p=0.90$).

Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities in the declarations of students of pedagogical and non-pedagogical fields of study

Negative social attitudes towards people with disabilities not only indicate a lack of acceptance but also manifest through hidden or expressed rejection, feelings of discomfort in their presence, avoidance of contact with them, and even social exclusion or discrimination (Table 1). In the presented study, it was assumed that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities would be indicated by a high level of agreement with the following statements:

- *I feel uncomfortable seeing a person with a disability, so I try not to pay attention to them* (Table 6., Figure 5.).
- *I believe that people with disabilities are a 'burden' to their family and society, and I tell them this directly* (Table 7., Figure 6.).

The research results revealed that unfortunately, a significant part of the surveyed students, which is approximately 10% (9.26% in both subgroups, regardless of the field of study), show varying degrees of agreement with the statement that they feel discomfort in the presence of people with disabilities and therefore avoid contact with them. Additionally, a similar proportion of respondents (10.18% of all respondents, and surprisingly, slightly more students from pedagogical fields than from non-pedagogical fields) found it difficult to determine how much they agree with such a statement. It can be assumed that among these individuals are those who did not want to express their opinion, aware that it would indicate a negative attitude towards people with disabilities, which is inconsistent with the overall societal trend.

However, it is optimistic that the significant majority of respondents do not identify with the provided statement, which indicates that their attitudes towards people with disabilities can be considered positive. This group constitutes 80.56% of all respondents, with slightly more of them being students from non-pedagogical fields (81.48%) than from pedagogical fields (79.63%). However, these differences are not statistically significant.

Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities unfortunately often lead to inappropriate behaviour towards them. The research aimed to address this

issue by evaluating students' responses to a statement that portrays people with disabilities as a "burden" to their immediate and extended social environment.

Table 6.

Negative attitudes of students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical fields towards people with disabilities – emotional components

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS				Overall	
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		%	%
	N	%	N	N		
POSITIVE	43	79,63	44	81,48	87	80,56
AMBIVALENT	6	11,11	5	9,26	11	10,18
NEGATIVE	5	9,26	5	9,26	10	9,26
Sum	54	100,00	54	100,00	108	100,00

Chi2 = 4,82, df=2, p=0,950 - The difference is not statistically significant.

Source: own research

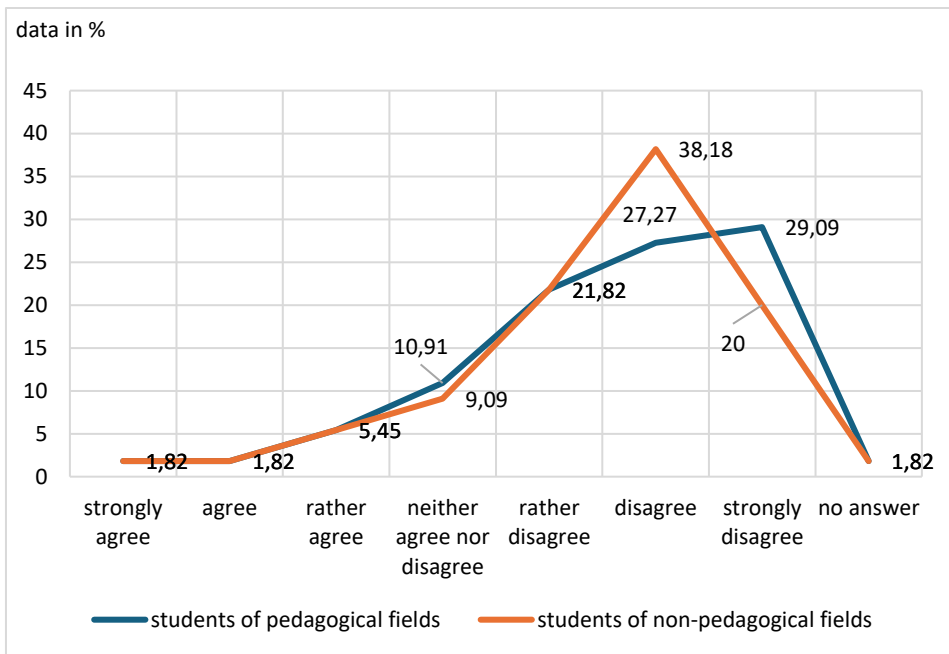


Figure 5.

Experiencing discomfort and avoiding people with disabilities in respondents' declarations

Statement: *I feel uncomfortable seeing a person with a disability, so I try not to pay attention to them*

Source: own research.

Table 7.

Negative attitudes of pedagogical and non-pedagogical students towards people with disabilities – volitional components

ATTITUDES	STUDENTS				Overall	
	pedagogical field		non-pedagogical field		%	%
	N	%	N	N		
POSITIVE	55	100,00	46	85,19	101	92,66
AMBIVALENT	0	0,00	7	12,96	7	6,42
NEGATIVE	0	0,00	1	1,85	1	0,92
Sum	55	100,00	54	100,00	109	100,00

Chi2 = 8,79, df=2, p=0,012 - The difference is statistically significant.

Source: own research

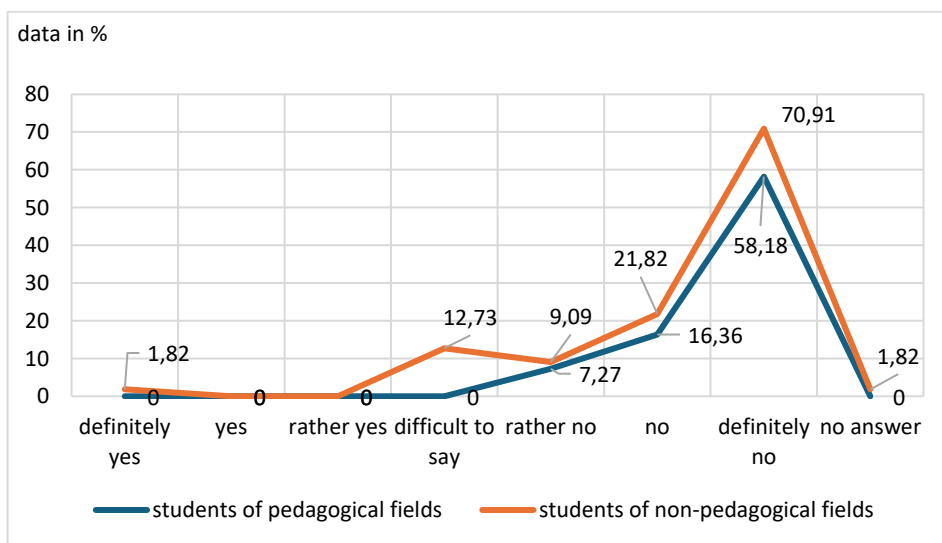


Figure 6.

Perception of people with disabilities as a "burden" on family and society in respondents' opinions

Statement: *I believe that people with disabilities are a 'burden' to their family and society, and I tell them this directly.*

Source: own research

A significant majority of the surveyed students, 92.66%, did not agree with the statement that people with disabilities are a "social burden". It was found that all students from pedagogical programs (100.00%) rejected this statement, either strongly or any other way. Importantly, not only did no one identify with the statement, but also no one had any doubts about their decision, as no one found it difficult to express their opinion on this matter (difficult to say).

In contrast, among students from non-pedagogical programs, there were individuals who had difficulty with this (12.96%), and one person explicitly declared that they strongly agree with this statement. Considering that this is a negligible percentage of all respondents (0.92%), it could be treated as an extreme result falling within the measurement error categories. However, an in-depth analysis of this issue using the Chi-square test showed that the differences in this case are statistically significant ($p=0.012$). Therefore, this issue requires further in-depth analysis, both quantitative and qualitative.

Summary

Today's discussions increasingly emphasize that "disability is a relative characteristic, primarily arising from the nature of the relationship between an individual and the environment in which they find themselves and must operate" (Gąciarz, 2014, pp. 10-11). At the same time, the idea of social inclusion and the full integration of individuals with disabilities into the of society is gaining popularity in everyday practice. One of the crucial conditions for effectively realizing this idea is overcoming irrational fears, concerns, and anxieties in interactions with people with disabilities. This is also a prerequisite for achieving genuine acceptance of people with disabilities and for realizing, rather than declaring, positive social attitudes towards this group.

The pilot study presented, conducted with a group of 110 students from both pedagogical and non-pedagogical programs, although it does not permit far-reaching generalizations, allows for the following conclusions:

1. The majority of the surveyed students have a positive perception of individuals with disabilities and exhibit positive social attitudes towards them, with ambivalent attitudes being significantly less frequent. There are also a few negative declarations, but these are relatively rare.
2. The differences between students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical programs regarding their attitudes towards individuals with disabilities are relatively minor and generally not statistically significant. Statistical significance was only found in one case, concerning the emotional and volitional components of negative attitudes (specifically the belief that individuals with disabilities are a "burden" to family and society). This situation requires further analysis.
3. It can be assumed that the attitudes declared by the students towards individuals with disabilities are related to various other factors that influence their overall social perception, internalized patterns of interpersonal behaviour, and, most importantly, direct interactions with people with disabilities.

In summary, each attempt to understand and describe the social perception of disability, as well as efforts to update knowledge regarding social attitudes leading to their modification and continuous update, contributes to the realization of the concept of social inclusion. This article is such an attempt by presenting the results of research on the attitudes of students from pedagogical and non-pedagogical programs towards individuals with disabilities, conducted as part of a broader project.

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Niepełnosprawność w percepcji studentów. Wyniki badań nad postawami wobec osób z niepełnosprawnością

Streszczenie

Celem prezentowanego artykułu jest ukazanie wybranych wyników badań dotyczących postrzegania osób niepełnosprawnych i postaw wobec tej grupy deklarowanych przez studentów kierunków pedagogicznych i niepedagogicznych.

Prezentowane badania przeprowadzono w grupie 110 osób, podzielonych na dwie równoliczne podgrupy: 55 studentów kierunków pedagogicznych i 55 studentów kierunków niepedagogicznych. Zastosowano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego oraz technikę ankietową z wykorzystaniem kwestionariusza ankiety. Przedstawione badanie pilotażowe pozwala na sformułowanie następujących wniosków: 1. Większość badanych studentów pozytywnie postrzega osoby z niepełnosprawnością i wykazuje wobec nich pozytywne postawy społeczne, przy czym postawy ambiwalentne występują istotnie rzadziej. Pojawiają się również nieliczne deklaracje negatywne, ale są one stosunkowo rzadkie. 2. Różnice pomiędzy studentami kierunków pedagogicznych i niepedagogicznych w zakresie postaw wobec osób niepełnosprawnych są stosunkowo niewielkie i generalnie nieistotne statystycznie. Istotność statystyczną stwierdzono tylko w jednym przypadku, dotyczącym emocjonalnych i wolicjonalnych komponentów negatywnych postaw (w szczególności przekonania, że osoby niepełnosprawne są „ciężarem” dla rodziny i społeczeństwa). Sytuacja ta wymaga dalszej analizy. 3. Można przypuszczać, że deklarowane przez studentów postawy wobec osób z niepełnosprawnością są związane z różnymi innymi czynnikami, które wpływają na ich ogólną percepcję społeczną, zinternalizowane wzorce zachowań interpersonalnych oraz, co najważniejsze, bezpośrednie interakcje z osobami z niepełnosprawnością.

Słowa kluczowe: postawy wobec osób z niepełnosprawnością, studenci kierunków pedagogicznych, studenci kierunków niepedagogicznych.



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Psychiatrization as a Mechanism for Handicapping Students with Intellectual Disability

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Abstract

This article aims to carry out a review analysis of issues related to the phenomenon of psychiatrization, especially in relation to students with intellectual disability (and, for example, coupled with autism). Analysis of the literature on the subject shows that for decades, intellectual disability was defined as mental retardation and treated as a reduction in mental ability and was identified as mental illness. The fact is that people with intellectual disability may manifest mental disorders (Rola, 2004; Bouras, Holt, 2019), but this does not mean that this condition is common and affects the entire population.

Psychiatrization is associated with the discourse of, for example, school staff addressed to students with intellectual disabilities, with a narrative characterized by the pseudo-medical term: "mentally ill or disturbed." Scientific research proves that those students, due to their specific communication code, hidden in behavior (defined as difficult, aggressive, passive, antisocial, etc.), may be treated as mentally disturbed. This type of categorization concerns the phenomenon of medicalization in the nature of psychiatrization, where the consequence is stigmatization, handicapping and falsification of students' identities.

Keywords: psychiatrization, medicalization, handicap, intellectual disability, education.

Introduction

The issue of mental health and occurring disorders is a subject of scientific interest and has a multidisciplinary context in medicine, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, economics and philosophy. Nowadays, the issue of mental health has become particularly important in relation to children and adolescents, primarily in terms of providing psychological and pedagogical assistance and personalized support in the educational environment. According to Majewicz, among disorders in children and adolescents, we can distinguish those that are characteristic of early developmental periods, e.g. intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorders, and those that may appear during lifetime, e.g. depression or schizophrenia (Majewicz, 2022, p. 15). A mental disorder is also identified with disturbed behavior or mental illness and has a stigmatizing dimension. According to the ICD-10 classification, mental disorders include: organic disorders, mood, emotion and behavior disorders, developmental (e.g. autism), personality disorders as well as addictions, schizophrenia, behavioral syndromes, mental retardation (Banaszczyk, 2016, pp. 17-18). The situation of categorization in the DSM-IV classification is similar.

The term mental retardation is included in the catalog of medical concepts, but in the biopsychosocial approach, scientists and practitioners use the term: intellectual disability (mild, moderate, significant and profound). Intellectual disability (ID) occurs during the developmental period and is characterized by reduced cognitive, social, speech and motor ability (diagnosis is made on the basis of standardized intelligence tests, functional assessment or social adaptation scales).

"Intellectual disability may occur alone or with other mental or physical disorders" (Komender, 2015, p. 59), which means that people with intellectual disabilities (ID) do not automatically become psychiatric patients. Many student behaviors have a specific character and may differ from the "normalized" behaviors of people from the general population, e.g. aggression, self-aggression, high level of anxiety, may indicate the experience of misunderstanding, boredom, loneliness (family, peers), or be a reaction to the frustration of unmet needs, a sign of dissatisfaction and "ordinary" anger and a feeling of insecurity. Communication behavior (verbal and non-verbal) of students with ID, displays of resistance and the so-called difficult behaviors often result from failure to decode these behavioral messages by the teaching staff, which results in pacification, oppression, stigmatization, marginalization, need deprivation and the identification of mental disorders. In a situation where the meaning of the message given by the student is misunderstood, then the intention and meaning of a given act are falsified, resulting in unfair treatment of the student by the educational staff which arbitrarily assigns various labels to these messages and behavioral acts (Olechnowicz, 1999; Rola, 2004; Marcinkowska, 2013; Rzeźnicka-

Krupa, 2007; Gumienny, 2021). An excess of unpleasant feedback about oneself leads to the formation of a negative identity among people who have been labeled (Czykwin, 2013), and the school staff's fear of strange and difficult student behavior results in parents being forced to seek psychiatric treatment for their children (Gumienny, 2021; 2023), which is associated with the phenomenon of psychiatricization.

As Kmieciak (2024, p. 41) writes, "intellectual disability is sometimes confused or associated with mental illness, so it causes anxiety and numerous concerns. We do not know how a person will behave, because the condition he or she is experiencing is largely a mystery. Szabała (2010, p. 67) is of a similar opinion, concluding that society often equates intellectual disability with mental illness, usually due to the organization of many neurological and psychiatric care facilities where mentally ill people and people with intellectual disabilities are treated. Social stereotypes also result from the previously dominant medical model and the classification of this group of people as uneducable, unmanageable and deprived of the opportunity to live in the community. The author, citing Zalewski, writes: "the defect of spirit occurring in people with intellectual disabilities and the mentally ill, in the absence of visible physical conditions, is incomprehensible to those around them and causes an aura of mystery to hover over them."

In the educational environment, teachers are often the first to initiate psychiatric classification, describing student behavior in medical language, using terms from the catalog of mental illnesses. (Beeker et al. 2023). Of course, I do not exclude situations in which teacher observation may contribute to the confirmation of a student's mental illness, but in this article I would like to discuss situations of overinterpretation, pseudodiagnoses and harmful, unconfirmed judgments referred to in the literature as psychiatricization.

Students with intellectual disability in the education system

For many years, educational policy has been aimed at achieving inclusive goals for children and young people with special (individual, differentiated) needs. "The basis of these assumptions is the understanding of a social group as a group that is as diverse as possible in terms of biological, personality and cultural and social characteristics" (Jachimczak, 2021, p. 35). The issue of educational inclusion is a multi-contextual phenomenon, which means that it is not limited only to a group of students with a recognized need for special education, because the idea is to organize schools for all students as full participants of the school community, including creating appropriate educational, cultural and social conditions (Szumski, 2012; Gajdzica, 2020). This fact means that students

with intellectual disabilities may attend not only a special (segregated) institution, but also an inclusive and integrated school.

The choice of an educational institution is decided by the parents or legal guardians of the child, who, often consulting with specialists, are guided by how a given institution meets the student's needs, how the integration and inclusion process works, what access to the school is and what the parents' organizational capabilities are (Church, 2019). This choice is not an easy one, because the parents, the moment their offspring's disability is diagnosed, struggle with many fears, difficulties, experiences, crises, as well as with concern and hope for beneficial and pro-development changes in the child's functioning. Moreover, they trust in favorable interpersonal conditions, especially in terms of peer contacts, and at the same time expect satisfactory cooperation with the teachers, expecting that their child will be well (or somehow) adapted to the conditions of able-bodied people (Barnes & Mercer, 2008, Grzyb, 2013). Parents make every effort to transform the unwanted characteristics of disability into "carriers of values favored by our culture", so that the child and family can live a relatively "normal" life (Zakrzewska-Manterys, 2015, p. 107).

Teachers play an important role in the educational process as they are the creators of teaching, educational, caring, integrative and rehabilitative activities. For the most part, it is their task to implement the inclusive education assumptions, including diagnosis, psychological and pedagogical assistance, support, cooperation with parents, specialists and other entities. The quality of education includes, among others: the quality of work life of teachers, who are required to be professional and open to the needs of every student, including a student with special needs (Janiszewska-Nieścioruk, 2016, p. 57). Also, if any educational difficulties emerge, it is important that they are effectively resolved. However, such a situation can only occur when all parties to the conflict are involved in solving the problems – not only the teacher, but also the students, their parents and the school authorities. "The above-mentioned people must show a willingness to cooperate and be ready to operate within a coherent framework of specific theoretical or purely common sense assumptions. They should also be willing to accurately understand the reality and the self-awareness of people involved in complex and multi-faceted educational processes" (Jagięła, 2018, p. 134).

Taking into account the social changes taking place in the approach to disability and the educational law system, the question arises whether and to what extent the living space, including the educational space, of students with intellectual disabilities has improved. Is the debiologization of disability and a new approach to the limits and possibilities of development of these people actually taking place, and do educational institutions provide optimal education to students with diverse needs, including students with deeper intellectual disabilities and with the autism spectrum (Ćwirynkało, 2011, p. 7). Dilemmas related to in-

clusive education under the shadow of ideology and oppression are addressed by Krause, who acknowledges that the problem of, for example, inclusive education determines the axis of the dispute "whether joint teaching in a public school will be optimal for every person with a disability. In the discussion for and against inclusive education, its supporters mainly point to the legal and social foundations of equal rights; opponents raise the issue of student mental comfort and problems with the quality of teaching in this system" (Krause, 2023, p. 11).

The above problems are also related to the question of creating the identity of students with ID, the question of creating handicapping discourse, the forms of social and cultural oppression, the mechanisms of marginalization, exclusion, manipulation, establishing norms, assigning labels and negative evaluation of behavior, communication and corporeality, and about psychiatricization, i.e. being forced into the role of a mentally ill person (Gajdzica, 2012; Rzeźnicka-Krupa, 2019, Gumienny, 2021; Davis, 2022, Garland-Thomson, 2020; Beeker, et al., 2020).

Disability entangled in handicap

Handicap means neglect, backwardness in some field. One can distinguish economic, social and economic handicap, as well as handicap considered in medicine as a limitation in the function of an organ (Szymczak, 1981, p. 610). Sztompka, analyzing the ideology of social inequality, mentions, among others: egalitarian ideologies that are "formulated by disadvantaged groups" or other entities acting on their behalf. The main messages of egalitarian ideology are: demands for identical living conditions for everyone due to the existence of the same needs; meeting human needs; equal opportunities to achieve them; equality before the law and equality of subjective rights. In this context, handicap refers to the social position of certain groups whose condition tends to deteriorate, especially if they have previously "fallen to a low position" (Sztompka, 2002, pp. 357 and 367).

Therefore, the handicapped group may include any person who, in the course of life, experiences (short- or long-term), e.g. injustice, violence, isolation, deprivation, marginalization, surveillance, ableism, indoctrination, disinformation, informational or relational manipulation, as well as a person who is deprived of the goods necessary to live in dignity and freedom. It can therefore be concluded that handicapped groups are those which, in the course of their development or life, have not had equal opportunities, have not been given these opportunities, or have lost them, including many rights and privileges, and their needs have been deprived (e.g. due to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, primary attributes, views, religion, etc.). The phenomenon of handicap can also be considered from a micro- and macro-social perspective, analyzing contexts regarding privileges, prohibitions, orders, expectations and obligations.

Handicap is associated with an action that puts a disabled person in a worse and unfair situation (Barnes & Mercer, 2008), making it difficult, limiting, or preventing the fulfillment of life tasks and roles which are appropriate, e.g., to age and gender in given socio-cultural conditions (Drypałowska, 2004, pp. 646-647). Krause (2016), in turn, states that handicap as a social dimension of this phenomenon is the accumulation of systemic, environmental and cultural conditions and factors that determine the strength and direction of handicap, and assumes that the condition or degree of this handicap will intensify with deeper or coupled disabilities. Therefore, to handicap means to treat someone in an unfair way, to humiliate, weaken, neglect, limit the functioning of a given person (Szymczak, 1981, p. 610), it is addiction and incapacitation, which is the result of relationships prevailing in a given environment (Speck, 2005, p. 228). It is also a violation of human dignity that occurs when disabled people encounter cultural, physical and social barriers that limit their participation in various areas of activity available to other citizens (Kosakowski, 2013, p. 34).

In this perspective, being in the world depends not only on development potential or broadly understood resources, but also on environmental factors, e.g. attitudes, discourse, stereotypes, existential conditions, barriers, etc. In the socio-cultural aspect, handicap appears as a specific set of interactions with the environment in which specific characteristics become deficits in relation to a specific set of requirements. It is disability that is entangled in the world of senses and meanings, perceived as a "social fact", as a construct that is defined and interpreted in various ways. The authors pay special attention to the concept of intellectual disability, which "is not only a term describing a certain state of affairs, but also a concept which, in order to be understood, requires values and assessments, hidden postulations, camouflaged labeling" (Gustavson, Zakrzewska-Manterys, 1997, p. 26).

An interesting perspective is presented by Davis (2022, pp. 12 and 154), who refers to the phenomenon of handicap to a deliberate situation in which "the stronger one is disadvantaged to equalize the opportunities of the others." In terms of analyzing disability, Davis also uses the term handicapping, especially when society segregates impairments. He gives an example of "wearing a hearing aid, which is socially perceived as much more handicapping than wearing glasses, even though both instruments enhance the failing sense." The author adds that handicapping also means the impairment of femininity, masculinity, attractiveness, assigning meanings to body parts, assigning value to certain activities or dysfunctions, which outlines the mechanism of the social construction of signs and meanings.

In general, the meanings that are assigned in the discourse of social definition of disability take on a certain construct of the mental map of society, which, by creating a given culture, determines the relational and existential scope of

certain groups or people, locating them in a stereotypically constructed "norm". In M. Foucault's perspective, the norm is grounded in the discourse of knowledge, classifications, categorizations of disorders and is sanctioned by personnel with the power to repair and restore individuals to the sphere of normality (Foucault, 2009). Shakespeare (1994, pp. 283-199) believes that the disabled are subject to objectification through cultural representations, and that handicap and perception are omitted in the social concept of disability.

An interesting approach is proposed by M. Chutorański (2022, p. 20), who argues that disability is performed within heterogeneous systems of people and non-humans, showing disability as a verb. Such a constellation means that disability is "performed - stabilized and destabilized - within the arrangements between nature and culture that organize the thinking of dominant approaches to disability ("medical model" vs. "cultural models"). The researcher's verb approach results from selected analyses of posthumanism, new materialism and the actor-network theory.

The consequence of the handicapping discourse is medicalization, stigmatization, pushing a person to the margins of a given social group, falsifying their identity and depriving them of development opportunities. Identity falsification may be identical with identity handicap, which, according to Gajdzica (2014, pp. 232–233), is reflected in the concept of a handicapped "self", determined by specific practices of social construction, based on emphasizing the special needs of a given individual. Therefore, handicapping practices (relational situations) have the power to create a handicapped identity, initiating and strengthening specific consequences.

Handicap may result from perceiving disability as a category of exclusion, and the process of exclusion itself often begins in the family, educational or community environment. The process of handicapping also constitutes the architecture of social constructions, showing the relationships between the person(s) with intellectual disability and the educational environment, and between the parents and this environment, as well as between the parents and their children. Moreover, the process of handicapping illustrates the educational and cultural-social mechanisms of perpetuating disability as a category which constantly deviates from the norm. This approach activates many mechanisms, including the mechanism of psychiatrization of people with ID in the educational environment.

Psychiatrization of students

Psychiatrization as a complex, global and multi-contextual phenomenon involves various actors in social arenas, and is one of the mechanisms of handicapping the identity of students who, through the narratives of school employ-

ees, are forced into the role of a mentally ill person, and therefore pose a threat to the social group of normalized educational participants. Naive pseudo-diagnosis of student behavior by the educational staff, searching for mental illness and claims for psychiatric treatment, including pharmacotherapy, are becoming a harmful phenomenon determining the biography of students with ID (de Barbaro, 2012, 2016; Beeker, et al., 2020; Gumienny, 2021, 2023; Batstra et al., 2021). The literature shows that students with intellectual disabilities (e.g. ASD-related), students with pervasive developmental disorders and students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorders are most at risk of psychiatricization.

The educational environment is one of the basic socio-cultural systems, it is a microworld reflecting the way intellectual disability is defined and represented (Borowska-Beszta, 2016). It also belongs to the arenas of social interactions in which various performances involving people with intellectual disabilities take place. At school, children and adolescents spend a significant part of the day establishing peer relationships and being influenced by a team of teachers and specialists who, by creating their identity, also take part in their life history. Educators use power, and following Foucault's (1995) concept, we should say: power-knowledge, which means that they have the power to discipline, tame, standardize, normalize and regulate. They use various forms of discourse, including verdict discourses located in medicine, having the nature of social practices, specific language, position or relations. Foucault's (1977) discourse is associated with a category of statements which is an element of a certain whole or context of a social, political and cultural situation (relation). However, one of the forms of discourse is language, treated as an extremely important sequence of social and interactive behavior, and it is formed by the following determinants: who speaks, to whom, in what situation and for what purpose (Grabias, 1994).

Social constructionists take the position that "language not only reflects reality, but it actually creates it. In other words, when we verbalize the world, it gains causative power. Michael White (...) noted that *a problem becomes a problem, not a person*, which means that a problem arises when language formulates it as a problem (...). In this sense, the word creates a reality that imposes a certain scenario or – as constructionists would say – a certain narrative" (de Barbaro, 2016, p. 141). Therefore, "a deviant is one who has been effectively labeled as such (...). (Becker, 1963, cited in: Barnes & Mercer, 2008, p.11). By using the language of normalization, it can be assumed that the label of mentally ill refers to behaviors of people with ID that go beyond the established and accepted framework of a given community. This means that the conceptualization of defining non-normative disorders is variable and depends on the specificity of a given environment, the discourse of decision-makers and creators, and on the primary behavioral characteristics, including communication characteristics of the people who have been labeled.

The classification of states of human behavior as mental disorders results in the expansion of psychiatric institutions and an increase in mental health diagnoses, as well as the penetration of its meaning and impact on human experiences. "In terms of diagnosing or treating children, psychiatry is usually presented as a more or less monolithic, top-down process that, according to some, ensures the child's right to health, while for others it constitutes a form of child abuse" (Beeker et al., 2020, p. 12).

Psychiatrization is not only a language or a specific medical practice, it is primarily a tangle of infrastructures and ideologies generating a number of social phenomena that organize and direct human life, creating a material and symbolic space. It permeates education, family life, the identity repertoire, and the social welfare system. This concept indicates that psychiatricization is not only a consequence of psychiatrists' activities or the pharmaceutical industry, but is a phenomenon co-created by top-down and bottom-up interactions of citizens unrelated to the health care system (Witeska-Młynarczyk, 2019).

Psychiatrization is part of the medical language, the phenomenon of medicalization, defined as "the process in which problems previously considered "non-medical" are defined, described and treated as medical, mainly through the use of the terminology of diseases and disorders and the application of therapeutic procedures." In other words, it is the creation, programming and application of medical categories to human problems and events" (de Barbaro, 2012). We are talking about a situation when a person does not manifest mental disorders, does not have a medical diagnosis, but is treated as mentally ill only due to the demonstration of specific communication, including behavioral one. This fact may also be influenced by the phenomenon of the so-called diagnostic obfuscation, i.e. an incorrect correlation of the actual mental disorder symptoms with behavioral abnormalities that accompany intellectual disability" (Davidson & O'Hara, 2019, p. 400). This type of diagnostic reasoning can be compared to pseudopsychiatric reasoning, which belongs to "categorical abuses in the nature of metaphors borrowed from the field of psychiatry to describe phenomena from other areas of social life and evoking the context of medicalization, covering increasingly wider areas of experience of individuals and social groups" (Prokop-Dorner, 2017). Since identity is situational and variable in nature and is constructed similarly to social reality in the process of social interaction (Hałas, 1987, p. 180), so the phenomenon of psychiatricization should be considered as a concept of identity falsification by imputing a mental illness, which affects not only the educational career, but also the interweaving of multi-threaded relational, developmental, functional and life situations of people with ID.

Uramowska-Żyto (1992, p. 119) claims that unmasking a mental disease "causes very severe social reactions and, as a result, individuals burdened with them are unable to perform their roles effectively (..), and public stigma may

completely paralyze their social activity, they may retreat to the margins of society." Therefore, the problem of mental disease is related to the professional definition of what the norm is, because this type of categorization affects not only research results, analyses and conclusions from observations, but also societal opinion, religious and cultural values. The boundary between norm and pathology may be fluid, and the term "mental disease" has for years referred to human behavior, which is rather a description of behavior that is difficult to explain (e.g. mania, paranoia, madness are terms related to medical conditions, but if used informally, go far beyond the medical nature) (Puzyński, 2015, after: Kmiecik, 2022, p. 38).

Scientific analyses show that psychiatricization occurs when the censor, using his or her own, naive perspective, abuses and overinterprets the behavior of people with ID, by strengthening medicalization and finding mental disease. The focus is on behavior defined as: hyperactivity, hyperreactivity, aggressiveness, self-aggression, malice, etc., which, in the opinion of the censor, lead to dangerous situations and pose a threat to the social group. "The construction of a psychiatric identity by educators, labeling children as crazy, imputing the child's mental illness to the parents is part of the so-called pseudo-protection strategies – both for children with ID, peers and teachers. As a result, protective measures allow children with ID to legally reside in the demarcation territory, and the educational center remains at the disposal of the group members who promise to strengthen their social capital in the future" (Gumienny, 2021, p. 180).

Tonge (2010, p. 109), a child psychiatrist, believes that it is extremely important to observe the behavior of children and adolescents with ID, because in some situations these behaviors may regress, which determines the deterioration of cognitive competences and the demonstration of bizarre, psychotic-like behaviors, mistakenly diagnosed as schizophrenia. The author draws attention to environmental factors, including deprivation of children's needs, abuse, stimulating-functional minimalism and the low level of emotional, relational and social activity, which contributes to an increase in the level of intellectual disability and consequently to the demonstration of various behaviors. The reason for using medical language of a psychiatric nature are the students' behavioral reactions (perceived as bad, aggressive, abnormal, bizarre, crazy, deviant), often coded and incomprehensible to the school staff (Gumienny, 2023). Therefore, the students' unrecognized communication codes (behavior, relationships, verbal and non-verbal communication) constitute a primary attribute, which creates an opportunity for stigma, i.e. a sign that depreciates the social identity of people – the carriers of attributes (Goffman, 2005).

When addressing the problem of psychiatricization, many researchers ask the question: why do teachers usually suspect that a child who achieves, e.g., poor results and/or exhibits difficult behavior has a mental illness? The answer

comes down to the following conclusion: a problem creates a diagnosis – and this factor plays an important role in an increase in the number of psychiatric diagnoses in children. This process is called reification, which literally means creating things from something that does not have objective characteristics. Specifying difficult behaviors, the excess of states of increased emotionality and hyper-reactivity of students becomes a problem for teachers, which determines the creation of the student as a neurobiological person (Hyman, 2010, citing: Batsara et al. 2021). According to Obuchowska (1983, pp. 147–148), when child behavior (exaggerated, intense, extreme) exceeds the threshold of adult tolerance, it is treated as problematic and not as signal behavior (by means of which the child consciously or unconsciously signals his or her unmet needs). Therefore, the socio-cultural perspective is the language of meanings, patterns, stereotypes, assessments, diagnosis, categorization and perception of people with ID. Language creates and formulates problems, language has causative power, it works where it is spoken and created, it does not reflect reality - language creates a person (Gumienny, 2021). Teacher discourse proves that student behavior is not recognized as a form of communication and as a functional message; the context of pedagogical perception is limited to stereotypes relating to psychopathological and medical phenomena. In this situation, students have no chance to defend themselves because they are labeled as having a handicapped and/or autistic mind affected by mental illness.

Conclusions

The phenomenon of psychiatrization is gradually penetrating many social groups, including school environments, where students demonstrate emotional (hyper)sensitivity, various behaviors or other behaviors resulting from developmental disorders, disabilities, experiences and other multi-contextual situations. The danger appears wherever student behaviors and reactions become the focus of teacher attention and their alleged beliefs about an emerging or existing mental illness. A particularly sensitive group are children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities (and/or coupled with ASD), or students with pervasive developmental disorders or other special needs, because the way they are perceived and categorized may be related to the language of pseudo-diagnostic psychiatry. Verbalized meaning categorizations, including labels, based on opinions such as: the student is unable, unwilling, does not perform, behaves negatively, is aggressive, malicious, goes beyond the norm, is mentally ill, etc. may take the form of a permanent variable that determines not only the educational career, but also the life history of the student and his or her family.

Failure by teachers to recognize as well as falsifying the communication codes of students with ID, hidden in behavioral acts or in incomprehensible verbal communication, may lead to the development of the role of a disabled and mentally ill person. Persistent "interest" in the student as a neurobiological individual who poses a threat to himself or herself, the peer group and the school staff may also result in marginalization by veiled encouragement for parents to seek individual teaching (at home). This is a subtle method of removing the student from an educational institution while receiving educational subsidies for his or her education. A student labeled mentally ill becomes the silent subject of a hidden program, pseudo-education and pseudo-upbringing, "taking on the dimension of the opposite, perversion, hypocrisy or pretense" (Śliwerski, 2004, p. 441), which is evidence of anti-pedagogical activities that conceal deceit, pretense, discrimination, enslavement, oppression or violence (Śliwerski, 2010, pp. 72-83).

Psychiatrization causes a great deal of harm: both to student functioning and his or her family, as well as to the moral, ethical, social, civic, medical and cultural aspects. There is a risk that this discourse of pedagogical or therapeutic communities will, over time, intensify as an intrusive and unpleasant practice of creating school psychiatric factories, and a diagnosis validated by psychiatrists will reinforce the constellation of the handicap mechanisms.

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Psychiatryzacja jako mechanizm upośledzania uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przeglądowa analiza problematyki dotyczącej zjawiska psychiatryzacji, szczególnie w odniesieniu do uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną (i np. sprzężoną z autyzmem). Z analizy literatury przedmiotu wynika, że przez dziesięciolecia niepełnosprawność intelektualną określano jako upośledzenie umysłowe i traktowano jako obniżenie sprawności psychicznej oraz utożsamiano z chorobą psychiczną. Fakt, że osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną mogą przejawiać zaburzenia psychiczne (Rola, 2004; Bouras, Holt, 2019), ale to nie oznacza, że ten stan jest powszechny i dotyczy całej populacji.

Psychiatryzacja wiąże się z dyskursem np. personelu szkoły skierowanym do uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną, z narracją nacechowaną pseudomedycznym określeniem: „chory lub zaburzony psychicznie”. Badania naukowe dowodzą, że uczniowie ci, ze względu na prezentowany specyficzny kod komunikacyjny, ukryty w zachowaniach (określanych jako trudne, agresywne, bierne, aspołeczne itp.), mogą być traktowani jako osoby zaburzone psychicznie. Ten rodzaj kategoryzacji dotyczy zjawiska medykalizacji o charakterze psychiatryzacji, gdzie konsekwencją jest stygmatyzacja, upośledzanie i fałszowanie tożsamości uczniów.

Słowa kluczowe: psychiatryzacja, medykalizacja, upośledzanie, niepełnosprawność intelektualna, edukacja.



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Inclusive Education from a Sociological and Pedagogical Perspective: Report from Polish Research

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Abstract

The objectives of the paper were to identify the areas of research on inclusive education, systematize them through the developed categories, identify the dominant research directions, and conduct a sociological reflection on them. The article is divided into two parts. The first part is a systematic review of Polish research on inclusive education. 72 scientific sources were analyzed and systematized into four categories: creating an inclusive culture, developing inclusive policies, developing inclusive practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), and critical reflection. In the second part of the article, there are considerations about inclusive education in the context of social theories. Each theory provides a different perspective on the issue and emphasizes different elements of it. By analyzing the issue through the lenses of reproduction theory, social constructivism, autopoietic systems theory, and critical theory, it is possible to identify the reasons behind the difficulties in implementing this model.

Keywords: inclusive education, systematic review, critical discourse analysis, social theories.

Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) in Poland is a relatively new phenomenon, still under development and refinement. An attempt to understand the current state of knowledge on inclusion led to the creation of the following text. One of the inspirations was a review article on international research (Van Miegheem et al., 2020). The authors analyzed 26 sources and, on their basis, identified five areas of research on inclusive education: attitudes towards IE (input), teachers' professional development on IE (input), IE practices (process), student participation (outcome) and aspects of conducting research into IE. Another important point of reference was a report analyzing Polish research on inclusive education Domagała-Zyśk, 2018). The areas identified by the author are: 1. Theoretical, formal, and organizational foundations of integration and inclusion. 2. Methods and strategies supporting inclusive education. 3. Peer relationships in inclusive and integrated classrooms. 4. Parents' attitudes and opinions on segregation, integration, and inclusion in education. 5. Teachers' attitudes and opinions on segregation, integration, and inclusion in education. 6. Opinions and attitudes of students with disabilities in the context of their education in mainstream and inclusive schools. As a result, we decided to conduct our own review, which will examine and analyze the most recent Polish research.

The outcome and one of the goals of the mentioned reviews was to provide guidance for inclusive education practice, highlight research gaps and point to their potential for further development, and provide evidence-based knowledge resources. In our case, there was a need not only to analyze sources and systematize research on inclusive education, but also to attempt to understand the sociological foundations of their trends.

Sources and methodology

The objective of the own research is to understand the scope of research in Poland on inclusive education. The following research questions have also been formulated to facilitate the creation of the entire review:

1. What are the topics and problems addressed by research on inclusive education?
2. How can these studies be systematized, highlighting their main areas?
3. What are the sociological factors that condition the results of the review?

The method used for the review is a systematic review (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 95), which is based on a comprehensive search, synthesis of scientific research and guidelines on the conduct of a review – including or excluding sources after quality assessment.

The sources used in the review were books under the editorship (on inclusive education), reports and scientific articles. Due to the multi-faceted nature of inclusive education, Polish scientific journals on pedagogy and special pedagogy were used for the review.

Articles were searched for using the keywords: "inclusive education." They also had to meet a time criterion of 2018-2023. This criterion was based on the existence of a previous report that covered the years 2013-2017 (Domagała-Zyśk, 2018).

The texts (72) were systematized according to the areas they address. The framework for identifying these categories was based on three areas of inclusive education (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p. 13): creating inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies, evolving inclusive practices. We also identified one additional category – critical reflection on inclusive education, which refers to theoretical articles and the development of pedagogy as a scientific discipline.

Inclusive culture (15)

The indicators mentioned by the authors (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p. 75) are the creation of a school community where everyone feels welcome, helps each other, and collaborates on a partnership basis, as well as the establishment of inclusive values such as equal treatment and appreciation of all students, adherence to a common philosophy of inclusion and inclusive education, reduction of barriers in the educational process in all aspects of school life, and minimization of forms of discrimination.

In the area of creating an inclusive culture, empirical studies have been categorized. These studies concern the opinions of participants in the educational process: teachers (or education students), parents, and students. These studies are presented chronologically below in the form of a table.

Table 1
Empirical studies on the perceptions and meanings ascribed to inclusive education.

Source	Research objective	Method	Study group
(Koralewicz-Lew, 2018)	To understand teachers' opinions on the process of integrating children with autism spectrum disorders.	Diagnostic poll method	Teachers (60) working with individuals on the autism spectrum: inclusive kindergarten (26), mainstream primary school (34).
(Chrzanowska, 2018)	To determine whether and to what extent the opinions of teachers in inclusive kindergartens regarding the integrated education of children in mainstream institutions are influenced by their years of professional experience.	Diagnostic poll method	Teachers in inclusive kindergartens (190).

Table 1
Empirical studies on the perceptions... (cont.)

Source	Research objective	Method	Study group
(Nowakowska & Pisula, 2018)	To examine how knowledge and opinions about autism spectrum disorders are currently shaped among teachers in mainstream primary schools and education students.	Diagnostic poll method	Education students (70) and teachers in mainstream primary schools (70).
(Skotnicka, 2019)	Find out and consider the opinions of students of pedagogical faculties concerning the selection of the most beneficial form of education for students with disabilities.	Diagnostic poll method	Students of pedagogical faculties (213).
(Barłóg, 2019)	Attempt at finding an answer to the question- how do teachers determine and classify difficulties and successes in inclusive education.	Diagnostic poll method	Teachers working at public schools (65).
(Chrzanowska, 2019)	Learn the attitudes and the opinions of the teachers on varying levels of seniority, from special pre-schools and to identify, whether essential statistical differences exist in the opinions of teachers, determined by their seniority.	Diagnostic poll method	Special pre-school teachers (127).
(Baranowska & Leszka, 2019)	Determine the aims with which teachers from various types of schools and of varied professional experience develop normative definitions of inclusive education.		Teachers of various types of schools (188).
(Przybyszewska, 2019)	To analyze the opinions of parents about the infrastructure of buildings, the size of classes, the availability of professionals, teacher qualifications, accommodations and social relations.	diagnostic analysis method	Parents of children attending inclusion classrooms in four different primary schools in the city of Poznan (70).
(Godawa, 2020)	Examining the opinions of students in the field of inclusive education and inclusive education, as well as broadly understood social integration.	Diagnostic poll method	Students in special education and rehabilitation pedagogy (100).
(Skibska, 2021)	Structuring based on "factor loadings" of early childhood education teachers' opinions on inclusive education and identifying and distinguishing the attitudes (beliefs) of the surveyed teachers towards inclusive education and students with special educational needs (SEN) without considering disability categories.	Diagnostic poll method	Teachers of early childhood education in mainstream schools where children with special educational needs are enrolled (277).

Table 1
Empirical studies on the perceptions... (cont.)

Source	Research objective	Method	Study group
(Gorczyca, 2023)	Diagnosing the inclusion process and assessing the level of acceptance of children with disabilities by their typically developing peers in a mainstream institution.	Diagnostic poll method	Students in grades IV-VIII at KOU Elementary School in Rudzienko (55).
(Mórawska, 2023)	Understanding teachers' opinions on the benefits and risks associated with implementing inclusive education.	Diagnostic poll method	Teachers from randomly selected primary schools in Mińsk Mazowiecki (27).

Source: own research.

There is a clear predominance of research on teachers' attitudes (10) compared to parents (1) or students (1). As indicated by Iwona Chrzanowska (Chrzanowska & Szumski, 2019, p. 44) one of the determinants of successful inclusive education is the teacher's attitude, their acceptance, and understanding of this concept. However, collaboration and shared inclusive values within the student-teacher-parent triad are equally important and worth exploring.

Another area emerging in this category is the relationships between teachers or between teachers and students in inclusive education. The relationships between supporting teachers (co-teachers involved in organizing education) and lead teachers have been the subject of research in focus groups (data collected through interviews) among 19 general and supporting teachers, postgraduate students, and second-degree students (Skura, 2018). The conclusions drawn by the researcher emphasized the need for mandatory co-creation of general principles of cooperation among teachers and the declaration of the necessity to base this cooperation on partnership relations.

The topic of relationships between students in inclusive education was addressed in a study aimed at determining the position of children with special educational needs within peer groups and the nature of their relationships with peers during early school education (Dyduch & Trojańska, 2018). The study involved 270 primary school students (including 75 students with special educational needs) and 13 early childhood education teachers. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and sociometric techniques. The research indicates that all students with special educational needs, despite a strong desire and sympathy towards the group, are not perceived as liked by their typically developing peers. They experience difficulties in collaboration and spending time together with their peers. These findings vary depending on the type and severity of the special educational needs.

At the intersection of culture and inclusive policy, there is a text discussing the social and cognitive aspects of the participation of people with disabilities in education (Chilman, 2021). The author highlights important social aspects of inclusion such as stigmatization, stereotyping, social judgment, and the creation of image and social norms in media discourse. She relates these to the cognitive needs of students and specific strategies for optimizing the educational process, for example, through the use of particular methodological approaches.

Inclusive policies (30)

In the realm of creating inclusive policies (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p. 97) two areas of action have been distinguished. The first involves the development of schools for all: encompassing recruitment and advancement systems for staff, support in implementing inclusive practices, acceptance of students from local and non-local areas, architectural adjustments, assistance for students in adapting to school life, and ensuring fair and non-discriminatory class formation processes. The second area focuses on providing support and assistance tailored to student needs and organizing support for diversity: including coordinating all forms of support, developing staff to address student diversity, avoiding excessive categorization of students with special educational needs, recognizing diversity within educational needs groups, coordinating support for students learning Polish as a second language, implementing educational policies that support students' educational journeys, reducing exclusion levels through collaborative efforts, decreasing premature school leaving rates, and minimizing school violence levels.

In the analyzed Polish sources, two research trends can be observed. The first concerns "special educational needs" (18). Researchers analyze the following issues:

- Analysis of challenging behaviors among students on the autism spectrum (Woźniak, 2018).
- Risk of exclusion of students in inclusive education (Dryżałowska, 2018; Skałbania & Babiarez, 2018).
- Strategies for working with students "for inclusion" (Gołębnik & Pachowicz, 2018).
- Diagnosis and areas of support for students with migration experience (Chrzanowska & Jachimczak, 2019; Chrzanowska & Szumski, 2019).
- Utilization of the Assisting Hand Assessment in the diagnosis and therapy of children with unilateral cerebral palsy (Podgórska-Jachnik & Szmalec, 2019).
- Education of exceptionally gifted students (Chrzanowska & Szumski, 2019).
- Higher education for students with disabilities (Waszczuk et al., 2020).

- Sensory support (its absence) for students on the autism spectrum (Bombińska-Domżał et al., 2020).
 - Aggressive behaviors among students with Special Educational Needs (Baranowska & Leszka, 2021).
 - Personality model and diagnosis (Cieciuch & Strus, 2021).
 - Pedagogical therapy (Baran, 2021).
 - Specific educational needs of students from various groups, as well as work in a diverse group (Jachimczak, 2021).
 - The role of a school pedagogue (Soszyńska, 2022).
 - Students with special educational needs in remote education (Chrzanowska, 2022).
 - Socio-economic factors in inclusive education (Piwowarski, 2023).
 - Support for students with intellectual disabilities (Żółkowska & Parafiniuk, 2023).
- The second pertains to the legal and organizational aspects of inclusive education (12):
- Implementing inclusive education into the Polish education system (Sadowska, 2018).
 - Analysis of the inclusive school and kindergarten model (financial, organizational, and pedagogical aspects) (Chrzanowska & Szumski, 2019).
 - Right to education under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Mikrut, 2019).
 - Principles of educating students with disabilities (Gajdzica, 2019).
 - Inclusive education in relation to the Integrated Skills Strategy (Staszewicz & Walczak, 2021).
 - Organizing teaching for students with special educational needs in inclusive education (Pomirska, 2021).
 - Inclusive actions in schools from the perspective of theory, legal solutions, and educational reality (Dobrowolska, 2022).
 - Changes in the education system for students with intellectual disabilities (Konieczna & Smolińska, 2022).
 - Analysis of the education system in Poland during the implementation of inclusive education (Gajdzica et al., 2021; Podgórska-Jachnik, 2022).
 - The role of local governments in implementing inclusive education (Skotnicka & Mrózek, 2023).
 - The role of the principal in creating an inclusive school (Tersa, 2023).

Inclusive practices (21)

According to Booth and Ainscow, indicators for implementing inclusive practices include (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p.120): organizing the educational process

(planning programs that meet the needs of all students, encouraging their participation and activity, aiming to understand diversity, promoting cooperative learning, inclusive assessment practices, maintaining order and discipline based on mutual respect, teacher collaboration in planning processes, support for all students by support teachers, appropriate formulation of homework assignments, and participation in extracurricular activities) and orchestrating learning (recognizing diversity as a value conducive to enhancing education, utilizing the knowledge and experience of staff, the local community, and fair management of assistance and support).

Teachers, particularly their knowledge, competencies, and experience, are identified as a key resource in inclusive education. This area has been the focus of numerous texts and studies categorized under inclusive practices (14). Below is a chronological list of topics addressed within this area:

- Analysis of teacher education in inclusive education. Identification of challenges and the necessity to promote knowledge of inclusive education among teachers and educational management staff (Jachimczak, 2018).
- Reflection on the role and tasks of a special educator in a mainstream school, and the potential benefits of special pedagogy for inclusive education (Rutkowski & Bidziński, 2018).
- Identification of key competency areas that should be developed in future teachers of inclusive education, as well as the skills required in these areas. The author highlights the concept of inclusive education, diversity as an asset, supporting all students, diverse educational needs in relation to teaching programs and methods, collaboration with parents, intra-school team cooperation, and professional development within the education sector. The author advocates for expanding the competencies of students in special education programs to encompass these areas (Chrzanowska, 2018)
- Description of teachers' self-efficacy in pursuing goals related to inclusive practices. Exploration of its definition, sources, and conducting research on its measurement (Narkun, 2019).
- Creating a classification of competencies for early childhood inclusive education teachers and formulating conclusions for the training model of early childhood education teachers (Zamkowska, 2019)
- The role and tasks of a support teacher in the education of students on the autism spectrum (Szafrńska, 2019).
- Analysis of the key players involved in educating and raising pupils within the public school system. It focuses on the roles, responsibilities, professional qualifications, necessary skills, and personality traits of teachers who work with students with special educational needs (Niemiec, 2019).
- Definition of the profile of an inclusive education teacher, including personality traits, predispositions, qualifications, competencies, and practical skills.

Diagnosis of difficulties and needs of teachers in achieving effective inclusive education based on own research. Formulation of guidelines for preparing teachers for inclusive education (Kołodziejczyk, 2020).

- Analysis of changes introduced in the education of future teachers in the field of inclusive education. Reference to international reports and Polish initiatives within the framework of education for all models. Formulation of new demands for changes in teacher education programs (Zamkowska, 2021).
- Highlighting the importance, potencial and diverse forms of teacher mentoring in preparing future inclusive education teachers (Domagała-Zyśk, 2021).
- Examining three key methods for supporting mainstream teachers in achieving inclusive education. It argues that these approaches are rarely used in Polish schools and are largely overlooked in Polish educational research (Gajdzica, 2022).
- Analysis of inclusive education (including educational opportunities and actions by teachers) in the face of the pandemic (Głodkowska, 2022a, 2022b).
- Providing a glimpse into the work of special education teachers in Polish mainstream schools, as described by the teachers themselves. It aims to portray the realities of their work following the introduction of a mandate to employ special education specialists in all schools. It also highlights the need for a deeper analysis of this issue from the perspective of preparing special education teachers for real-world tasks that enhance the effective implementation of inclusive education in practice (Bartuś, 2023).

The natural consequence of enhancing teachers' competencies in inclusive education is their adoption of specific methodological solutions that support this form of education. Based on several texts (7) addressing this topic, the following methodological solutions and best practices have been highlighted:

- Project-based methods, utilization of the Dalton Plan, small group work, task teams or pairs, introduction of bilingualism through CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning), education towards democracy, peer tutoring, and age-diverse group work (Jachimczak & Małachowska, 2019).
- Formulating performance goals, referring to universal principles of teaching, Collaborative Learning, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Science Education, Design Thinking, STEAM lessons (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths), inclusive educational content, evaluation (Rola, 2021).
- Holistic education, relational in reference to inclusive education (Nowak-Łojewska, 2020).
- Educational dialogue, organizational differentiation, Winnetka Plan, Dalton Plan, Dottrens' concept, auxiliary team-individual teaching concept (Al-Khamisy et al., 2020).
- Collaborative learning (Bąbka & Korzeniowska, 2020).

- Uniwersal Design for Learning (Knopik et al., 2021).
- Utilization of artificial intelligence (Koziej, 2023).

Critical Reflection (9)

The final category identified through the analysis of all sources was critical reflection on inclusive education. This category includes articles that place inclusive education within the theoretical grounds of social sciences and contribute to the development of pedagogy as a scientific discipline (inclusive education and systemic transformations are factors that generate many dynamic changes).

Works that highlight the multifaceted nature of inclusive education relate it to social theories:

- defectology (Vik, Somby, 2018);
- paradigm shift from classroom pedagogy to inclusive pedagogy (Gołębniak & Pachowicz, 2018);
- Social Role Valorization (SRV) theory (Papuda-Dolińska, 2018, 2019);
- Education for Peace (Jachimczak, 2019);
- constructivism (Rzeźnicka-Krupa, 2020);
- education for social transformation (Sadowska, 2021);
- hypocritical discourse (Krause, 2023a);
- ideology of enchantment and oppression (Krause, 2023b).

Sociology reflection

In the analyzed literature, both directly and indirectly, the theories of social constructivism and critical theory resonate strongly. Social constructivism posits that social reality is constructed by people through their interactions and communication (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). In the context of inclusive education, the attribution and transformation of meanings seem crucial. This process occurs at multiple levels and pertains to fundamental components of the education system. Discussions regarding the implementation of this model raise questions about who the learner is, what the teacher should be, and what the school should represent.

The learner ceases to be merely a recipient of knowledge and becomes an active participant in the educational process. Their role is constructed by both the educational system and interactions with teachers, peers, and their own experiences. In inclusive education, the learner is perceived as an individual with unique needs and potential.

Schools have long ceased to be institutions solely for transmitting knowledge. They are also places where values and social attitudes are shaped. In the context of inclusive education, schools should be spaces that support diversity and inclusion, where all students feel accepted regardless of their psycho-physical abilities.

As the literature indicates, these meanings diverge from those present in societal consciousness and the consciousness of the educational environment itself. In practice, schools may encounter difficulties in fully integrating students with diverse needs due to lack of appropriate resources, the scope of teacher competencies, and support from parents and caregivers.

The discourse analyzed raises not only questions about the current state and its implications for the education system but also ideas about the desired shape of the system and concepts for improving the current state. The discussion focuses on what the school should be like and how to bring about transformations to ensure that the content and meanings align with the ideals of inclusive education. Critical theory, which examines existing structures, also creates space for proposals for change (Bottomore, 2003). This is an extremely useful approach in the context of inclusive education, which is based on principles of equality and inclusion.

Thus, we are dealing with a complex problem that concerns both theoretical and practical aspects. The current state of education is undergoing structural transformations while questioning the meanings underlying it.

According to the theory of autopoietic systems by Niklas Luhmann, the education system has the ability to self-reproduce and, although embedded in a broader social context, it is somewhat independent. The elements it generates, including meanings, become (if accepted by the system) part of it, allowing it to autonomously persist. It can maintain its identity and structure despite turnover among its members (Luhmann, 1989). If we understand education in this way, the concept of inclusive education appears either as an external element outside the systemic framework, artificially implemented, or as an element generated by the system that is still awaiting a decision on whether it will be accepted or rejected by the system. In both cases, we observe similar effects. Inclusive education is an element awaiting its status. The consequence of this state is the discussion we can observe concerning the construction and reconstruction of meanings.

According to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, despite its task of reducing social inequalities, the school actually reproduces them (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). In the educational field, as in any other field, there is a struggle for power and resources (Bourdieu, 1990). In this context, the assumptions of inclusive education may seem almost impossible to implement. The question arises whether, in the current field of education, it is possible to implement the assumptions of inclusive education without transforming the field itself and the rules of the game that prevail within it. Analyzing the discourse, this seems impossible.

An interesting perspective is the perception of the school field in inclusive education as a space for integration, stemming from its mass character. The discourse of inclusive education emphasizes massiveness as a potential asset, enabling broad access and even social development. However, scientific literature shows significant difficulties in effectively implementing this model. From Bourdieu's perspective, massiveness can be seen as a potential obstacle, leading to the reproduction of social inequalities by perpetuating existing structures of dominance and exclusion.

In summary, we are dealing with a constant clash of expectations and practices. Observing systemic change, we are also witnessing changes in the realm of symbols, where tensions are most pronounced, causing difficulties in making these transformations.

Given these considerations, inclusive education becomes a challenge both theoretically and practically. Discussions on constructing roles for students, teachers, and schools build social awareness and point to the need for profound systemic and cultural changes to realize its ideas.

The conceptualization of the notion of a publicly accessible education system is another interesting issue. Inclusion in a publicly accessible education system can refer to the current system or the system after transformations. The discourse of inclusive education may consider a publicly accessible system one that has already undergone appropriate transformations. Whether this belief applies to the existing publicly accessible system or through the transformation of the current system, it actually becomes publicly accessible to all students. It seems that these are purely theoretical considerations, but a review of the literature indicates that this is an issue that translates into practice. This is evident, for example, in the issue of teacher competencies. Much time in the discussion is devoted to teacher competencies. Attention is paid to the fact that there is no appropriate devotion to this issue.

In literature on the implementation of the assumptions of inclusive education, a great emphasis is placed on social attitudes, indicating that they are a key factor influencing the success of the implementation of new ideas and practices. The effectiveness of implementing pedagogical innovations largely depends on the attitudes of the three main groups: teachers, students, and parents/caregivers.

Teachers play a central role because their commitment, openness to change, and ability to adapt teaching methods to the diverse needs of students determine whether new educational practices will be effectively implemented. In the context of social constructivism theory, the role of the teacher takes on special significance. In inclusive education, the teacher must adapt their methods and approach to meet the diverse needs of students, considering their individual experiences, cultural background, and abilities.

The transformation of the teacher's role in the context of inclusive education represents a significant change not only in terms of function but also in terms of meaning. The traditional role of the teacher, deeply rooted in societal consciousness, undergoes transformation that triggers tensions and discussions. This transformation is not just a change in the teacher's function but primarily a change in their role in societal consciousness and social readiness to accept this change. Inclusive education itself, along with its components, is still in the process of construction.

The field of inclusive education not only questions the traditional role of the teacher but also suggests a model of the teacher consistent with its ideals. This approach aligns with critical theory, which provides space for reflection on existing educational practices and their transformation towards greater inclusiveness and equality.

The directive of inclusive education, stemming from social policy aimed at realizing human rights, is implemented through appropriate legislation, initiating wide-ranging discussions and diverse concepts regarding its implementation, revealing numerous difficulties. Although teachers are key agents of change, their efforts prove insufficient without accompanying structural and organizational reforms. Traditional educational goals focusing on knowledge acquisition lose significance, giving way to social relationships, a direct result of the political demand promoting social integration and shaping civic attitudes among students. Implementing these changes, although challenging, is necessary to adapt the education system to contemporary social challenges.

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Edukacja włączająca w ujęciu socjologiczno-pedagogicznym: doniesienia z polskich badań

Streszczenie

Celami pracy było poznanie obszarów badań nad edukacją włączającą, usystematyzowanie ich poprzez opracowane kategorie i wyłonienie dominujących kierunków badań oraz dokonanie socjologicznej refleksji nad nimi. Artykuł podzielony został na dwie części. Pierwsza z nich jest systematycznym przeglądem polskich badań nad edukacją włączającą. Analizie poddano 72 źródła naukowe i usystematyzowano je w ramach czterech kategorii: tworzenie inkluzyjnej kultury, wypracowanie inkluzyjnej polityki, rozwój inkluzyjnych praktyk (Booth&Ainscow, 2011) oraz krytyczna refleksja. W drugiej części artykułu pojawiają się rozważania nad edukacją włączającą w kontekście teorii społecznych. Każda z nich daje możliwość spojrzenia na zagadnienie z innej perspektywy oraz kładzie nacisk na inne jej elementy. Dzięki analizie zagadnienia przez pryzmat teorii reprodukcji, konstruktywizmu społecznego, systemów autopojetycznych i teorii krytycznej możliwe jest wskazanie przyczyn w trudności implementacji tego modelu.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja włączająca, systematyczny przegląd, krytyczna analiza dyskursu, teorie społeczne.



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Do Studies Provide Knowledge, Skills, and Social Competences – Are You Sure? Social Competences of Future Special Educators – Longitudinal Studies

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Abstract

The research's aim was to verify whether higher education indeed significantly develops students' social competences as intended. The research project consisted of three separate studies. Anna Matczak's Social Competence Questionnaire was used, which allows for the presentation of results across three subscales related to functioning in intimate situations, situations of social exposure, and situations requiring assertiveness. The study included 66 first-year special education students, 83 STEM students, and 111 fifth-year special education students. A longitudinal study was conducted on a sample of 31 special education students. The results showed that both special education and STEM students have an average level of social competences. Studying special education significantly contributes to the enhancement of social competences, although the impact is moderate/low. The educational environment and the experiences gained throughout the studies appear to play a crucial role in this development.

Keywords: social competences, special education students, special education teacher competences, soft skills, professional predispositions.

Introduction

Many young people around the world are currently contemplating the value of pursuing higher education. They seek answers to the question: what do studies offer to an individual? Scientific research attempts to answer this question.

The Importance of Higher Education in a Person's Life

Research highlights the development of study skills, including the acquisition, organization, and synthesis of information, alongside the enhancement of cognitive-based study strategies (Malhotra & Mehta, 2015; Joseph et al., 2017). University programs support the cultivation of these skills, which are vital for degree completion and employability (Prifti et al., 2017; Tudor, 2019; Duche-Pérez, 2022; Briede & Peks, 2017). Additionally, studies emphasize the development of professional and research skills, which are essential for adapting to contemporary professional environments and society, as well as for conducting scientific research projects (Duche-Pérez, 2022; Briede & Peks, 2017; Ain et al., 2018). Furthermore, these programs facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills pertinent to the knowledge economy, thereby contributing to the development of students' capabilities (Thalgi, 2020). Study programs aim to equip students with essential study skills to enhance their learning and academic competence, including reading, writing, note-taking, and stress management (Malhotra & Mehta, 2015). These programs also emphasize the development of generic competencies, self-directed learning, and the promotion of specialized investigative knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and values (Briede & Peks, 2017). Moreover, academic programs contribute to the development of research skills, time management, teamwork, and soft skills, which are transferable across various contexts (Joseph et al., 2017; Prifti et al., 2017; Duche-Pérez, 2022; Ain et al., 2018).

In the context of academic education, soft skills refer to interpersonal, non-cognitive competencies essential for employability and career development (Ilyina & Kryuchkova, 2021; Jayaram & Musau, 2017). These skills are increasingly important for graduates amidst ongoing globalization and the knowledge-driven economy (Ilyina & Kryuchkova, 2021; Gilyazova et al., 2021; Barakat & Abed, 2023). Soft skills are crucial for effective problem-solving, decision-making, and fostering a collaborative culture in both academic and professional settings (Barakat & Abed, 2023). Developing these skills among students is essential, and various measures are being implemented to transform the educational process at universities to better foster these competencies (Ilyina & Kryuchkova, 2021). However, there is a notable lack of instruments for evaluating soft skills

within educational settings (Escolà-Gascón & Gallifa, 2022). Soft skills, also referred to as behavioral or non-cognitive skills, encompass interpersonal abilities such as communication, problem-solving, punctuality, and flexibility (Jayaram & Musau, 2017). Soft skills are positively correlated with academic outcomes and can mitigate inequalities in academic achievements stemming from differences in cognitive ability (Keng, 2024).

The Importance of Social Competences in Professional Work

In today's world, social competencies are of particular importance as they determine effective social and professional functioning. Social competencies seem to be especially significant in the work of a special educator, whose job is based on interacting with individuals with special needs. Therefore, it is emphasized that students should develop skills such as quick learning, openness to experiences, innovative thinking and action, as well as the ability to adapt socially and professionally, which includes functioning in social and professional roles (Wierzejska, 2014). At the same time, even in technical fields, there is increasing emphasis on the development of social competencies. It is no longer sufficient to have technical knowledge to secure a job; increasingly, employers are also testing "soft skills" during recruitment.

A specific subset of soft skills crucial for professional success is social competence. Social competence refers to a complex system of social abilities, habits, skills, and knowledge that organizes social behavior and activates individual elements of the system (Zsolnai & Kasik, 2016; Alejziak, 2020). Social competencies encompass a range of skills and behaviors related to social interaction and coexistence (Peñalva-Vélez et al., 2020). They are critical for various aspects of life, including education, vocational training, nursing, and adolescent development (Alejziak, 2020; Myles et al., 2015; Shek & Leung, 2016; Aarkrog & Wahlgren, 2017; Chrzan-Rodak et al., 2019). Social competencies develop throughout childhood and can be influenced by internal qualities and environmental factors (Alejziak, 2020; Peñalva-Vélez et al., 2020). Assessing social competencies involves evaluating social behavior, competitiveness, cordiality, aggression, and loneliness, with observed differences across genders and age groups (Peñalva-Vélez et al., 2020).

In this study, social competence is defined as the conformity of human behavior with social expectations while balancing personal and social interests. Thus, individuals are expected to manage the discrepancy between individual and social goals (Matczak, 2007). According to Anna Matczak (2007), social competence emerges from social training, the intensity of which depends on per-

sonality and temperamental variables (such as reactivity or extraversion), and its effectiveness is contingent on intelligence, particularly social and emotional intelligence.

In conclusion, social skills in academic education are vital for students' future career success and are increasingly recognized as essential competencies in the modern knowledge-driven economy. Despite challenges in measuring and developing these skills, their positive association with academic outcomes underscores their significance in educational settings.

Present Study

Given the importance of higher education in a person's life and the skills that are sought after in today's job market, it is crucial to emphasize the enhancement of students' social competences. Although, as highlighted in the introduction, these competences are key in every aspect of life, they seem to hold particular significance in the work of a special educator. Based on this premise, the entire research project's aim was to verify whether higher education indeed significantly develops students' social competences as intended. The research project consisted of three separate studies, each addressing a different research question.

The tool used in each of the three studies was Anna Matczak's Social Competence Questionnaire. It comprises 60 diagnostic items and 30 non-diagnostic items. This tool allows for the presentation of results across three subscales related to functioning in intimate situations, situations of social exposure, and situations requiring assertiveness. Participants are asked to respond to various activities by indicating on a 4-point Likert scale how well they would handle a given task (Matczak, 2007).

Study 1

In Study 1, the aim was to describe and compare the level of social competences between students of special education and students of STEM fields (physics, mathematics, computer science). Given this objective, two research questions were formulated:

- What level of social competences do first-year students of special education and STEM fields exhibit?
- Are there statistically significant differences in social competences between students of STEM fields and students of special education?

Method

Participants

A total of 149 students participated in the study, including 66 first-year special education students (integrated master's program) from the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw and 83 first-year STEM students (bachelor's degree) from the Military University of Technology in Warsaw. The group of STEM students consisted of 33 computer science students, 29 mathematics students, and 21 physics students.

Procedure

Students provided informed verbal consent to participate in the study. The study involved completing a questionnaire and a brief survey regarding the characteristics of the participants (gender, age, field of study, and academic year). Additionally, students from the Academy of Special Education were informed about a planned follow-up study at the end of their studies. Those who expressed interest in participating in the second phase of the study were asked to encode their papers according to the pattern "X123", where "X" is the first letter of their mother's name, and "123" represents the last three digits of their telephone number.

Results

The results showed that both special education students and STEM students exhibit an average level of social competences. Details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Basic descriptive statistics of the studied variables along with the Shapiro-Wilk test regarding social competencies measured by the KKS questionnaire (N = 149)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sk.</i>	<i>Kurt.</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Competence	4.44	4.00	2.53	0.33	-0.88	1	10	0.94	<.001
Intimacy	5.05	5.00	2.30	0.18	-0.83	1	10	0.96	<.001
Social Exposure	4.65	4.00	2.49	0.27	-0.78	1	10	0.95	<.001
Assertiveness	4.94	5.00	2.48	0.36	-0.87	1	10	0.94	<.001

Note. Data collected by author

The statistical analysis conducted indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between students of special education and students of STEM fields in terms of their social competences (Table 2).

Table 2

Comparison of Special Education and STEM Students in Terms of Social Competences Measured by the KKS Questionnaire – Mann-Whitney Test

Dependent variable	Special education students (n = 66)		Science students (n = 83)		U	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social Competence	4.68	2.62	4.24	2.45	2485.50	0.329	.14
Intimacy	5.29	2.17	4.86	2.40	2428.50	0.231	.18
Social Exposure	4.82	2.54	4.52	2.45	2552.00	0.471	.19
Assertiveness	5.15	2.56	4.77	2.41	2516.50	0.391	.18

Note. Data collected by author

Discussion

The results of the conducted research align with those obtained by Wierzejska (2016). They showed that students in Poland generally exhibit, at best, an average level of social competence. According to the author, many of them (about 40%) displayed deficiencies in this area. No significant differences were noted between students of science and natural science disciplines and students of social sciences. However, students of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and political science were better able to function in intimate relationships than students of chemistry, biology, biotechnology, or geography.

Empirical studies demonstrate that competencies positively correlate with mental well-being, overall life satisfaction, the quality of interpersonal relationships, readiness to help others, as well as the use of social support, effective stress coping strategies, and broadly understood adaptation and proper social functioning. Negative correlations were found with various types of mental disorders, somatic symptoms, feelings of loneliness, criminal behavior, and addictions (Argyle, 1999; Cherniss, 2002; Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal, 2005; Engelberg & Sjoberg, 2004; Gerits et al., 2005; Lopes et al., 2003; Palmer et al., 2002; Schutte et al., 2002; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004).

Based on the results of the conducted studies, it can be concluded that social skills promote school and academic success, good adaptation to the school environment, faster and easier adaptation to a new school, and even the use of more effective learning strategies by students (Bar-On, 1997; Gil-Olarte Marquez et al., 2006; Goetz et al., 2005; Newsome et al., 2000; Parker et al., 2004a; Parker et al., 2004b; Schutte et al., 1998).

Therefore, it can be concluded that it is possible to improve people's social functioning by developing certain abilities as part of their studies. However, developing appropriate intervention forms requires diagnosing the level of students' social competencies and any potential deficits in this area.

Study 2

In Study 2, the aim was to describe the level of social competences of fifth-year special education students, who are about to enter the job market, and compare it with the level of social competences of first-year students. The research questions were thus formulated as follows:

- What level of social competences do fifth-year special education students exhibit?
- Is there a difference in social competences between first-year and fifth-year special education students?

Method

Participants

The study included a total of 177 special education students – 66 first-year students (data from Study 1) and 111 fifth-year students from the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw.

Procedure

Fifth-year special education students provided verbal consent to participate in the study. The study procedure was similar to that of Study 1. Additionally, students were asked to encode their papers according to the pattern "X123," where "X" is the first letter of their mother's name and "123" represents the last three digits of their telephone number. This coding was necessary for subsequent analyses described in Study 3.

Results

The analysis revealed that fifth-year special education students demonstrated a higher level of social competence compared to first-year students. Detailed results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and Shapiro-Wilk test for social competences measured by the KKS questionnaire (N = 111)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sk.</i>	<i>Kurt.</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Competence	6.24	6.00	2.08	-0.06	-0.60	2	10	0.96	.002
Intimacy	7.20	7.00	1.93	-0.59	-0.40	1	10	0.90	<.001

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and Shapiro-Wilk test... (cont.)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sk.</i>	<i>Kurt.</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Exposure	5.96	6.00	2.14	-0.01	-0.37	1	10	0.97	.006
Assertiveness	6.23	6.00	2.17	-0.08	-0.52	1	10	0.96	.004

Note. Data collected by author

The statistical analysis conducted indicated that fifth-year students exhibit significantly higher social competences compared to first-year special education students (Table 4). The obtained results suggest that higher education in special education contributes to the development of social competences among students. This observation supports the idea that the educational process and the experiences gained during studies can positively influence the enhancement of these competences.

Table 4
Comparison of First-Year and Fifth-Year Special Education Students in Terms of Social Competences Measured by the KKS Questionnaire – Mann-Whitney Test

Dependent variable	1st year students (<i>n</i> = 66)		5th year students (<i>n</i> = 111)		<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social Competence	4.68	2.62	6.24	2.08	4953.50	<.001	.81
Intimacy	5.29	2.17	7.20	1.93	5432.50	<.001	.90
Social Exposure	4.82	2.54	5.96	2.14	4642.00	.003	.74
Assertiveness	5.15	2.56	6.23	2.17	4612.00	.004	.73

Note. Data collected by author.

Discussion

Based on the research, a good special education teacher should possess several key competencies. These competencies can be divided into four groups. The first group can be defined as Personal, Social, Professional, and Pedagogic Competence. A study conducted by Erna Retna et al. (2019) found that students are generally well-prepared for work in special education, possessing strong pedagogical, personal, and social competences. Among the four areas studied, professional competences scored the lowest, indicating a need for further improvement in this area for future educators. The second group can be defined as Collaboration Skills. Pre-service special educators should possess competencies in instructional expertise, understanding the collaboration process, collaboration

skill development, and character building for effective collaboration with general educators (Jiyeon et al., 2018). The third group can be defined as Smart Education Competency. Special education teachers were found to have a high demand for competencies related to understanding, evaluating, and reflecting on future education, highlighting the importance of smart education competency (Kyoung Ock & Jung, 2022). The last, fourth group can be described as Inclusive Education Competencies. Teachers perceived screening and assessment, differentiation of instruction, classroom and behavior management, and collaboration as key competencies required for inclusive education (Tawanda, 2019).

The findings suggest the need to embed the development of these competencies within existing training and support programs for teachers (Biggs & Gilson, 2019). Both pre-service and in-service training of teachers in key competencies could facilitate successful and effective implementation of inclusive education through equipping them to respond to child diversity (Tawanda, 2019). The results of the presented research also show that special education students have generally good social competences, but there is still much room for improvement in this area.

Study 3

The aim of Study 3 was to examine whether students of special education develop social competences while studying. The research questions were as follows:

- How have the social competences of special education students changed over the course of their studies?

Method

Participants

The study ultimately included 31 special education students who completed both the pre-test (in the first year) and the post-test (in the fifth year).

Procedure

To answer the research question, the results from Study 1 and Study 2 were compared for those who agreed to participate in the longitudinal study and correctly coded their questionnaires.

Results

The results showed that studying special education contributes to the development of social competences (Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of Social Competences of Special Education Students at the Beginning (Pre-test) and End of Studies (Post-test) – Wilcoxon Test

Dependent variable	Pretest		Posttest		Z	p	r
	M	SD	M	SD			
Social Competence	4.81	2.56	6.48	1.91	-3.43	<.001	.37
Intimacy	5.74	2.11	7.74	1.75	-3.47	<.001	.41
Social Exposure	4.87	2.58	6.13	2.16	-2.44	.015	.20
Assertiveness	5.19	2.39	6.16	2.15	-2.35	.019	.17

Note. Data collected by author

Both in general social competences and its specific components—intimacy, social exposure, and assertiveness—the average scores significantly increased. However, it should be noted that the effect of the variable, which was the time of studies (comparison of first and fifth-year results), is moderate (for overall social competences and intimacy) and weak (for social exposure and assertiveness).

Discussion

It is essential to systematically diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of special education students. The training of special education teachers is crucial for providing psychological and pedagogical support for students with special educational needs (Dyussenbayeva et al., 2022; Babkina & Kochetova, 2022). The studies presented above show that academic programs contribute to enhancing the social competences of future special education teachers, but this is only one of the key competences for this profession. For example, the experimental studies by Artemova et al. (2021) on first- and second-year students in special education programs demonstrated the importance of developing information and communicative competence, essential for future special education teachers. Proper preparation of students for the profession should include practical experiences in educational institutions (Bubnys, 2019). In conclusion, the benefits of studying for first-year students include improved conceptual knowledge, enhanced soft skills, and social interactions (Greene et al., 2020; Mkonto, 2018; Okagbue et al., 2021).

General Results and Discussion

The conducted research revealed that students starting their studies in special education do not exhibit exceptional social competencies. These findings may suggest that individuals choosing this field of study do not naturally possess well-developed social skills, which could stem from various factors such as previous educational and social experiences or personal predispositions. However, the analysis of the results shows that over the course of their studies, the social competencies of special education students significantly improve. The difference between first-year and fifth-year students is statistically significant, indicating that the study program effectively contributes to the development of these skills.

Although the effect of the change in social competencies over the course of the studies is moderate or weak, its importance cannot be overlooked. In the context of a special education teacher's work, where interactions with individuals with special needs are crucial, any improvement in social competencies is valuable. The results suggest that studying special education contributes to developing the skills necessary for effective work in this profession.

Nonetheless, the moderate nature of the effect may indicate the need for further enhancement of study programs to better develop social competencies. This could include a greater emphasis on practical experiences, workshops on interpersonal skills, and a more individualized approach to education.

Based on the conducted research, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the social competencies of special education students:

- Special education studies do not attract individuals with outstanding social competencies at the beginning of their academic career.
- Individuals graduating from special education studies achieve an average level of social competencies.
- Over the course of their studies, the social competencies of special education students significantly increase, suggesting a positive impact of the study program on the development of these skills.
- Despite the moderate or weak effect of the change, it can be assumed that the studies contribute to the development of social competencies in students.

These conclusions highlight the importance of systematically developing social competencies in special education study programs. Given the increasing demands of the job market, particularly in the field of special education, it is crucial that educational programs are continually refined to better prepare students for future professional challenges.

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Studia dają wiedzę, umiejętności i kompetencje społeczne – czy na pewno? Kompetencje społeczne przyszłych pedagogów specjalnych – badania longitudinalne

Streszczenie

Celem badania było sprawdzenie, czy studia wyższe rzeczywiście w sposób istotny rozwijają kompetencje społeczne studentów. Projekt badawczy składał się z trzech odrębnych badań. Wykorzystano Kwestionariusz Kompetencji Społecznych Anny Matczak, który pozwala na przedstawienie wyników w trzech podskalach dotyczących funkcjonowania w sytuacjach intymnych, sytuacjach ekspozycji społecznej oraz sytuacjach wymagających asertywności. W badaniu wzięto

udział 66 studentów pierwszego roku pedagogiki specjalnej, 83 studentów kierunków ścisłych i 111 studentów piątego roku pedagogiki specjalnej. Badanie podłużne przeprowadzono na próbie 31 studentów pedagogiki specjalnej. Wyniki pokazały, że zarówno studenci pedagogiki specjalnej, jak i kierunków ścisłych posiadają przeciętny poziom kompetencji społecznych. Studiowanie pedagogiki specjalnej w istotny sposób przyczynia się do podniesienia kompetencji społecznych, choć wpływ ten jest umiarkowany/niski. Środowisko edukacyjne i doświadczenia zdobyte podczas studiów wydają się odgrywać kluczową rolę w tym rozwoju.

Słowa kluczowe: kompetencje społeczne, studenci pedagogiki specjalnej, kompetencje pedagoga specjalnego, umiejętności miękkie, predyspozycje zawodowe.



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Determinants of Functional Diagnosis and Strategies of Work in School Relations with Students with Diverse Educational Needs – in the Opinions of Teachers and Students of Special Education

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The goal of education is to develop children's native abilities from an early age, not to burden them with knowledge...

(Shimada, 2023, p. 146)

Abstract

Currently, functional diagnosis is becoming an essential part of teaching and learning processes at school. It allows for the identification of students' needs and the adaptation of teaching strategies to the individual skills and abilities of each student. To properly perform a functional diagnosis, it is necessary to consider many conditions. This paper focuses on the analysis of the most current concepts concerning the essence, assumptions, characteristics and principles related to the functional diagnostic process, which are the result of many years of theoretical, practical and scientific work of a large group of specialists investigating this issue. The paper also presents a fragment of the author's research on the perception of functional diagnosis and its determinants in the current educational reality by active teachers and students of special education. A qualitative strategy was used. The method of a semi-structured, individual written interview was applied.

This study also contains conclusions from the research, observations and implications for pedagogical practice regarding factors that may foster better effectiveness of the diagnostic process, and the strategies applied in educational and therapeutic work with students with diverse needs in institutions available to general public.

Keywords: determinants of functional diagnosis, diagnostic process, school functional assessment process, strategies for working with students in an institution available to general public, students with diverse educational needs.

Functional diagnosis/assessment according to experts and specialists

The fundamental essence and aim of the diagnostic process is the description and analysis of facts, events, phenomena and processes leading to their understanding and explanation. However, Danuta Skulicz indicates “the identification of the aim of the study and its description (genesis, classification, typology) should not be the final stage. With regard to research whose subject is a human being, we want to find an answer not only to the question of who a human is but also who they become and who they should be ... diagnosing, i.e. understanding and explaining leads us to another goal, which is human development and the complex (observable and unobservable) contexts of his/her being and functioning in the world. The determinants of being and functioning of a person have cultural, symbolic and social dimensions. In these dimensions, we try to answer the question: what should a human be? Multifaceted and multi-threaded answers result in consequences both for the construction of pedagogical theories and pedagogical practice” (Skulicz, 2010, pp. 221, 222). Changes in the approach and the way of thinking about people with individual/diverse needs have also led to changes in conducting diagnostic activities in special education. The biological model, in which nosological diagnosis was predominant, was replaced by the social (individual) model and the humanistic paradigm, where the necessity to consider the needs of people with disabilities and the possibility of satisfying them most effectively were recognized, which was reflected in the functional diagnosis/diagnosis of functional skills (Niemiec, 2018, p.48). Currently, functional diagnosis, which is identified only with various contexts of psychological and pedagogical counseling, is losing its importance. It ceases to be a typical psychopedagogical diagnosis associated with various developmental aspects of the examined person. Additionally, it does not only concern the environmental assessment of student’s functioning that refers to interpersonal and social contexts. We can consider it to be the assessment of the daily functioning of a student with a disability with diverse needs. A student is perceived as a complex person and consideration is given to various aspects of their development, whose functioning is the result of many different factors. In

the field of special education, including speech therapy, functional diagnosis (diagnosis of functional skills) is currently conducted for instance in diagnostic and therapeutic work with an individual person and their conceptualization in connection with the development of individual diagnoses, multi-specialist assessments of the student's functioning, educational, therapeutic and care programs, speech therapy and assessment in conducting a diagnostic and therapeutic observation.

The way the essence of functional diagnostics is currently understood is due to many years of theoretical, practical and scientific work of a large group of specialists and experts investigating the process in question. The basic assumptions that guide the current model of functional diagnosis mostly include its processual nature, a holistic approach to the human being, immersion in the environmental context ... it is a diagnosis for the "quality of life" (Marcinkowska, 2009, p. 239). It is a positive, complete (developed), dynamic diagnosis that is constantly updated (Cytowska, 2006, pp.55,56). A functional diagnosis contains information about the stage of development of cognitive functions, communication competencies, socio-emotional development, demand for support, executive and motor functions and independence (Trochimiak & Gosk, 2012, p.144). It is characterized by comprehensiveness, profiling, developability, focus on the rehabilitation process, prediction and non-invasiveness (Głodkowska, 1999). In contrast to nosological diagnosis, all people (not only professionals) take part in the child's/student's activities. ... Observation and interviews are most frequently used for assessment and diagnostic tools are individual. ... In the diagnosis-rehabilitation relationship, diagnosis "does not precede rehabilitation" and both processes are intertwined (Marcinkowska, 2004). The term *functional skills* indicate the skills that have a direct impact on a person's independence, self-reliance and resourcefulness. Functional diagnosis focuses not only on "strengths and weaknesses" but, above all, on the developmental potential of a person. Therefore, it includes a positive diagnosis. It is a long-term process (verification of the diagnosis during therapy, possible modifications of methods and techniques of interaction, observation of changes in individual spheres of development, etc.). It is also an interdisciplinary process (cooperation of many people, such as specialists and people from the closest environment of the examined person). Additionally, it is also dynamic (the diagnosis is not constant; it is subject to modifications; it is completed on an ongoing basis and verified with the actual state – diagnostic verification should take place at least every six months in special education practice). Importantly, diagnosis should include functional skills of care diagnostic process related to noticing, learning about and meeting the needs of people with neurodiverse development. These needs may be related to the functioning of the respondent's family or may be associated with a care or educational institution. They may result from the properties

of the body, or be related to the activity of a person with individual needs in the environment (Niemiec, 2018, p.50). Functional diagnosis should be useful (pragmatic), serving practical interactions, which allows the determination of the key elements of therapy, corresponding to the real needs of a person. It can also be understood as "... a certain horizon that directs changes in the Polish system of psychological and pedagogical counseling...; [functional diagnosis] require redefining of this horizon from diagnosticians and therapists" (Domagała-Zyśk, Knopik, & Osza, 2018, 2018, p.88). In 2022, a textbook was prepared under the title *Standards for the Course of the Process of Functional Assessment of Children and Students and Planning of Educational and Specialist Support in the Case of the Following Difficulties: hearing impairment, visual impairment, specific learning disorders, speech and language development disorders, intellectual development disorders, autism spectrum disorders (ASD), behavioral and emotional disorders*. The textbook was prepared as part of a conceptual project at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science. It was developed by a group of experts, researchers and practitioners from various academic centers and educational institutions in Poland (Associate Professor Wojciech Otrębski, PhD, KUL; Katarzyna Mariańczyk, PhD, KUL; Agnieszka Amilkiewicz-Marek, KUL; Katarzyna Ita Bieńkowska, PhD, The Maria Grzegorzewska University; Associate Professor Ewa Domagała-Zyśk, PhD, KUL; Beata Kostrubiec-Wojtachnio, PhD, Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre in Chełm; Beata Papuda-Dolińska, PhD, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Educational Research Institute and Prof. Ewa Pisula, PhD, University of Warsaw). A year later, as part of the above project, the following study was published *School Functional Assessment: The Course of the Process in the Aspect of Activity and Participation Assessment*. It was prepared by Associate Professor Ewa Domagała-Zyśk, PhD, KUL; Katarzyna Mariańczyk, PhD, KUL; Professor Iwona Chrzanowska, PhD, The Adam Mickiewicz University; Marzenna Czarnocka, Director of the Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre; Associate Professor Beata Jachimczak, PhD, The Adam Mickiewicz University; Associate Professor Magdalena Olempska-Wysocka, PhD, The Adam Mickiewicz University; Associate Professor Wojciech Otrębski, PhD, KUL; Beata Papuda-Dolińska, PhD, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Educational Research Institute; Karol Pawlak, PhD, Polish Council for International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and Prof. Dorota Podgórska-Jachnik, PhD, University of Łódź. In the above study, the school functional assessment process is based on the analysis of student's functioning according to the scheme provided by ICF (WHO 2001, WHO, 2009). The authors described the use of ICF in the process of school functional assessment, and the teacher's diagnostic tasks in the context of the implementation of functional diagnosis. They presented the course of school functional assessment in an educational institution and de-

terminated the importance of school in the process of functional assessment of students. The tools recommended for school functional assessment and the evaluation of the school functional assessment were also presented. The innovation and implementation project in the field of intersectoral support for children, students and families at the district level (*poviat* in Polish), i.e. the School Functional Assessment Process developed by the above team of experts, (see also Byra, 2022), currently implies the need to prepare schools and teachers for the task of carrying out the functional assessment of students in institutions and to take necessary supportive measures. The latest concept of functional diagnosis understood as "... a multifaceted process of identifying the student's resources and difficulties and the environmental factors affecting them, taking into account the analysis of functioning (based on the ICF classification, knowledge of milestones in the child's development) and a criterion diagnosis if established (based on the ICD or DSM medical classification), as well as an appropriate and constantly evaluated support program" (Bugdalski, 2024) indicates that not only psychologists, school educators and special educators are to carry out functional assessments. It can also be conducted by a teacher or tutor. Therefore, one of the basic conditions for the implementation of the education model, which considers a functional diagnosis appropriate to the needs of the child/learner, adequate support and care, and a focus on building an inclusive culture, is not only an organizational change or increasing specialist competences of the staff of institutions available to general public but, above all, a positive attitude of the community of these institutions to cooperation, and engaging work in the communities of people with diverse needs and developmental opportunities (Bugdalski, 2024).

Functional diagnosis/assessment from the perspective of students of special education and teachers – an outline of own research

The above concepts regarding functional diagnosis and school functional assessment have become a premise to present a fragment of my own research conducted as part of a larger empirical project concerning the opinions of teachers on the concept of inclusive education and the perception of the process of educating students with diverse needs in schools. The fragment of the research was related to the problem of understanding the essence of functional diagnosis and its determinants in the context of educational, care and therapeutic work with students with neurodevelopmental difficulties in institutions available to general public. The research group consisted of 28 students in the third and

fourth year of special education (major: education and rehabilitation of individuals with autism spectrum disorder) conducted at the University of Silesia in Katowice (the students started the research after completing the module *Diagnostic process in special education*, as part of which they learned about the essence of functional diagnosis) and students of postgraduate studies at the WSB Merito University (degree program: Education and therapy of individuals with autism spectrum disorder, with whom the author of this study conducted classes – *Diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders*). Thirty-six students were mainly teachers at various stages of education (from preschool education teachers and primary school teachers to secondary school teachers). Among the respondents, there were five special educators (implementing revalidation and co-organizing education in primary and secondary schools available to general public), two psychologists and four speech therapists. The remaining respondents (n=25) were teachers in primary and secondary schools (n=16) and teachers of early school and preschool education (n=9). Among the surveyed students, thirteen were trainee teachers, seventeen were contract teachers, three were appointed teachers and four were certified teachers. When enrolling in the study, the students were in the process of implementing content on functional diagnosis. A qualitative strategy was used. The method of a semi-structured, individual written interview was applied.

Below are selected written statements from teachers and students concerning their subjective understanding of functional diagnosis, its essence, characteristics, principles of implementation and crucial conditions, as seen by the study participants.

Selected written statements of the surveyed teachers

N1 (early school education teacher; promotion level – contract teacher)

... Functional assessment is about identifying the student's individual way of coping with challenges and discovering and eliminating barriers that inhibit progress.

N2 (high school teacher, English teacher; certified teacher)

In my opinion, an important element of functional diagnosis (if it is to be an effective tool) is an individual analysis of the child's problems in various situations. Entering the child's environment gives the opportunity to determine the reasons for failures. It allows you to individualize work with the child and adjust the methods of work to their abilities and needs. Then, it is important to translate them into taking action to improve the child's functioning. It is crucial to observe the child in various situations and collect a full picture of what is a problem for them and what hinders their harmonious development. The diagnosis should include a detailed description of the child's strengths to make them stronger and a description of areas for development. I believe that it is not possible to create an in-depth diagnosis based on a single source of information. These elements seem particularly important to me.

N3 (preschool education teacher; trainee teacher)

I believe an effective functional assessment is conditioned by a positive approach. Discovering the potentials, resources and abilities of the child and the environment in which they function ... focusing on the positive sides strengthens the student's self-esteem and encourages them to continue working. It is also important to the educator, who noticing the positive sides and the development of the child in terms of their strengths also works on the child's weaknesses more effectively and with greater motivation. Activating the potential of parents and the local environment results in the development of the student in various spheres.

N4 (history teacher, primary school - stage II, certified teacher)

... For the functional diagnosis to be effective, first of all, it is necessary to expand and educate everyone in the field of inclusive education and inclusion in general because everything starts with the approach. If there is cooperation between specialists, teachers, principals, parents and students, who will follow the goal of treating each other individually, with understanding and awareness, it will be easier and better for all these people. It will be easier to make an accurate diagnosis and, above all, to choose the right means and methods to support the student and parents. Of course, you cannot expect everyone to act in this way. It is about cooperation based on partnership, mutual respect and openness to new knowledge and experience. It is also worth paying attention to parents and willingness to cooperate and show great understanding. Because cooperation with parents (or rather the lack of it) is often the reason that disturbs the process of diagnosis and improvement of the child's functioning. It is necessary to develop a sense of security in them and gain trust without judging them. And above all, you have to put your heart into it, have a goal in making an appropriate diagnosis of the child to help them. Because if a child receives adequate help, they will function better at home, in an educational institution and in society in general.

N5 (Polish language teacher, special educator, teacher co-organizing education, secondary school; promotion level – appointed teacher)

Functional diagnosis should be performed by qualified specialists with knowledge and experience in a given area. Objective criteria and standards should be considered to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the results. The examination should be comprehensive, taking into account various aspects of a person's functioning, such as motor skills, cognitive, emotional skills, etc. ... Functional diagnosis is a thorough assessment and identification of the needs of students with difficulties, giving the opportunity to adapt curricula and support individual needs of students.

N6 (special educator, teacher co-organizing education [grades I-III of the primary school], promotion level – contract teacher)

Functional diagnosis in institutions is possible only if the teaching staff led by the principal is aware and convinced of its effectiveness and the need for it in the institution. Without the knowledge and willingness of teachers, this diagnosis will not make sense, it will not meet its objectives. Therefore, it will not bring any positive results and will only cause confusion. Therefore, initially, it is necessary to take care of the training of teachers and specialists. The second component is cooperation with parents and their involvement in the school diagnostic process. They should be informed and educated because without it, the process of functional diagnosis can be also difficult.

Selected written statements of the surveyed students

S1 (student with the autism spectrum and ADHD, third year of special education)

In my opinion, the diagnostic process makes sense when the diagnostician has competences such as insightful observation and the lack of superficiality in diagnosing. Recently, there has been more and more discussion about hasty diagnoses of children. Several different disorders have similar symptoms, so misdiagnoses may occur. There are also situations in which the child has temporary difficulties related to adaptation to the new environment ... There are overinterpretations related to attributing "fleeting" behaviors of the child to neurodevelopmental disorders. You should be open and investigative when observing the student!

S2 (third-year student of special education)

... Functional diagnosis is an in-depth process, it should not work based on the "zero-one" principle ... A great advantage of this method of diagnosis is the fact that it does not stigmatize the child as a 'problematic child with a disorder'.

S3 (student with the autism spectrum, fourth year of special education)

... The factors determining the quality and completeness of the functional diagnosis include improving one's own diagnostic skills because thanks to this, it is possible to influence the educational and therapeutic progress of the child. Perhaps if many more diagnosticians realized it, the situation in the lives of students and their families would improve. I believe in the metaphorical phrase that little by little does the trick. I hope that more and more children will not only receive reliable diagnoses, but also thanks to them will have a vision of a better quality of everyday life in the future.

S4 (a third-year student of special education)

In my reflections, I will try to base my thoughts on the acquired knowledge because the experience related to functional diagnosis at school is foreign to me now. I believe that attention should be paid to the significant potential of functional diagnosis, especially in the context of effective help for the child. A well-conducted diagnosis, through a thorough understanding of the child's needs and taking appropriate action, can lead to a clear improvement in their functioning. However, this involves a lot of effort on the part of the diagnostician due to the multifaceted approach to the student. It is a difficult process but not impossible.

S5 (a fourth-year student of special education)

What needs to happen to perform a functional diagnosis directly in the facilities? It is certainly necessary to change the approach of the rest of the teaching staff to the whole idea of inclusion and work among people with diverse educational needs. It is important that cooperation between teachers and special educators should take place with mutual respect and support. There is still a shortage of specialists at schools and kindergartens. I think the teaching staff will have to undergo training on the functional diagnosis of the student so that their later effects of work are as good as possible.

The analysis of the statements of the surveyed teachers and students indicates their good knowledge of the general assumptions and principles of func-

tional diagnosis. They understand the essence and the need to implement the diagnostic process based on a functional approach in different educational institutions at various levels of education. In their statements, they emphasize the need to recognize the comprehensiveness and interdisciplinarity of school diagnosis, a holistic approach, taking into account various factors and aspects of students' functioning, their extracurricular activities and the environment in which they realize these activities. They pay attention to the adequate and accurate identification of students' needs, focus on their strengths, potentials and resources and also on improving the diagnostic and therapeutic skills of diagnosticians, specialists, teachers, educators and psychologists. They accurately indicate the main characteristics of functional diagnostics, such as profiling, developability (its dynamics), focus on the rehabilitation process, prediction, non-invasiveness and processual nature. This is particularly important from the perspective of inclusive education.

In their statements, the surveyed teachers and students of special education also point to the critical determinants of the functional diagnostic process in institutions available to general public. One of them, according to the respondents, should be qualified staff who will create a specialized diagnostic team. Therefore, it will allow a reliable diagnosis based on clinical and diagnostic knowledge. Such a team should include a psychologist, a special educator, a speech therapist and optionally a physiotherapist, a sensory integration therapist, etc. Another condition indicated by the respondents should be the availability of tests and materials for diagnosis. The diagnosis should be supported by a test diagnosing development in a specific area. Therefore, the formulated diagnosis will not be based only on observation, analysis of documents, or interview. To achieve this aspect, the team must have access and appropriate qualifications to conduct tests. Another condition is teamwork and cooperation with students' parents. For the diagnosis to be effective, the team must have a coherent vision and must cooperate in the diagnosis process. Cooperation with parents and common goals regarding the diagnosis must be uniform. Another critical factor as indicated by the respondents should be the appropriate space and conditions for diagnosis. It is important that the school should find a space in which the team can diagnose the student. At the same time, such a space must be conducive to the well-being of the child.

According to the surveyed teachers and students, school functional diagnosis can bring many advantages. It can be more accurate, accurate, reliable, friendly and "adapted" to the student due to a better and more precise knowledge of specific students by teachers. During its implementation/course, it may enable observation of more behaviors and reactions in different situations. The assessment conducted in a familiar space for students, such as the institution they attend on a daily basis, will allow them to feel more comfortable,

natural and at ease so that the results may be more reliable than in the case of a diagnosis in a psychological and pedagogical counseling center. Functional diagnosis in school can contribute to better cooperation between teachers in diagnostic, therapeutic and educational work with students. It can help increase the quantity and quality of consultations with students' parents. Finally, it may contribute to reducing the phenomenon of "hiding" counseling center opinions and certificates by parents, which could allow for accelerating and improving the process of adapting the forms and methods of helping a learner/child with diverse needs.

The respondents also indicated possible disadvantages/barriers to the implementation of school functional assessment. They associated them mainly with organizational difficulties, lack of readiness of school staff to introduce changes, lack of specialists, ambiguity of specific tasks (e.g. in the case of special educators, teachers co-organizing education), a negative perception of or attitude to the idea of inclusive education and working with people with diverse educational needs, lack of sufficiently good cooperation between teachers of different subjects and other specialists working with neurodiverse students.

Functional diagnosis – aspects determining its significance and strategies for working with students with diverse educational needs – summary

Functional diagnosis can be a crucial element in educating students with diverse educational needs and, in fact, all students. It can generate effective strategies in individual work with the student, the whole class team and the group. In the context of the adequate identification of the skills and needs of all students, a functional diagnostic process seems to be extremely necessary and useful. It allows for the determination of the main elements of therapy and education. It also enables planning adjustments that meet the real needs of specific students. It allows the use of individualized tools to identify needs (e.g. needs diagrams). Due to the permanent verification, it allows for the introduction of therapeutic elements during its duration. It also allows for the modification of strategies for educational or care work, e.g. to properly build communicative situations between teachers and students or between students. However, it must be implemented based on factors that will determine its sense in school practice, especially in the context of the concept of educational inclusion, such as:

- properly implemented multi-specialist assessment of the student's level of functioning, functional school diagnosis, current diagnoses and their evaluation - reliability of diagnoses, knowledge of the etiology, mechanisms of functioning, and especially not underestimating endogenous factors, or neu-

robiological determinants (e.g. autism spectrum or ADHD), the use of differential diagnosis, proper identification of developmental, educational and social needs of neurodiverse students;

- multicontextuality – considering the assessment of student’s functioning from various sources – specialists (educators, psychologists, speech therapists, doctors [a multidisciplinary dimension of the diagnosis], but also from the student, their parents, teachers, peers; avoiding the mistake of not considering all sources of knowledge;
- versatility of approach and tools - considering various areas of child’s functioning (cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral). The tools and methods should be varied to understand the needs and potential of the student as comprehensively as possible. It will ensure the reliability of the diagnosis, eliminating a one-sided or simplified approach to the child’s situation – an adequately selected and prepared diagnostic workshop of teachers (methods, techniques, tools for collecting data on students);
- adequate methodological solutions (educational, therapeutic and care) – in relation to the identified needs of students and multi-specialist assessment of the student’s level of functioning, as well as an appropriately individualized assessment system.

The following should also be given attention:

- (informational, instrumental, emotional) support given to parents from the educational institution;
- the need for qualified educators, training of teaching staff to raise awareness of the mechanisms and determinants of the functioning of neurodiverse students;
- open and flexible use of methods and solutions by teachers at work in relations with students with diverse needs;
- noticing their own diagnostic, therapeutic, educational, personality resources by teachers – improvement and self-diagnosis of their own social and emotional skills (assertiveness, empathy, coping with stress, communication); identifying their own needs and emotions.

Regardless of the criterion (differential) diagnosis, most neurodiverse students need support in common areas, i.e. attention span, motivation (especially internal), differences in learning (different learning pace), behavior management, working time (efficiency, fatigability), assessment of students’ progress and evaluation of strategies implemented for them. These are the main common challenges in teaching children and young people, which are the basis of their functioning in the educational space and reality. Therefore, diagnostic or educational-therapeutic work strategies useful for all students are the ones that are based on mindfulness, accurate identification of the needs of all students, methodological flexibility (modifications of methods of work that do not bring

benefits), feedback, empathic listening, paying attention to non-verbal communication (emotions). These are the strategies that are eclectic, which could be verified during teacher “supervisions” that unfortunately are not commonly applied in Polish schools and kindergartens). The crucial elements of work, which could also bring success in the diagnostic process and the resulting educational and therapeutic process, include a system of motivation and reinforcement (contracts – rules with students and parents), authentic reliance on passions and interests, concise messages in the same form (multiplicity of communication channels), organization of the environment - stability and predictability, distance and humor, not judging and not taking offense at students (students feel whether they are liked), not treating the profession as self-sacrifice, support and commitment from parents, the atmosphere in the classroom and the quality of rooms.

We should bear in mind the words of Nishimoto Shimada for whom the purpose of education is to develop children’s native abilities from an early age, not to burden them with knowledge. If functional diagnosis in school is to be useful and beneficial for students, it should aim at a thorough analysis of problems and ought to establish goals conducive to the acquisition of skills by students that are essential for contemporary challenges, dynamically changing reality and the future. It should be carried out with consideration given to relationality and dialogue.

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Uwarunkowania diagnozy funkcjonalnej a strategie pracy w relacji szkolnej z uczniami ze zróżnicowanymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi – w opiniach nauczycieli i studentów pedagogiki specjalnej

Streszczenie

Diagnoza funkcjonalna staje się dziś kluczowym elementem procesu nauczania i uczenia się w szkole. Pozwala ona na identyfikację potrzeb uczniów oraz dostosowanie strategii nauczania do indywidualnych umiejętności i możliwości każdego ucznia. W celu prawidłowego przeprowadzenia diagnozy funkcjonalnej, konieczne jest uwzględnienie wielu uwarunkowań. W niniejszym artykule skoncentrowano się na analizie dotychczasowych oraz najbardziej aktualnych koncepcji dotyczących istoty, założeń, cech charakterystycznych, zasad związanych z diagnostyką funkcjonalną, które stanowią wynik wieloletniej pracy teoretycznej, praktycznej i badawczej liczego grona specjalistów zajmujących się tą problematyką. Zaprezentowano też fragment badań własnych dotyczący postrzegania diagnozy funkcjonalnej i jej uwarunkowań w obecnej rzeczywistości edukacyjnej przez czynnych nauczycieli oraz studentów kierunku pedagogika specjalna. W badaniach zastosowano strategię jakościową, posłużono się metodą wywiadu częściowo-ustrukturyzowanego, indywidualnego w formie pisemnej. W opracowaniu niniejszym zawarto też wnioski z przeprowadzonych badań, refleksje własne, a także implikacje dla praktyki pedagogicznej dotyczące czynników, które mogą sprzyjać lepszej efektywności procesu diagnostycznego, a tym samym strategiom stosowanym w pracy edukacyjno-terapeutycznej z uczniami o zróżnicowanych potrzebach w placówkach ogólnodostępnych.

Słowa kluczowe: uwarunkowania diagnozy funkcjonalnej, proces diagnostyczny, proces szkolnej oceny funkcjonalnej, strategie pracy z uczniami w placówce ogólnodostępnej, uczeń/uczennica ze zróżnicowanymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi.



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It's Not That I'm "Abnormal". Social and Emotional Experiences of Women with Autism Spectrum (AS) Related to the Diagnosis in Adulthood

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Abstract

The paper is part of a research project related to the preparation of the master's thesis of Magdalena Wala, a fifth-year student of Special Education, prepared under the scientific supervision of Dr. Sabina Pawlik. The research concerns the social and emotional experiences of women diagnosed as late as in adulthood. Compared to men, women are more likely to remain undiagnosed in childhood, thus belonging to the so-called "lost generation", i.e. people who are deprived of the opportunity to be diagnosed in childhood. One of the reasons is that women with autism spectrum (AS) have a different behavioral pattern (female autism phenotype) than men and the established diagnostic practices are focused on the basic characteristics of AS that were historically established based on the symptoms in men. The aim of the research was to learn about the social and emotional experiences of women with AS who were diagnosed in adulthood. It was associated with women's experiences before the diagnosis (related to the diagnostic process itself) and experiences after the diagnosis. The research found that women with AS in adulthood saw the value of the diagnosis in the form of increased self-knowledge, liberation from stigmatizing labels, finding their "tribe" and the possibility of receiving forms of support adequate to their condition.

Keywords: autism spectrum, female autism phenotype, diagnosis, biographical narrative interview.

Introduction

The paper presents the research on the social and emotional experiences of women with autism spectrum (AS) who were diagnosed as late as in adulthood. It is embedded in the neurodiversity paradigm, which treats autism not as a deficit or disorder but rather as an aspect of naturally occurring and desirable human variability and an essential element of identity (Straus, 2013).

Recently, there has been a significant increase in the prevalence of diagnosis of AS in adults since the diagnostic criteria have been expanded in such a way that people who may not have been diagnosed with AS in childhood or may have received a misdiagnosis can meet the current diagnostic criteria (Happé et al., 2016, p. 3469). These are usually individuals with mild symptoms who were born in the early 1990s and earlier, in whom less severe symptoms than those in autism were ignored due to the lack of diagnostic criteria (Asperger's Syndrome was included in the DSM-IV classification as late as in 1994) (Sławińska, 2014, p. 304). Women are particularly at risk of being undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Lai and Baron-Cohen found that compared to men, women remain undiagnosed, thus belonging to the so-called "lost generation", i.e. people who were deprived of the opportunity to be diagnosed in childhood (2015).

Social and emotional functioning of women with AS

According to Sarah Hendrickx, author of *Women and girls with autism spectrum disorder: Understanding life experiences from early childhood to old age*, since the beginning of the formation of the modern concept of autism spectrum disorder, there has been a general belief that there are many more men than women among individuals with autism disorders (Hendrickx, 2015, p. 17). Currently, however, it is known that the prevalence of autism in this group of people is significantly higher than previously thought. In their research on the Scottish population, Rutherford et al. (2016, p. 630) indicated that the male-to-female ratio in childhood is 5.5 boys for one girl, while among adults it is only 1.8 men for one woman. According to Aleksandra Buchholz, this may indicate that women with AS are diagnosed much later than men (Buchholz, 2021, p. 63).

One of the reasons is that women with AS have a different behavioral pattern than men, and the established diagnostic practice is focused on the basic characteristics of AS that were historically established based on the symptoms in men. Therefore, they do not necessarily reflect the areas in which women with AS behave in a different manner than men. As a result, the diagnosis of autism in women is limited to the areas in which they are most similar to men. In turn, those who do not meet the criteria for behavioral disorders typical of

men with autism are likely to remain undiagnosed (Hull et al., 2017). Compared to men, women present with less rigid behaviors and intense interests (Duvekot et al., 2017, p. 647). Their interests are not perceived as traditionally related to AS in cultural, social, or developmental contexts (Rynkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 4). They are more interested in people and relationships than objects. Their passions are mostly associated with literature, art, languages, human or animal behavior, psychology, medicine, fashion, or cosmetics (Rynkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 12). They also present with lower deficits in play and often have better imagination and a rich world of fantasy (Rynkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 3). Compared to men, women with AS are less likely to experience externalizing behaviors such as hyperactivity, impulsivity, or behavioral problems, but they are more susceptible to internalizing problems, including anxiety, depression and eating disorders (Bargiela et al., 2016, p. 3282). According to Agnieszka Rynkiewicz et al., women are characterized by a significantly greater need to enter into social relationships, make friends and be among peers than boys or men (Rynkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 3), which is often associated with the need to adapt to social requirements and mask the difficulties that arise in interpersonal relationships (Lai & Baron-Cohen, 2015). For Hull et al. (2020, p. 306), masking is considered the primary axis of the female autism phenotype. It is a strategy aimed at hiding differences and minimizing the symptoms of autism (Buchholz, 2023, p. 187). Masking can also be an individual response to stigmatization associated with autism, resulting from the discrepancy between the natural being of people with autism and the requirements of the environment (Perry et al., 2022, p. 800). The non-obvious characteristics of female autism lead to the lack of diagnosis, or incorrect/insufficient diagnosis, thus hindering or distorting the development of normal identity understood as self-acceptance of being without the need to suppress natural aspirations (Buchholz, 2023, p. 188 after Corden et al., 2021). Women with AS who are not diagnosed do not have access to adequate forms of medical, psychological, or social support. To cope with difficulties, they use many exhausting defense mechanisms, generating low self-esteem and reducing their quality of life (Buchholz, 2021, p. 68).

Methodological note

The paper is part of a research project related to the preparation of the master's thesis of Magdalena Wala, a fifth-year student of Special Education, prepared under the scientific supervision of Dr. Sabina Pawlik. The aim was to learn about the social and emotional experiences of women with AS who were diagnosed in adulthood. The main research problem was associated with how the experiences of women with AS in adulthood were formed. Specific problems

were associated with women's experiences before the diagnosis (related to the diagnostic process) and experiences after the diagnosis.

Due to the aim and nature of the research problems, the study was embedded in a qualitative research approach (Flick, 2007). The basic technique for collecting empirical data was Fritz Schütze's autobiographical narrative interview focused on the life stories and experiences of the narrators. Its aim is to obtain from an individual an account of life or some selected stages (Kaźmierska, 2016, p. 61). In accordance with the assumptions of the technique, each interview consisted of 4 stages: the beginning of the interview, stimulation to tell the story/narration, questions (resulting from doubts arising in the narrative stage and theoretical questions, the list of which had been prepared in advance) and the end of the interview (Kaźmierska, 2016, pp. 63, 64).

The sampling was non-probabilistic. Due to the unfavorable social situation of potential narrators and their unwillingness to expose themselves, the participants were selected using the snowball method (Noy, 2008, p. 330). The target group was searched mainly through social networks. The inclusion criteria were age ≥ 18 years, biological female sex and a diagnosis of AS in adulthood. Eight narrative interviews were conducted with women aged 19 to 42.

Before the interview began, the narrators were given information about the study, including voluntary participation in the research and the possibility of withdrawing at any time. They were asked to give permission to record the interview. After the end of the interview, the recording was finished, and an informal part (casual conversation) took place as a normalizing function.

The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and then the recordings were converted into text. The next step was the anonymization of the transcript, understood as the removal of specific information from the text (e.g. countries, towns, names, surnames, etc.) so that determining the identity of the participants was not possible. The research project was approved by the research ethics committee of the University of Silesia in Katowice (KEUS381/05.2023).

The analysis of the research material made it possible to divide it into parts, which were distinguished according to the chronological order of events in accordance with the stages of the narrators' lives. Another stage was related to coding, i.e. giving labels for assigning units of meaning to the information collected during the study (Konecki, 2005, p. 271).

Research results

Due to the specificity of the paper, it is impossible to present a complete analysis of the collected material. Therefore, we show only some selected fragments that we consider crucial in reflecting the social and emotional experiences of women with AS diagnosed in adulthood.

Table 1.
Main analytical categories

STAGE OF LIFE	CODES
Social and emotional experiences before diagnosis	The feeling of being weird Naughty child Education as a space of rejection and misunderstanding Building self-awareness Interest in AS Misdiagnoses
Social and emotional experiences related to the diagnosis process	Uncertainty of the diagnosis Impostor syndrome The course of diagnosis
Social and emotional experiences after the diagnosis	Affirmation and celebration Identity and belonging Explanation of the difficulties

Source: own materials

Social and emotional experiences before the diagnosis

Going back to their childhood, the narrators recalled that they often had a feeling of being different, strange, abnormal, or naughty. They felt incompatible with the surroundings. They needed to establish social relationships but could not understand why others did not reciprocate them. The comments included repetitive issues related to the experience of being misunderstood, rejected, and even encountering violence from relatives and peers. The text was literally translated from Polish into English so as not to distort the meaning. Therefore, some language inaccuracies and mistakes can be found.

I noticed from the very beginning when I was a child that something was wrong with me... I could not establish any relationships with my peers. That is why I was bullied at school. (N5)

My parents always had problems with me... I was naughty...I did not pay attention to them. I often did not listen to them when they talked to me, so they had to shout at me so that I could understand what was going on. I also often switched off, for example, as a child, because... I had my own world. (N1)

The participants did not have good memories of their school days. The school was not a safe place for them and education was associated with a strong fear. They experienced reluctance and even violence from other students. They also experienced a lack of understanding from teachers. Due to an intense fear of change and the lack of support from the environment, they decided to stay in an unfavorable environment.

I wanted to escape from the elementary school. I was also supposed to change school, but on the other hand, it was the fear of change in general because... this fear of changing the elementary school was probably greater than the fact that... they laughed at me, so in the end I stayed. (N3)

My teacher in my third year of high school told me to say who the subject of the poem was during Polish classes. And... I did not get these poems and their interpretations... I do not know... I told her that the author. And she later... started to get nervous, how come, saying that only a stupid person does not know that the fog was the subject of this poem and how I could be so stupid and so on. (N3)

Before the narrators were officially diagnosed, they had searched for the causes of their social difficulties. They needed to explain the causes of their difficulties and understand how they functioned and perceived the world.

I remember what struck me... I visited Wikipedia ... and there were various comorbidities and comorbid disorders. And I found that I had almost all of them... all these comorbidities. Well, there were ... OCD, depression, drowsiness, ADHD, different ... tics and so on... It struck me that there could indeed be something to it. (N6)

Somehow, I always felt different and I always had some small things and there were so many of these small things that I felt somewhere under my skin that there was some big thing that connected them. But I never knew what it was. (N7)

One thing was connected with my stereotypes, already fixed somewhere in my head. Another thing was related to the realities that I saw not to be so dark at all. Therefore, I started reading about it. I did a basic AQ test on the Internet. [The AQ test is a screening tool in the diagnosis of AS. It can be used by adolescents and adults as well as parents on behalf of their children. It was developed by Simon Baron-Cohen with the Cambridge Autism Research Centre. The aim of the test is to quickly select people for the formal diagnostic process associated with AS.] (N7)

The study participants explored their knowledge about AS. It became a special interest for them at some point in their lives. They mentioned that their sources of knowledge were books, the Internet, groups on social networks, or self-advocate blogs. Gaining knowledge about autism led them towards their diagnosis.

Reading about autism spectrum became such a passion of mine. So strong that I wanted to spend every moment on it. In fact, I wanted to find out as much as possible ... I feel fantastic that I finally found myself in something. I mean, I finally read papers that are about me, and I read books that are about me. It is beautiful because all the material about autism spectrum, especially in women, is simply a story about me. (N7)

Before the women were correctly diagnosed with AS, they had often received misdiagnoses (e.g., behavioral and emotional disorders) or insufficient diagnoses (e.g., depressive disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).

I was admitted to a psychiatric facility twice when I was in the orphanage... And that is where I was diagnosed with behavioral and emotional disorders... At the time, I thought it could have been [autism spectrum] but [it was] misdiagnosed. (N1)

I have somewhere a psychological diagnosis that was made many, many years ago because in junior high school, I may have been 12 years old when a psychologist diagnosed me with adolescent depression. (N2)

I had, so to speak, three approaches to the diagnosis in three different places. In the first one, they said that I did not have it and that I only had ADD. In another place, they said that due to my experiences in childhood, they could not clearly diagnose me. And it was in the third place that I got a final diagnosis. (N5)

Social and emotional experiences related to the diagnosis process

The diagnostic process of some women was associated with significant uncertainty and the fear mainly related to the fact that their assumptions about their condition would not be confirmed. Several narrators directly indicated that they were accompanied by the impostor syndrome (that is the feeling that they "did not deserve" a diagnosis and deceived themselves and others by wasting time and money).

I had...the impression that they would not find me to be autistic. (N6)

I was really afraid that it would turn out it was not ... I mean I was really afraid that at that moment the psychologist ... would directly say: "No... you are just abnormal. You have made it all up". ... It was a very strong fear. (N7)

Somewhere in the back of my head ... the impostor syndrome in my case was just like that ... Well, I was just afraid that I would spend the money on nothing, right ... It was also fine for others because denying myself and all these symptoms was and ... is all the time. (N2)

Among the study participants, some were very certain of the diagnosis, and the diagnostic process was only a formality for them. The diagnosis was only a formal confirmation of being diagnosed with AS.

Was I afraid? Rather not... I rather thought ... that it was more than likely. (N1)

I went for a diagnosis when I was sure I was on the spectrum. So, it was more like "Why did it last so long? Give me this paper!" (N4)

The diagnostic process was different for each narrator. There were situations when the diagnosis was made unprofessionally and resembled more the diagnosis of a child than of an adult.

Well, I had different tasks. I just got different tasks, which sometimes even surprised me. Well, for example, I had ... God, yes, children have such tasks ... they have to put in shapes, right, into some molds and so on ... I also had a task to simply describe a picture ... (N6)

In some participants, however, the diagnostic process was more age-appropriate and in line with the standards of adult diagnosis. An important part included the interviews with informants, usually a parent or parents, whose task was to provide reliable and essential information necessary to confirm the diagnosis.

I did a test at the psychiatrist's ... an Australian one? I don't know ... she gave me something to fill in and later ... First, my mother had it ... and then I had it with a psychiatrist. Next, I had a meeting to take an IQ test. After this test, I had an appointment with a speech therapist. (N3)

Social and emotional experiences after the diagnosis

The participants willingly shared the information about the diagnosis. They did not consider it shameful. It was not regarded as a stigma or a stigmatizing attribute but rather some form of relief, explanation, and even a reason to celebrate with her loved ones in the case of one of them.

It is nothing embarrassing for me ... On the contrary, right after I got that I was on the spectrum, I generally told everyone who wanted to listen. (N4)

When I got the diagnosis, I immediately threw a party. ... I made the cake ... the cake with a question mark. Now I think it is quite funny, but ... it was a beautiful event. I have very good memories of it. And I did a gender reveal¹ - meaning I gathered everyone. I said, "Well, we are here because I got a psychological diagnosis" and I said, "I am autistic!" And they were all shocked. (N7)

The diagnosis gave the women a new identity, a sense of community, belonging, and not being alone with their problems. It gave access to an autistic community, where it is possible to obtain answers to crucial questions and support in difficult or crisis situations.

I feel that many people have the same problems, and I am not alone ... For a limited group of people, it is normal, and they have it too and it is cool that, for example, I do not know ... I can turn to someone [and] do something to talk it over with someone. (N3)

And also ... a lot of support groups. When I have a problem, it is often better for me to consult people who are on the spectrum on how they see it than. For example ... look for it in some textbooks or some other books and so on. (N1)

The diagnosis provided the participants with an answer to the source of their difficulties, which they had experienced from an early age. It set them free from the burden of being weird or abnormal. Becoming aware of the source of the problems reduced anxiety. It allowed them to accept their condition. It also gave valuable tips on how they could work on their difficulties.

¹ Gender reveal party is a pregnancy party whose main theme is to reveal the sex of the child to family, relatives and friends.

All in all, it is nice that I got this diagnosis because I know what is wrong with me and why I stand out from everyone. It is a kind of a starting point that it OK. It is because I have this autism and as if ... I can work on it to improve a little in this area, to ... fit in a bit ... It is not like you are ... abnormal, this is a disease entity and you can work with it somehow. That was cool. (N3)

What did this diagnosis give me? Well, first of all, it gave me peace of mind ... that I do not have schizophrenia, I ... am simply different, right? I do not think I am worse. It is just hard for me sometimes because ... I have the awareness of the existence that I am on the spectrum. (N1)

Conclusion

We conducted biographical and narrative interviews with eight women with AS who were diagnosed in early to middle adulthood to find out how their social and emotional experiences were shaped before, during, and after the diagnosis of AS.

The study showed that women had struggled with difficulties in everyday life before the diagnosis without knowing the source. Lack of awareness of the autistic etiology of their behaviors meant that they used labels taken from the "non-autistic" world to explain them, defining themselves as strange, naughty, abnormal, or mismatched. They considered their behavior pathological, which had an impact on the formation of a constructive image of themselves (Buchholz, 2021, p. 62).

Before obtaining a final diagnosis, women strongly needed to know and understand the reasons for their differences. They had searched for the explanation of their difficulties in the available literature, Internet sources and social media. Before they were given a proper diagnosis of AS, they had been exposed to incorrect and insufficient diagnoses. According to Sarah Bargiela et al., the phenomenon of misdiagnoses reflects specific features of the female phenotype, which are not captured by gender-insensitive diagnostic tools and features of diagnostic systems in a particular country (Bargiela et al., 2016, p. 3290).

Before the diagnostic process, the narrators had been afraid that they would not be given the diagnosis, they had misjudged their difficulties and had overinterpreted the behavior. They were accompanied by the impostor syndrome as a negative consequence of long-term masking (Buchholz, 2023, p. 188). Obtaining a formal diagnosis was a breakthrough for them (Pawlik, 2019). They accepted it with relief and even satisfaction. Paradoxically, the diagnosis did not mean another labeling for them. It was seen as a release from the label they had previously had (being strange, abnormal or defective) (Buchholz, 2021; Pawlik, 2019). Due to the diagnosis, women gained a sense of belonging. They found their "tribe" (Buchholz, 2021, p. 62, after Campbell, 2018). It gave them access to an autistic community where it is possible to obtain answers to questions and

support. The diagnosis also proved helpful in the process of unmasking, i.e. taking control over the masking strategy, which in turn supports the formation of authentic identity.

To conclude, women pay high social and emotional costs related to not being diagnosed or misdiagnosed, which limits the chances of receiving early medical, psychological, or social support for this group of people (Buchholz, 2021, p. 69). It also deprives them of the opportunity to benefit from the identification with a group of people with similar characteristics. Women with a late diagnosis of AS definitely see the value of the diagnosis in the form of increased self-knowledge, liberation from stigmatizing labels, finding their “tribe” and the possibility of receiving forms of support adequate to their condition.

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To nie jest tak, że jestem „nienormalna”.

Doświadczenia społeczno-emocjonalne kobiet z zaburzeniami ze spektrum autyzmu związane z diagnozą w dorosłości

Streszczenie

Prezentowane badania stanowią część projektu badawczego związanego z przygotowaniem pracy magisterskiej Magdaleny Wali, studentki V roku pedagogiki specjalnej, przygotowanej pod opieką naukową dr Sabiny Pawlik. Dotyczą doświadczeń społeczno-emocjonalnych kobiet, które swoją diagnozę otrzymały dopiero w dorosłości. Kobiety częściej niż mężczyźni pozostają w dzieciństwie niezdiagnozowane, należąc do tzw. „pokolenia straconych”, czyli osób pozbawionych możliwości otrzymania diagnozy w dzieciństwie. Jedną z przyczyn takiego stanu rzeczy jest fakt, że kobiety w spektrum autyzmu reprezentują odmienny od mężczyzn profil behawioralny (tzw. żeński fenotyp autyzmu), a ustalone praktyki diagnostyczne koncentrują się na podstawowych cechach zaburzeń ze spektrum autyzmu, które zostały historycznie ustalone na podstawie objawów pojawiających się u mężczyzn. Badania miały na celu poznanie doświadczeń społeczno-emocjonalnych kobiet w spektrum autyzmu, które swoją diagnozę otrzymały w dorosłości. Odnoszą się do doświadczeń kobiet poprzedzających diagnozę, tych, które wiążą się z samym procesem diagnostycznym oraz doświadczeń po otrzymaniu diagnozy. Ukazały, że kobiety, u których zdiagnozowano autyzm w dorosłości dostrzegają wartość otrzymanej diagnozy w postaci wzrostu samowiedzy, wyzwolenia ze stygmatyzujących etykiet, odnalezienia „swojego plemienia” i wreszcie możliwości otrzymania adekwatnych do ich kondycji form wsparcia.

Słowa kluczowe: zaburzenie ze spektrum autyzmu, fenotyp autyzmu u kobiet, diagnoza, wywiad biograficzny.



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Interdisciplinarity, Disability and Inclusion: Knowing to Educate

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Abstract

This contribution delves into the institution of interdisciplinarity, in the light of Cognitive Motor Training, through an exploration of epistemic devices to reflect on issues relating to interdisciplinarity, disability, inclusion and the construct of Knowing to educate. The aim of the research is to reflect: a) on the web of complexity that supports inclusion and scientific evolution; b) on how, epistemologically, the complex epistemological process is vitalised; c) on narrating how transdisciplinarity combines neuro-activation, Cognitive Motor Training and Inclusion through the aphorism of "Knowing to educate". In particular, the need for a complex epistemic substratum emerges to dynamize transdisciplinarity in the inclusive dimensions inherent to the humanization process.

Keywords: interdisciplinarity; transdisciplinarity; neuron activation; cognitive motor training; inclusion.

1. Introduction to interdisciplinarity

The problem inherent to the definition and organization of knowledge appears to be difficult to resolve in human education. Through Morin's thought (Crispiani & Pellegrini, 2004, p. 97) we derive the fundamental paradigms that can act as a reference for redefining the position of the school with respect to contemporary civilization.

Morin highlights the issues ignored by the contemporary scientific panorama and derives an approach to knowledge and educational teaching by defining the paradigms necessary for the epistemological platform:

- a) the biological and anthropological foundation of the sciences;
- b) the ecological, global and contextual approach to knowledge;
- c) metadisciplinary relations (Morin, 2000, p. 124);
- d) introspection as a process of conscious evolutionary autonomy;
- e) the uniduality of the mind;
- f) understanding being, existence and life.

In light of the facts unfolding in reality, I believe that scientists, through a series of innovations and mainly through the ongoing ecological transition (Pellegrini, 2023, p. 7), are attempting to make up for the educational demand that contingent reality requires. However, any modification implemented by it is implemented on the basis of the same cognitive palimpsest, sharpening the specialist and technocratic culture, which in this argument is included in the complexist perspective.

Starting from a conscious vision of the context surrounding me, I maintain that the implementation of complexity theory (Morin, 2007, p. 64) constitutes the global and ecological approach through which to redefine the entire structure of knowledge and the pedagogical debate that it suits.

The following aims to outline the fundamental problems that affect the globality of training resources and which in the author are configured in the possible relationships that can be implemented within the triad "mind – culture – society" (Morin, 2007, p. 111), for introduce not only questions inherent in a specialized manner to teaching or epistemology, but to get an idea of what complexity is and what culture represents in this also complex reality.

The theme is configured on the basis of a global and progressive introduction to complexity, which is outlined both in a diachronic and synchronic sense, until reaching the heart of the discussion. This explanatory method implemented by me has the dual purpose of understanding the genesis and evolution of complexity theory in a contextual and global manner and of giving a vision of epistemology and pedagogy, also addressed on the basis of an ecological, global and contextual. This distances itself from a finalistic and immediate solution of knowledge, but introduces us to a paradigmatic, planning vision of man, as it does not intend to impart a quantitative movement on the learning-teaching process, but on the contrary the epistemologist of complexity intends humanize it, that is, create knowledge adequate to the bio -anthropological rhythm of all living things.

With E. Morin the great problems reopen in a plurality of areas including the epistemological and epistemological one with planetary repercussions, since they affect the plurality of aspects of man, such as:

- the relationship between philosophy and science, between heart and mind, between ideal and reality;
- the unity and complexity of knowledge;
- the processing of thought;
- disciplinary reports;
- the relationship between the observer and the observed;
- the density of education and teaching;
- the structuring of knowledge;
- renewed way of conducting scientific work.

Therefore the study I conducted has the great aim of reconsidering the entire cognitive horizon and pedagogy in light of the complexity of this proposal.

With the intention of offering an option to the organization of the cognitive system, through the thought of E. Morin I outline a series of purposes and perspectives outlined by him, which contribute to the aforementioned reorganization, such as:

- raise awareness of the present abstract and fragmentary cognitive modality, no longer adequate for the global context;
- understand relationships by revealing their logic and the connections that characterize them;
- introduce the renewed concept of understanding;
- introduce us to complex reality.

Therefore I undertake to highlight, reveal and interpret the "new humanism" thought of by E. Morin, which invasively involves pedagogy, teaching, disciplines, science and culture (Pellegrini, 2023, p. 14).

2. Challenges and prospects

Interdisciplinarity (Morin, 2007, pp. 217-221) is a thought perceived by scientists as an important perspective for addressing the complex challenges that characterize contemporary society (Smith et al., 2018, p. 34). This is representative of a human propensity aimed at inclusion, as a process that aims to actively and fully involve individuals affected by diversity, becoming an ethical and social imperative (Jones, 2016, pp. 567-579). However, the ways of plurality used to promote inclusion remain a topic of keen interest and heated debate in academic and professional circles. Interdisciplinarity refers to the collaboration between different disciplines in order to integrate knowledge, perspectives and methodologies to address complex problems (Klein, 2010, p. 231-325). On the other hand, inclusion is about creating environments that welcome and value diversity in all its forms, promoting equity and mutual respect (Thomas, 1995). Exploring the connections between interdisciplinarity and inclusion can lead to

new perspectives and innovative practices that address inequalities and promote social well-being (Anderson & Meyer, 2017).

One possible strategy to promote interdisciplinarity and inclusion is the adoption of integrated approaches that contextually combine theory, research and practice (Gupta, 2019). For example, educational programs that incorporate experiential interdisciplinary projects can provide students with opportunities for authentic learning and collaboration (Banks et al., 2008). At the same time, establishing organizational policies that foster diversity and equity can create inclusive practice environments that promote creativity and innovation (Choi & Rainey, 2010).

3. The horizon of meaning: Knowing to educate

This research is preparing to follow the paths of inclusion according to a transdisciplinary approach precisely through the eyes of Pedagogy, which in turn develops in behavioral science, reflecting on a multiplicity of critical elements that affect the scientific and professional panorama, as well as civic attention to generate enabling practices on the basis of shared and widespread values: humanity is committed to seeking ways to encourage the self-paced interactive mode for the self-activation of behavior.

Therefore, scientific evolution and its multidisciplinary expansion are sensitive to the discovery, treatment, maintenance and transformation of behavior through neuroactivation.

A set of tensions has always regulated knowledge, but particularly in this phase, scientific thought reflects on entirely epistemological questions.

They are problems that concern the definition and delimitation of the working domain of knowledge and its purposes, that is, of the purposes and methods of research and of the founding paradigms, of language, which is one of the weakest areas of pedagogy, of the terms of scientific and literature accreditation and other factors that constitute the epistemological status.

Scientific innovations, as we have also seen in recent years, appear very pressing, as does epistemological reflection. If we take the DSM-5 as a reference, we see that from that phase, therefore from the early nineties to today, there has been a continuous re-selection or conceptual and lexical re-reading of many problems.

We observe concepts that are still unstable and in movement - think of the concept of neurodevelopment, of the distinction between phonological and phonetic, of the distinctions between integration and inclusion: they are all lexicon, that is, they are all terms that testify to today's epistemological tension.

The same tensions concern the paradigm of education. Education is a concept, a lexicon and a semantic area that has its own history in humanity, but which also combines this with a definitional fragility. Starting very clearly from the second half of the twentieth century, but with antecedents dating back to Itard JM (Crispiani, 2019, p. 19) and then to the nineteenth century, education has expressed a series of evolutionary trends of which two seem to us to be the most interesting.

The first trend is professionalization, that is, the fact that education beyond school has become a job with a strong professional identification for many people.

The other trend is the expansion of one's domain in the sense that education from the ethical, civil or military formation of the person has expanded its boundaries and today the discussion also arises in terms of qualification, therapy, training, didactics, training, consultancy and mentoring.

The phenomenon itself makes it evident, therefore it becomes evident if we consider the dominant feature of the helping relationship, it constitutes the element and the lexical formula, the module around which today it is agreed to recognize or lead education. Therefore education fundamentally as a "helping relationship" (Crispiani, 2019, p. 9). It is interesting to observe how in most educational, re-educational and rehabilitative treatments, treatments of an educational nature are actually carried out, that is, treatments based on the helping relationship.

The vast majority of treatments for the Autism Spectrum, Fragile We therefore observe a series of pushes towards a new structure that we can summarize in indicators. Meanwhile, a general affirmation of educational action, today society reserves great expectations towards educational treatments. On the other hand, the expansion of education which concerns human behavior in all phases of life.

Another trend is the professionalization of educational practices which are no longer attributable solely to parents and teachers, but to a range of professionals in a trans-professional structure.

At the origin of this phenomenon we also see a strong reinforcement of skills on human behavior, that is, the professional today is an expert in human behavior.

The educationalist is no longer indebted to knowledge from other qualifications. It knows human behavior and the diversity of human behavior.

Morin (Morin, 2000) gave us of transdisciplinarity. Pedagogy, as a behavioral science, has a transdisciplinary relationship with other sciences.

A further important marker that stands out as a science and as a profession, one cannot exist without the other because we need to "know to educate" (Crispiani, 2019, p. 9). Not only does considering Pedagogy the Science of Education and the Science of Human Behavior produce two strong professional gains. On the one hand, greater scientific competence, on the other, greater autonomy in treatments, i.e. adherence to explicitly educational enabling treatments.

The perspective is therefore towards effective and clinical habilitation procedures based on knowledge of human processes and therefore on a biological perspective.

The biological perspective cannot fail to deal with neuroscience and the array of knowledge and problems that these highlight today.

In reality, this closeness to biology and neuroscience has precedents in the history of pedagogy which have been present in Italy, but also in other European countries starting from Austria and the central European area and France. They can be reunited with Biopedagogy (Fraunfelner, 1994), Clinical Pedagogy (Crispiani, 2001), Neurodidactics and Neuropedagogy (Rivoltella, 2012).

It is in this area, of biopedagogy and neuroscience, that for some time now the experience of the Itard Network and the practices of Cognitive Motor Training (Crispiani, 2015) have focused attention on the Institute of Neuroactivation (Crispiani & Palmieri, 2023).

4. Transdisciplinarity and Cognitive Motor Training

Neuroactivation is a category of neurobiological nature which in pedagogical settings is considered as a neurobiological process with educational activation. What does this mean? It means that this neurobiological process that physiologists and neurophysiologists see as neuroactivation can be stimulated by electrical instruments and probably by drugs, but they allow an educational activation. This can happen precisely through Cognitive Motor Training.

A complex range of neurodevelopmental disorders are affected by this phenomenon of neuroactivation. They are those phenomena of individual cognition that manifest diversity and disorganization affecting cerebral physiology, i.e. normal neural functioning.

These are biological conditions in which fluidity, i.e. the constancy of movement and the order of cortical flows, are disordered beyond conditions of brain damage.

These are therefore dysfunctions of a qualitative nature, i.e. not connected to structural damage and with operational dysfunctions, therefore also of a qualitative nature.

In reality we observe a discontinuity of the conduct and a slow cerebral viability. The slow cerebral viability means that neuroactivation has moments of hesitation.

The causes of this condition of slow neuroactivation can be electrochemical, brain anomalies, then neuronal migrations, anomalies of inter-hemispheric exchanges, anomalous self-regulation processes and anomalous information processing.

The phenomenon of neurological disorganization which is the counterpart or opposite, the antagonist of the best-known concept of neurological organization. Neurological disorganization is present in Dyspraxia, Neurodevelopmental Disorders and many other disorders.

The main manifestations are found in executive slowness, in disorder, in the slow incipit, i.e. the first start of action, i.e. in neurological randomization, in functional discontinuity from which the phenomena of distraction and inattention, from tiredness, from cognitive confusion and overall from dyspraxia. From Crispiani's research (Crispiani, 2015) we find an interest in the lack of settlement of lateral dominance, believing that the failure to stabilize lateral dominance is one of the causes of neurological disorganization and the syndromes connected to it.

Now I express one last concept which concerns the development of neuroactivation, through a process of cognitive and motor enabling that we define as Cognitive Motor Training.

What is meant by neuroactivation ? We mean a set of brain processes that concern the speeding up of the incipit. Some neurophysiological studies have highlighted how there are many correlates in dyspraxia, obviously motor and cognitive, among which the slowness of the incipit stands out. A series of dynamic vectors favor neuroactivation, the rapidization of the incipit, the acceleration of overall action and the strengthening of the inter-hemispheric exchange, which is produced with the lateral and rotatory, cruciate and rotator motor patterns, because the cruciate patterns and rotational patterns require an acceleration of the exchange between the right and left lobes.

Another important vector of neuroactivation is speeding up self-regulation and self-inhibition. All our behavior is given in its manifestation by self-regulation processes, by self-control processes, but also by self-inhibition, let's try to imagine when self-inhibition is slow. Recovering a formula dear to De Ajuriaguerra (De Ajuriaguerra, 1953) we can say that neuroactivation practices favor the improvement of cerebral harmony, also shared by Villanova and Lacerenza (Pellegrini, 2023, pp. 15–17).

The concept of cerebral harmony is combined with the principles of neuroactivation, since this union turns on the active principle that makes it effective, such as working on the wholeness or neuroactivating all functions, from motor to perceptive, to emotional, to social, to communicative, to thinking to activate them in fluidity but not in speed: the closest indicator of fluidity is the constancy of action.

Another indicator is intensity. The treatments according to the Crispiani Method are not slow, not playful and not with many pauses, but they are intense and work on the sequentiality of space and time and are therefore combined with finalized actions. To give you an example, not a motor scheme as an end in itself, but a finalized motor scheme such as throwing a ball. Finally, all these

practices are erected and conducted by a basic motricity, which can be built on a motor sequence, but also by a plurality of simultaneous sequences in the manner of a multitasking process.

The last of the concepts concerns the treatment that operates with an organization process that is in trouble and finds itself in a condition of disorganization with respect to which the Crispiani Method works in favor of the reorganization and that is the re-acceleration and position of linearity for the overcoming the randomization of cortical flows through Cognitive Motor Training.

Cognitive Motor Training is a transdisciplinary and therapeutic approach that integrates physical exercises with cognitive tasks to improve motor and cognitive functions. Recent studies show that this type of training can bring significant improvements in motor skills, memory, attention and executive functions. Its effectiveness has been demonstrated in a variety of populations, including the elderly, patients with neurological and athletic disorders, constituting an important profiling of treatment, life plan and inclusion.

5. Conclusions

In summary, the transdisciplinarity that pervades the enabling and professional approach is constitutive of an approach that by connecting disciplinary structures offers ample possibilities for addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges of our era (Taylor, 2014). However, to maximize their impact, it is therefore necessary to develop integrated approaches that are sensitive to the context and needs of the communities involved (Jones & Miles, 2020). Only through collective and collaborative engagement can we fully realize the transformative potential of transdisciplinarity and inclusion in promoting global well-being (Johnson, 2021). The problem of the certainty of inclusive practices and the definition of knowledge appears to be difficult to definitively resolve in education. Instead, it is essential to put into circulation the issues ignored by the contemporary scientific panorama to derive an approach to knowledge and educational teaching through the definition of the paradigms necessary for the epistemological platform:

- a) the biological and anthropological foundation of the sciences;
- b) the ecological, global and contextual approach to knowledge;
- c) metadisciplinary relations ;
- d) introspection as a process of conscious evolutionary autonomy;
- e) the uniduality of the mind;
- f) understanding being, existence and life (Pellegrini, 2023, p. 13).

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Interdyscyplinarność, niepełnosprawność i inkluzja: wiedza w służbie edukacji

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł analizuje instytucję interdyscyplinarności w kontekście Treningu Poznawczo-Motorycznego, wykorzystując narzędzia epistemiczne do refleksji nad zagadnieniami związanymi z interdyscyplinarnością, niepełnosprawnością, włączeniem oraz koncepcją „Wiedzieć, aby edu-

kować". Celem badania jest refleksja nad: a) złożoną siecią, która wspiera włączenie i ewolucję naukową; b) epistemologicznymi aspektami ożywiania złożonego procesu poznawczego; c) sposobem, w jaki transdyscyplinarność łączy neuroaktywację, Trening Poznawczo-Motoryczny i włączenie, wyrażonym aforyzmem „Wiedzieć, aby edukować”. W szczególności podkreślono potrzebę istnienia złożonego podłoża epistemicznego, które umożliwi dynamizację transdyscyplinarności w wymiarze inkluzywnym, nieodłącznie związanym z procesem humanizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: interdyscyplinarność; transdyscyplinarność; neuroaktywacja; trening poznawczo-motoryczny; włączenie.



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Interinstitutional Support and Deinstitutionalization of Social Services for Individuals with Disabilities as a Context for Inclusive Education

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Abstract

The article shows two seemingly contradictory trends in the organization of social services for people with disabilities: strengthening and improving the functioning of institutions that provide support through interinstitutional cooperation and deinstitutionalization of these services, considered a priority in the social policy. However, they do not have to be treated as mutually exclusive. The aim of the article is to familiarize educators with the concept and assumptions of the deinstitutionalization process – which is poorly recognized in the educational environment, and the complementary (and, contrary to appearances, not contradictory) processes of (neo)institutionalization and reinstitutionalization. Although deinstitutionalization does not directly concern the educational sector, it is considered both a goal and a means of contemporary social policies, shaping the realities of community support for students with disabilities as well as for schools implementing inclusive education. The article presents innovative solutions that combine in cooperation institutions and formal and informal support (Support Circles / School in Support Circles, 3D Cooperation, Intersectoral Support Model).

Keywords: social support, inclusion, cooperation, deinstitutionalization, normalization.

Introduction

The inspiration to write this article was the nationwide project "Intersectoral Support Model" (*pol.* Model Wsparcia Międzysektorowego – MWM), coordinated by the University of Silesia (<https://mwm.us.edu.pl/>), which develops new solutions for providing social support to children and youth at risk of developmental issues, as well as their families. The project seems crucial for the further development of inclusive education in Poland for many reasons, but primarily for its practical application of the principle that inclusive education cannot be considered without a vision of a broader, inclusive society. This is understood as a direction of transition through inclusive education towards a more inclusive society (NCSE, 2024), but also as the utilization of social inclusive mechanisms and institutions to support schools in meeting the diverse needs of students. In practice, *"a school is not a 'lonely island' on the local map of institutions and its problems - e.g. attempts to meet the challenges related to inclusive education - should and can be solved based on support obtained from local resources"* (Jachimczak and Podgórska-Jachnik, 2023, p.75). The MWM project aimed, among other things, to better utilize the potential of aid institutions operating within various government departments and sectors by creating conditions for their functional connections, i.e., interinstitutional cooperation to support children with diverse developmental and educational needs and their families.

In recent years, there have been attempts to join forces in supporting people at risk of social exclusion, including: people with disabilities, which is expressed, among others, in the popularity of concepts such as "support networks", "support circles", or more broadly: "supportive environment". This brings closer the functional connections of special pedagogy with social pedagogy, which has long been dealing with the relationship between the individual and the environment and its impact on human development. What is also appreciated - following the Polish pioneer of this topic, Helena Radlińska - is the possibility of pedagogically shaping this environment so that it serves people best, in accordance with the adopted values and educational concepts (Witkowski, 2014). Aiming to better shape this environment, taking into account the needs of people and groups at risk of social exclusion, educators and representatives of other professions that offer psychosocial support strive to use the best mechanisms and practices of professionalization and institutionalization of support. However, they encounter a certain trend that seems to be directed in the opposite direction: the idea and process of deinstitutionalization, concerning, among others, the method of providing support to people with disabilities. Moreover, deinstitutionalization is considered a priority in contemporary social policies, and even a certain mechanism of real pressure, which results, for example, in the inability to finance projects strengthening institutions when the programs are intended to develop

non-institutional alternatives (e.g. developing community care services instead of co-financing nursing homes). This apparent - according to the author - clash creates space for reflection also on the theoretical and practical aspects of inclusive practices.

Combining the Efforts and Activities of Aid Institutions and (New) Institutionalism

The search for model solutions in the field of interdepartmental, intersectoral and interinstitutional activities is also visible as a trend in social policy in recent years. The formal basis for such solutions lies in the implementation of departmental guidelines and obligations arising from the applicable laws. However, the context of this trend is much broader, as it is an increasingly desirable response to the so-called phenomenon of siloing in addressing social problems, which leads to the disorganization of support and inefficient use of existing resources.

The concept of institution itself is multifaceted and defined in various ways in law, political science, economics, anthropology and sociology. The most general dictionary definition is "*an organization established on the basis of some regulations to conduct specific activities*" (*Wielki Słownik Języka Polskiego, s.a.*), which indicates the formal and legal nature of the institution. Institutions that provide support and assistance to people with disabilities covered by this article are usually established to solve certain precisely defined matters, e.g. those related only to health, economic, legal, educational, vocational rehabilitation, employment problems, and problems with support in daily activities, everyday life, in educational difficulties, in preventing violence, etc. This list can be extended further, and in practice it means that people with disabilities and their families often find themselves in so-called multi-problem situations that are complex and unique in their complexity. It is rarely possible to receive help in such situations from a single place (one institution), and the scale of needs in this regard is very large, often with social expectations exceeding the capacity to meet them.

Combining efforts and activities of aid institutions is a manifestation of rationalization of the use of social resources in the field of social support. Cooperation of aid institutions in response to real problems of the environment and unmet needs of people and groups falls within the research area of the so-called new institutionalism (Bodnieks, 2020) - especially in terms of the rational choice theory (issues of interdependence and effective cooperation - Immergut, 1998) and sociological institutionalism (analysis of the impact of institutions on individual causal entities - Hall and Taylor, 1996). New institutionalism is an area of interdisciplinary social studies (mainly with the participation of researchers in political science, economics, organizational behaviour and sociology), with dif-

ferent theoretical inspirations and different methodologies, but with a common denominator: interest in the role of institutions in social, economic and political processes (Pieliński, 2013). The inevitable interpenetration of these processes results in increased interest in managerial institutional logic also in the area of education and social welfare, in creating space for social inclusion.

A broad definition of institutional logics defines "socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and principles by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008: p. 101). According to the authors, the perspective of institutional logics allows for conducting research into the changes, complexity and variability of institutional practices. But it seems that the opposite is also true: the perspective of broadly understood social change allows us to search for new patterns of institutional logics (action models) for the implementation of new ideas, concepts, social policies (various forms of macro pressure). The implementation of the idea of social inclusion seeks such logics and the possibility of improving the existing institutions and their cooperative practices, and neo-institutionalism may be a source of inspiration in this regard.

New social concepts, new ideas - including inclusive education and the broader inclusion movement in society - also require new institutions: new mechanisms for achieving goals and effectively meeting the needs of the community; new organizations based on new institutional logics. This requires going beyond what is commonly associated with the institution as a public establishment. The above definition of an institution is so ambiguous that it may indicate institutions that may have different sources of legitimacy, power and identity; their size and degree of formalization vary; various bases of norms, strategies, internal organization; various mechanisms of economic control and reinforcement, etc. (Powell and Bromley, 2015). Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) mention in this context six social meta-institutions that are completely different in nature. These are: the market, the corporation (enterprise), jobs (professions), the state (with its offices), family and religions (religious organizations). Referring to this set is essential for understanding how various entities can be considered institutions. In the context of further considerations on deinstitutionalization, particular attention is given to the family (nuclear family, including marriage) as legally sanctioned forms of institutions. Additionally, it seems that this need not be an exhaustive list. Each social sector is characterized by a distinct, specific logic that shapes its material practices and organizational forms, which crystallize into various institutional forms (Powell and Bromley, 2015). Some of these may eventually reach the level of metainstitutions (e.g., non-governmental organizations).

Therefore, if we treat institutions very broadly, as specific management structures, their emergence - including completely new models and categories of institutions - is a manifestation of the community's responsiveness to its own needs in a changing world, which is aptly reflected in the words of Marek Krajewski:

Institutionalization is the addition of importance and burden on actions that might otherwise not survive. Institutionalization is therefore a social decision to let a phenomenon live, enables it to be embedded in the world, and allows it to maintain its continuity and duration. In this way, mutual reinforcement occurs: society adds meaning to the phenomenon through its institutionalization, and the strengthened phenomenon begins to have an even greater impact on society, becoming a point of reference, an azimuth when making choices, a context for the questions asked, and finally - a model (Krajewski, 2020, pp. 5-6).

Institutionalization is, therefore, primarily *"the social consolidation of a value, a fact, a custom important for the survival and development of a given community"* (Słownik Języka Polskiego, 1997-2024). Institutionalization is, therefore, primarily "the social consolidation of a value, a fact, a custom important for the survival and development of a given community" (Dictionary of the Polish Language, 1997-2024). This process progresses, according to Olsen, in three dimensions: 1) through increasing clarity and agreement on rules of conduct; 2) through a strengthening consensus in describing, explaining, and justifying emerging principles; 3) through an increasing number of shared concepts of what is considered a resource in various environments and who should have access to and control over them (Olsen, 2010, p. 127). Institutionalization is a rational and socially important process, which cannot be forgotten when considering the opposite process – namely, deinstitutionalization.

Deinstitutionalization and normalization

On the other hand, deinstitutionalization is an idea that sets the direction for the development of social services, implemented in the contemporary social policies of European Union countries (Šiška and Beadle-Brown, 2020), including in Poland. Deinstitutionalization is considered the third Great Change in contemporary social policy—following decentralization and partial demonopolization (Grewiński, Lizut, and Rabiej, 2024). However, many questions and misunderstandings have arisen around this concept, as it is commonly interpreted literally as a mandate to eliminate institutions, or at least as a process that negatively values institutionalization.

The prefix "de-" merely indicates an opposite – in this case, it points to two opposing processes: institutionalization vs. deinstitutionalization. Neither is di-

rectly evaluated semantically as better or worse. However, describing deinstitutionalization as a desirable direction in social policy development evaluates it positively, simultaneously attributing a negative value to the opposing process: institutionalization, and consequently, to institutions themselves. In reality, there is nothing inherently wrong with institutions (which does not mean that bad institutions cannot exist). Institutions should be viewed as products of collective wisdom, instruments for creating a certain social order, regulations, predictability, and the potential for efficient collective action. The current and developing concept of institutionalism in social sciences also attests to the fundamental importance of institutions for the functioning of societies (Krakowiak-Drzewiecka, 2017).

The idea of deinstitutionalization is embedded in humanistic values and the premises of human rights, especially those regarding equality and quality of life. It results from the belief that a person's family and immediate environment should be the place to live and satisfy most of their needs. And although institutions – which are a common and natural element of the organization of society in the understanding of modern man - were created to respond more efficiently and effectively to the needs of groups and individuals, an excess of institutions (excessive institutionalization of life) can also pose a certain threat to their functioning.

According to the assumptions of the Polish national *Strategy for the development of social services (2022, p. 9)*, deinstitutionalization means

the development of community services in the place of residence so that they provide the most friendly and optimal conditions for meeting the needs of people in need of support, including: people with disabilities, but also older people, families and children and young people in foster care, people with mental health problems and in the crisis of homelessness.

Moreover, the *Strategy* itself, citing European Union guidelines, recommends avoiding the use of the term deinstitutionalization wherever possible, precisely in order to avoid misunderstandings: the goal of deinstitutionalization is not to close facilities, establishments or other institutions, but to rationally create alternatives to them. This also includes changes in the relationships between institutions.

It is worth emphasizing here that from the point of view of pedagogy, including special education, the guidelines mentioned make room for a completely different term, leading to similar effects of bringing support closer to the natural environment of people with disabilities, without using the word deinstitutionalization. For a special educator, a much more important theoretical and practical framework is the concept of normalization, promoting the exit of weaker social groups (including people with disabilities) from multi-person care and rehabilitation institutions (including "special" institutions established intentionally for

the rehabilitation of these people, such as occupational therapy workshops, sheltered workshops, etc.). Normalization is about enabling people with disabilities to live outside institutions, in the community; it is about supporting their independence and autonomy to the greatest extent possible (Krause, 2010; Żółkowska, 2011).

Special educators themselves also notice the limitations of current normalization practices, treating this concept more as a maintained direction of change than a fully crystallized model of action. Teresa Żółkowska points to many dimensions of normalization: normalization of the course, style and conditions of life, normalization through adapted professional tasks (making work work, and not rehabilitation), and finally normalization of life in the community, i.e. actual and full inclusion. Unfortunately, it is in this last area that the author sees barriers to participation that are difficult to overcome, contributing to the creation of subcultures, i.e. what can be called "glass walls" separating people with disabilities from the rest of society. Żółkowska (2011, p. 88) calls normalization an "unfinished theory of practice" for this reason. This does not devalue the idea of normalization itself, but constitutes a challenge for further exploration, also taking into account new trends in social theory and inclusive practices. Deinstitutionalization can be considered as such, in its dimension of bringing support closer to the living environment – or rather building it or even extracting it from the living environment. It is impossible to practice support for people with disabilities today without delving into the assumptions of deinstitutionalization, both in theoretical (logic of social change) and practical aspect (knowledge of the assumptions of the national *Strategy for the Development of Social Services* and the resulting regional policies, such as the *Regional Plan of development of social services and deinstitutionalization for the Łódź Voivodeship for 2023–2025*).

In this respect, normalization and deinstitutionalization remain convergent, with the additional advantage of normalization as a concept built on positive logic (direction: towards). However, at the semantic level, deinstitutionalization contains this negative logic (direction: from), which may lead to the already mentioned false conclusions about the need to liquidate aid and support institutions.

On the other hand, a whole spectrum of negative effects of excessive institutionalization can also be demonstrated: from mental discomfort of people and their loss in the world of institutions - through formal and legal barriers to access to the services they offer (bureaucratization, exclusion, alienation) – to excessive and even full control of people subordinated to institutions, they become the living environment, i.e. the so-called total institutions can take over every sphere of a person's life, which has a devastating impact on their sense of autonomy and overall mental well-being (Goffman, 2011).

The totality of institutions can be an unintended side effect of an institution's activity in organizing the lives of individuals, such as in the case of the need to provide long-term, around-the-clock care. However, there can also be institutions established as intentional tools of control and power (Foucault, 2020). We assume positive intentions behind the establishment of care and rehabilitation institutions, but the threat (tendency?) of their totalization is also an argument for distinguishing between good institutions (those that adequately meet the needs of individuals and communities) and bad ones (those that fail to meet these needs properly and/or cause additional harm, disproportionately high compared to the benefits received by the beneficiaries).

Deinstitutionalization, reinstitutionalization and neoinstitutionalization - in search of model cooperative solutions to support people with disabilities and their families

How to transform support institutions for people with disabilities into the "good" ones? Those that will function in accordance with the mission of inclusion? Marek Kwiek rightly points out that changes of or in the institution should be looked at by combining three processes: institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and reinstitutionalization.

Kwiek understands the process of deinstitutionalization differently from the previously defined concept of community-based services, which makes sense in the context of social services but not necessarily in relation to other institutions. The author considers deinstitutionalization (Oliver, 1992, by: Kwiek, 2015, pp. 46-47) as a process of disintegration, erosion, abandonment, and, in extreme cases, delegitimization of the legitimacy of the established and institutionalized organizational practice. Therefore, for him it is actually the opposite process to the process of institutionalization.

This last process is for him „transformation from one order into another, constituted on different normative and organizational principles" (Olsen, 2010, p. 128, by Kwiek, 2015, p. 47) and this transformation concerns those areas / processes that may lead to the weakening and disappearance of the institution, the loss of the ability to implement its mission and tasks. We can therefore say that reinstitutionalization is a certain improving or repairing element - a transformation within a changing institution.

However, transferring the concept of reinstitutionalization to the area of earlier considerations on the development of social services, this concept can be treated in three ways: 1) as an internal change of an institution that follows the designated directions of social policy (e.g. reducing the size of nursing homes, personalizing support plans, increasing the autonomy of people using the facility), 2) external change (e.g. opening of facilities to the environment,

new forms of cooperation with other institutions, co-production of services, sharing of resources, new models of cooperation and coordination of activities, creation of networks of cooperation and support), 3) emergence of new institutions (may coincide with the neo-institutionalization process). It is most difficult to talk about internal change at a high level of generality, because it always concerns the transformation of a specific facility in a specific social context, in a diagnosed area of its imperfections. The two remaining forms will be discussed based on national diagnostic research and examples of two model cooperative projects (including the Intersectoral Support Model mentioned at the beginning).

A nationwide diagnosis of the deinstitutionalization of social services shows that, both globally and regionally, we are not yet fully ready for deinstitutionalization (Grewiński et al., 2024). In the most important findings concerning the deinstitutionalization of services for people with disabilities (this is only one of the six areas in the report), it is noted that one in three people with disabilities (33%) currently residing in institutions could (already now) live outside them, leading a relatively independent life. However, the obstacles are: little widespread knowledge about deinstitutionalization; low readiness of local governments for this process of change; lack of coordination of services for people with disabilities, low intersectoral character (lack of developed model solutions for such cooperation), ineffective use of the potential of institutions (although it is emphasized that they still have unused support resources), lack of change leaders in institutions and local government units (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 22 et al.).

The report contains a number of detailed results, analyses, observations, conclusions and recommendations, which should become a direct basis for designing future social services, including for people with disabilities (in the author's opinion: a must-read for educators - especially special educators, social workers, local government employees, including people with disabilities themselves). The most complete picture of the current state of affairs in this regard is provided by this description:

Services for people with disabilities (...) resemble a thicket in which it is difficult to find paths leading to independence. Support recipients and their families expect services in the community (often emphasizing the need for independence and dignified treatment), and institutions have the potential to provide them. The biggest challenge seems to be combining services into packages and long-term planning and coordination of support. Deinstitutionalization creates a unique opportunity to redefine the method and scope of institution operation, as well as to release the potential of the community (empowerment) (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 230).

The above quote shows that deinstitutionalization becomes a strategic framework to be filled by new, alternative forms of institutional (co-)operation and - although it sounds like an oxymoron - also by a certain type of institution-alization. The authors call this neoinstitutional practices and define them as "the

actions of practitioners, professionals in social welfare, whose activities in the community imitate the practices used in institutions" (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 367). The word "imitate" can be interpreted so that for the authors, the institutionalization of activities does not immediately transform the environment into an institution, but introduces institutional logic into its activities, which allows for better use of its resources and better and more effective organization of support. They are also aware (supported by research results) that they cannot and do not have to give up the existing resources of the institution (and the institutions themselves), but they should be rationally transformed to better fulfil their mission. And this is in line with the spirit of deinstitutionalization. Therefore, reinstitutionalization, as a partial process, is also included in the broadly understood trend of deinstitutionalization, or at least it is not inconsistent with it. It is rather complementary, perhaps temporary, but this will be determined primarily by the development of a valuable and attractive alternative. The reinstitutionalization process was recognized in the report as

the process of transforming large, closed institutions into smaller institutions that are more open to community activities, including those combining various forms of activities; or a situation in which, after initial deinstitutionalization, support recipients find themselves in institutional forms of support again because the deinstitutionalization process did not ensure the durability of support or was not carried out properly (support in the community was insufficient or inadequate (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 367).

An example of new solutions (neo-institutionalization) may be a model activity in the form of creating "support circles", which are an excellent example of services shifted towards the community (deinstitutionalized vide: Jordan et al., 2024). A solution that was included in the national *Strategy for People with Disabilities 2021-2030* and the national *Strategy for the Development of Social Services* as a promoted example of deinstitutionalized activities. At the same time, Support Circles imitate organizational logic. Support Circles is

an activity aimed at creating personal networks of interpersonal relationships for people with intellectual disabilities in their immediate living environment and an example of activities supporting the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their "safe future" (Żyta 2022).

They are undoubtedly an exemplary form of activating the immediate environment of people with disabilities, but also incorporating the potential of local aid institutions (reinstitutionalization as part of the transformation in the cooperation model). The principle of the model is to combine elements of informal and formal support, which also requires preparation of institutions in the area of the latter. For inclusive education, the School Model in Support Circles (s.a.) is undoubtedly the most important, as an innovative solution for all schools in Poland.

School in Circles of Support is an institution that brings out the talents and strengths of students, cooperates in partnership with parents and is involved and connected with the local community. The main assumption is student-centered planning and work on the resources and potentials of: the student, family, school and local community (...). It is extremely important to develop a model of community support for children and young people that will provide a basis for full participation in the life of the community in the future (<https://kregiwsparcia.pl/szkola-w-kregach-2/>).

Finally, here are the two announced models of nationwide cooperative projects aimed at increasing the potential and effectiveness of existing institutions through the co-production of services and resource sharing. These projects have similar goals, a partially overlapping group of beneficiaries (children and youth in early development support and inclusive education, as well as their families), and comparable, though different, methods of operation. They were implemented by two different government departments with the same intention of developing systemic solutions. Examples of these are:

- 3D Cooperation project - a model of multisectoral cooperation to support individuals and families, initiated by the Social Policy Department (Models of Cooperations, 2021)
- Intersectoral Support Model (<https://mwm.us.edu.pl/>).

The most important elements of both projects / models are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.

Comparison of the assumptions of interinstitutional cooperation projects in the field of supporting children and families in local communities.

Main assumptions of the cooperation project and model	Project	
	3D Cooperation	Intersectoral Support Model
Project initiator / principal	Social Welfare Department: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Education Department: Ministry of Education
Implementation period	2017–2021	2022–2024
Implementers – authors of the cooperation model	Three macro-regional teams of experts from Regional Centres for Social Policy for developing a model for three types of communes: rural, urban-rural and urban (over 20,000 inhabitants)	Consortium of five universities coordinated by the University of Silesia, with the participation of supporting experts (developing a model for poviats and supporting poviats in its implementation)
Institutions implementing / testing the model	Social welfare organizational units from 151 communes and poviats in 15 voivodeships	Local government units of 36 poviats from all over Poland (14 voivodeships) in which Specialized Support Centres for Inclusive Education were established

Table 1.
Comparison of the assumptions... (cont.)

Main assumptions of the cooperation project and model	Project	
	3D Cooperation	Intersectoral Support Model
Project goal	Better use of local support resources and effective co-creation (co-production) of social services for individuals and families (including multi-problem families, including those with children with special developmental or educational needs)	Increasing the quality and effectiveness of coordinated, intersectoral support provided to children, students and their families and the environment in which they function at the local (powiat) level.
	Building local support networks	
The main assumption of the basis of cooperation	Creating frameworks and tools for cooperation for individuals and families in three dimensions (3D): 1) between institutions from different departments (interdepartmental cooperation), 2) between entities from various sectors, including the NGO sector (intersectoral cooperation), 3) at various levels of local government organization: commune, powiat, voivodeship	Effective use of local support resources and improving the quality of locally provided intersectoral assistance for children, students and families based on the functional assessment methodology using the ICF classification
Who receives support?	Individuals and families, including the so-called multi-problem ones, including with children with disabilities / special developmental or educational needs	Children (early development support), students (with diverse educational needs) and their families and the environment in which they live (including a kindergarten or school offering inclusive education)
Strategic pillar of cooperation (entity ensuring cooperation)	- Partner Cooperation Team - Voivodeship Cooperation Team	- Powiat Resource Coordination Centre
Operational pillar of cooperation (case support coordination)	- Task Cooperation Teams	- Coordinating Institution (selected unit of the education system, e.g. psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, or social welfare system, e.g. Powiat Family Assistance Centre) - Specialist Support Teams
Material pillar of cooperation (resources)	Local services baskets	Local resource maps
Project website	https://3d.rops-katowice.pl/model-kooperacje-3d/	https://mwm.us.edu.pl/

Source: own research based on own materials and project websites: <https://3d.rops-katowice.pl/model-kooperacje-3d/> and <https://mwm.us.edu.pl/>.

Both presented projects are an example of introducing institutional logic into the cooperation model but retain the idea of deinstitutionalization. In each of these models there is a place for a school implementing inclusive education, so it is worth getting acquainted with the detailed solutions since they may constitute practical guidelines for organizing support in specific cases of children (in the work of the Coordinating Institutions in poviats in the Intersectoral Support Model, among others, were also used experiences and tools from the 3D Cooperation Model).

Conclusion

Poland is still looking for solutions that improve support for people with disabilities, combining the assumptions of inclusion (normalization) and deinstitutionalization. In terms of building a support system for people with disabilities, two trends have emerged: expansion of interinstitutional cooperation and deinstitutionalization. The latter tendency is largely consistent with the concept of normalization developed in special education. In light of the European Union's guidelines on limiting the challenging and often misunderstood concept of "deinstitutionalization," it is worth promoting the use of the term "normalization", but after including the developed assumptions of the process of deinstitutionalization of social services into this discourse. In fact, this is already happening - the concept of deinstitutionalization has already emerged in the field of special education. Both terms should strengthen inclusive education conceptually and in terms of real support for schools.

Strengthening institutional cooperation, including support institutions, may seem contradictory to the idea of deinstitutionalization, making institutions appear outdated. However, this is only an apparent contradiction since institutions still hold valuable resources for supporting people with disabilities and their families. Creating partnerships and inter-institutional networks arises from the pragmatics of resource management, allowing for the optimization of access to social service resources. Deinstitutionalization of social services is a value that determines the direction of changes in social policy. It represents both an idea (concept), as well as a process and a legal and organizational framework for changes (strategic and planning documents being created).

The most important conclusions resulting from the analyzes performed:

- New institutionalism combines the processes of (neo)institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and reinstitutionalization as different dimensions of change.
- Deinstitutionalization does not mean the end of support institutions for individuals with disabilities.

- We are not yet ready for an effective, complete, and stereotype-free deinstitutionalization in the area of support for people with disabilities and their families. There is neither a need nor a possibility for the complete elimination of such institutions, although their role should diminish as alternatives (such as Support Circles, Schools in Support Circles, and the model solutions from the presented projects) are developed.
- Bringing services closer to the living environment is also possible by changing the institutions themselves, including: through the normalization and personalization of the living conditions of people with disabilities and the opening of institutions to the community (interinstitutional cooperation, including intersectoral).
- Intersectoralism (interinstitutionalism) does not have to be inconsistent with deinstitutionalization.
- The allocation of European Union funds does not favour institutions, as it inherently aims to develop alternative forms. This does not mean that institutions are "inherently bad" – the desired direction of change signals the need for their transformation.
- It is necessary to take into account both trends presented - joint cooperation between institutions and deinstitutionalization (bringing services closer to the environment) - in establishing partnerships by schools and in building a support network for students in inclusive education. School is not an isolated institution but is part of the entire system of social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Work on improving and implementing new solutions is ongoing, but the experience already gained can serve schools and inclusive education now.

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Wsparcie międzyinstytucjonalne a deinstytucjonalizacja usług społecznych dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami jako kontekst edukacji włączającej

Streszczenie

Artykuł ukazuje dwa pozornie sprzeczne trendy w organizacji usług społecznych dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami: wzmacnianie i doskonalenie funkcjonowania instytucji udzielających wsparcia poprzez współpracę międzyinstytucjonalną oraz deinstytucjonalizację tych usług, uznawaną za priorytet w polityce społecznej. Nie muszą być one jednak traktowane jako wykluczające się. Celem artykułu jest przybliżenie pedagogom pojęcia i założeń procesu deinstytucjonalizacji – słabo rozpoznawalnego w środowisku oświatowym, oraz dopełniających go (i wbrew pozorom niesprzecznych) procesów (neo)instytucjonalizacji i reinstytucjonalizacji. Deinstytucjonalizacja nie dotyczy bezpośrednio tego resortu, ale uznawana za cel i środek współczesnych polityk społecznych, kształtuje realia wsparcia środowiskowego dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnością, jak też dla szkoły realizującej edukację włączającą. Przedstawiono innowacyjne rozwiązania łączące w kooperacji instytucje, oraz wsparcie formalne z nieformalnym (Kręgi Wsparcia / Szkoła w Kręgach Wsparcia. Kooperacje 3D, Model Wsparcia Międzysektorowego).

Słowa kluczowe: wsparcie społeczne, inkluzja, współpraca, deinstytucjonalizacja, normalizacja.



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Preventive and Educational Support for Students with Special Educational Needs in an Inclusive Education as Perceived by Teachers

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to collect the opinions of teachers teaching in grades I-III of public primary schools about the educational and preventive support forms, methods and techniques implemented in schools and its effectiveness in preventing and eliminating inappropriate behaviour of disabled and non-disabled students.

Empirical material was collected using Questionnaire for Teachers: Educational and preventive support in inclusive education and involved 62 teachers working in public primary schools in the Lublin Voivodeship.

The research indicated which, according to teachers, educational and preventive activities implemented in schools are appropriate in working with students, as well as which forms of support are the least and most effective in educational work with non-disabled children and their disabled peers.

Keywords: educational and preventive support, behavioural problems, disabled students, inclusive education.

Introduction

The school is an educational institution dealing with the education and upbringing of children and young people, in accordance with the goals, tasks, edu-

cational concepts and programs adopted in society, and achieving these goals is possible only with the active participation of properly prepared teaching staff.

School is the second most important educational environment after the family, being a carrier not only of knowledge, but also of norms, rules and socializing values. School is the centre of development of desired social and professional competences, socially accepted patterns of behaviour, ability to cope with life and impact on the surrounding reality. Without participation in the school education process, it would be difficult to prepare young generations for conscious and rational social participation (Okoń, 2007; Çecelek, 2020).

It is here that children and young people gain knowledge and experience, develop skills, learn to coexist and cooperate with others, compare themselves against their peers, and develop skills needed in life, both cognitive and emotional and social. It is therefore important that the school creates appropriate, favourable conditions for the intellectual, emotional and social development of each student (Wosik-Kowala, 2019).

Nowadays, the school is expected to be an upbringing institution that protects the individuality of the student, helps him/her manage his/her own development and strive for self-fulfilment, prepares him/her for the above-mentioned valuable participation in social life, and the teacher, especially the class teacher, is mainly responsible for the effects of the educational process (Wosik-Kowala, 2018).

Every teacher, taking responsibility for the education and upbringing of students at school, must also be aware that various types of educational difficulties occur constantly in family life and school practice. It is the result of emerging obstacles and failures in the family and in the teaching and educational process carried out in schools. These difficulties are usually related to the subject and object of the upbringing process and the problems that a child or young person creates at home for parents and at school for teachers and educators in the objective process of general intellectual, social and psychological development (Kunowski, 2005, p. 18).

If we want to learn about the specific nature of the school, its resources and needs, and, above all, the individual problems of people within the school environment, we must recognize the conditions in which members of the school community function. An essential tool here is a reliable diagnosis, which not only allows for the assessment of the facility's potential, but also prevents the risk of unnecessary and inappropriate actions and, moreover, makes it easier to identify an effective solution. Every child, in the face of dynamic changes and escalation of risky behaviour, needs attention and educational influence on a daily basis and should be surrounded by appropriate care from adults. This is the idea behind the school's educational and preventive program, which aims to support the development process aimed at achieving full maturity by a young person in

four spheres: physical, social, mental (intellectual and emotional) and spiritual. Planning educational and preventive activities, which are ultimately intended to serve the development of students, must be based on reliable foundations resulting from research conducted at school. It is therefore necessary for the school to receive feedback on the activities carried out, both in the context of their effectiveness – especially meeting the expectations of the people to whom they are addressed – as well as supporting and improving these activities. When planning educational and preventive activities, an educational institution must have information about its students, covering a wide range of their school, family and personal problems. A common vision, clarity of school rules and focus on teaching and reinforcing positive behaviours facilitate a positive school and classroom climate (Gaś, 2006, s. 22; Borowik, 2018; Tabacaru et al., 2022).

Therefore, each school is obliged to prepare an educational and prevention program, including supporting development and shaping socially expected attitudes, prevention addressed to the entire community students and to groups at increased risk, as well as corrections including prevention addressed to groups at increased risk, who showed signs of dysfunctional behaviour (Chałupniak, 2014).

Therefore, in addition to its basic functions, the school should be oriented towards helping, supporting and advising students, but also other entities of the educational process and partners of everyday school interactions – teachers and parents. Teachers who are sensitive to students' dilemmas, questions and doubts, problems, difficult and crisis situations, have the opportunity to notice their symptoms in everyday relationships, provide support to their students in many situations and react in an appropriate way and at the right time (Piorunek & Werner, 2014).

A necessary condition for the effective action of every teacher is to have specific personality traits and skills needed in contact with the student, such as awareness of oneself and one's value system, experiencing and showing feelings, performing role models for students, interest in people and social matters, clear ethical principles or sense of responsibility. However, among the conditions that have a significant impact on the process of supporting students in their development, the most important are empathy, warmth and caring, openness, positive attitude and respect for the supported person, and specificity (Gaś, 2001, p. 17).

The educational and teaching process depends both on the teacher, his beliefs, the way he communicates with children and young people, but also on the students themselves. However, the mature personality of the teacher seems to be a factor determining upbringing and teaching, but also, apart from parents, it also influences the student's attitude, worldview and the choice of the most important values (Więckiewicz, 2023).

Maintaining a positive and inclusive school climate is another important role of the teacher, which is developed and maintained in a safe, positive and mutu-

ally respectful environment, which has a direct impact on students' academic performance and social life. Therefore, the mission of every teacher at school should be to contribute to achieving perfect harmonization of the cognitive side with the affective, behavioural, attitudinal and social sides (Elias & Weissberg, 2000, Dumitru, 2023).

Therefore, in everyday school life, apart from teaching functions, teachers perform a number of support and advisory functions, and their influence is related to training, coaching, mentoring, and various forms of therapy, which become components of broadly understood assistance in the student's development (Piorunek&Werner, 2014, Borowik, 2018).

Managing behaviour in the classroom is a key skill for teachers, yet teachers often emphasize that they are ill-equipped to respond effectively to student behaviour. Professional teacher education in classroom behaviour management is continually needed to support teachers in implementing evidence-based classroom management practices. Factors hindering the implementation of appropriate interactions may include, first of all, the inability to lead a diverse group of students, the inability to design educational interventions that ensure students' academic success and promote positive social bonds, and the inability to correctly diagnose students' behaviour and make diagnostic conclusions in this regard. Thus, professional development is an important element in guiding implementation research, as well as a valuable opportunity for teachers to fill gaps in their knowledge and practice (Charland, 2006; Meiers, 2008; Kretlow et al., 2011; Aiello&Sharma, 2018; Paramita et al., 2020; Kausar et al., 2023).

An important issue is therefore the search for ways to effectively influence students' individual attitudes towards risky behavior in school conditions and to shape appropriate behaviors and behavioral reactions in a changing social environment. This cannot be achieved when traditional delivery methods are used (talks, lectures, lectures, films, leaflets and other information materials), in which students' activity is reduced to passive listening, reading and/or watching. This interactive, activating methodology of conducting classes is the key to effective therapy. A classic example of the use of interactive methodology is when the teacher initiates students' work in small task groups. Activating teaching and learning methods are based on similar principles, including: the project method (Brudnik, 2012) and many other methods of actively conducting classes, e.g. the method of discussion, role-playing, analyzing and solving problems, small group discussion and activities, role plays, practical projects, videos and stories depicting real life situations, as well as techniques to facilitate self-reflection and active engagement of participants. Using this methodology is possible when the classes are dominated by two-way teacher-student communication and an open communication style of the participants based on mutual trust and openness (Borowik, 2018; Ostaszewski, 2019).

Research Aim and Question

The aim of the research was to collect the opinions of teachers teaching in grades I-III of public primary schools about the educational and preventive support forms, methods and techniques implemented in schools and its effectiveness in preventing and eliminating inappropriate behaviour of disabled and non-disabled students.

The research issues refer to answers to the following research questions:

1. According to teachers, what actions does the school take to prevent and eliminate student problem behaviours, and which are the most necessary when working with non-disabled and disabled students?
2. According to teachers, are the knowledge and educational competences of teachers working in public institutions sufficient to implement preventive and educational programs with non-disabled and disabled students?
3. What materials are used by teachers to prepare educational and preventive action plans?
4. According to teachers, what forms of support, methods and techniques to prevent and eliminate inappropriate behaviour are used in schools and which of them are the most effective in working with non-disabled and disabled students?

Research Method and Sample Characteristics

The analyses undertaken were based on empirical material collected using an original Questionnaire for Teachers: Educational and preventive support in inclusive education. This questionnaire consists of an information sheet (5 questions) and specific questions (10 questions, 8 of which were multiple choice, also giving respondents the opportunity to provide their own answers). This allowed for analyses of teachers' responses without suggestive direction or prompting.

The research involved 62 (100%) women working in public primary schools in the Lublin Voivodeship.

The data obtained indicate that 62 respondents (100%) have master's degrees – of which 12 (19,35%) of respondents have qualifications in the field of early school education, 28 (45,16%) teachers have qualifications in the field of special education and 22 people – 35,48% have qualifications in both early childhood education and special education. The surveyed teachers work in public institutions, in grades 1-3.

In the surveyed group of teachers, 16 of them (25,81%) have no more than 5 years of professional experience, 20 teachers (32,26%) have been working in

the profession for 6 to 10 years, 14 (22,58%) have had 11 to 15 years of professional experience, and 12 people (19,35%) have been working for over 15 years.

Due to the specificity of the research undertaken, it is also worth paying attention to the experience in working with students with disabilities among the respondents: 8 teachers (12,90%) have no experience at all or less than a year, 30 teachers (48,39%) have between 1 and 5 years of experience. 12 people (19,35%) have been working with disabled students for 6 to 10 years, 6 people (9,68%) have 10 to 15 years of experience and 6 of respondents (9,68%) have more than 15 years of experience.

Results

The analyses carried out and the selection of questions for teachers were intended to obtain answers to the questions asked and to show to what extent teachers are aware of actions the school takes to prevent and eliminate student problem behaviours, and which of them are most necessary when working with non-disabled and disabled students.

The study also analysed forms of support, methods and techniques for preventing and eliminating inappropriate behaviour used in schools and which of them are the most and least effective in working with non-disabled and disabled students, based on the competences and practical experience of respondents.

Thus, the first question in the questionnaire concerned the educational and preventive activities that schools undertake to both prevent, eliminate and correct inappropriate behaviour of students, which is presented in Chart 1.

It turned out that these activities are most often implemented in institutions in the form of tasks undertaken as part of educational and preventive programs developed annually by the school – as indicated by 52 respondents (83.87%). These activities are also based on the availability of special educator, psychologist and other specialists adequate to the needs of students – such activities were indicated by 50 respondents (80.65%). This activity is particularly important from the point of view of the needs and difficulties of disabled students, but also of their non-disabled peers. A large part of the surveyed teachers (40 people, 64.52%) also point to parents pedagogization as an activity often undertaken at school. The next most important school activity in terms of the number of choices is establishing an individual student and family support program – this means that 58.06% of respondents (36 people) believe that this activity is implemented in their schools. According to 45.16% of respondents, organizing training for Pedagogical Councils is another activity undertaken in public schools. Individual conversations with students are activities indicated by 41.94% of surveyed teachers. The smallest number of teachers indicated organ-

izing preventive actions (38.71%) and organizing extracurricular activities of an educational and preventive nature (25.81%) as activities undertaken by mainstream schools.

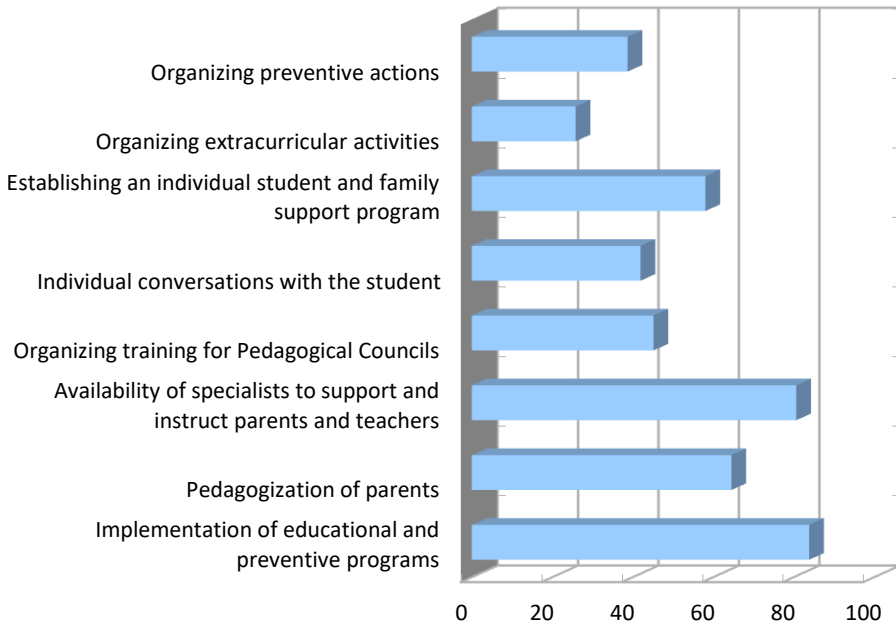


Chart 1

Actions taken by the school to prevent and eliminate students' behavioural problems

Source: own elaboration

The next two questions concerned the effectiveness of these activities undertaken in schools in working with non-disabled students and their disabled peers (Table 1).

Table 1

The effectiveness of actions taken by the school to prevent and eliminate educational problems of non-disabled and disabled students

Actions taken by the school	Non-disabled students		Disabled students		Chi-square value	p
	N=62	%	N=62	%		
Implementation of educational and preventive programs	6	9,67	4	6,45	0,548	0,459
Pedagogization of parents	32	51,61	20	32,25	4,233	0,040*

Table 1
The effectiveness of actions taken... (cont.)

Actions taken by the school	Non-disabled students		Disabled students		Chi-square value	p
	N=62	%	N=62	%		
Availability of specialists to support and instruct parents and teachers	20	32,26	22	35,48	0,320	0,571
Organizing training for Pedagogical Councils	2	3,23	10	16,13	5,489	0,019*
Individual conversation with the student	22	35,48	10	16,13	4,912	0,027*
Establishing an individual student and family support program	4	6,45	30	48,39	25,768	0,000*
Organizing extracurricular activities	6	9,67	10	16,13	0,133	0,615
Organizing preventive actions	18	29,03	12	19,35	0,988	0,320

* p<0.05

Source: own elaboration

According to the surveyed teachers, in the case of non-disabled students, the most effective is parents pedagogization (51.61%), individual conversations with students (35.48%), availability of specialists (32.26%) and organizing preventive actions (29.03%). The effectiveness of this type of activities may result from teachers' better knowledge of both the ways of eliminating difficulties and the types of educational problems faced by non-disabled students.

On the other hand, educators consider individual student and family support programs (6.45%) and training of Pedagogical Councils (3.23%) to be the least effective, which is understandable, because individual programs are primarily aimed at helping students with disabilities, and training often concerns more complex problems of students with disabilities.

When assessing the effectiveness of the school's educational and preventive activities in relation to disabled students, teachers best evaluate individual student and family support programs (48.39%), the availability of specialists (35.48%) and parents' pedagogization (32.25%). These opinions may result primarily from the forms of psychological and pedagogical assistance provided to students with developmental and educational challenges and from individual educational and therapeutic programs developed for students with a certificate of need for special education.

In their opinion, the least effective are the activities implemented as part of school educational and preventive programs (6.45%), which may indicate poor

adaptation of school educational and preventive programs to the actual difficulties and educational needs of students with developmental disorders.

Moreover, a comparison and statistical analysis of teachers' assessments in relation to the effectiveness of the school's educational and preventive activities indicates that teachers see greater effectiveness of parents' pedagogization in relation to work with non-disabled students ($p=0.040$) and individual conversations with students ($p=0.027$), but significantly greater effectiveness of individual student and family support programs ($p=0.000$), training of Pedagogical Councils ($p=0.019$) in relation to students with disabilities. This confirms the above conclusions and assumptions explaining this situation.

The next question resulted from the need to verify the knowledge and competences of teachers of mainstream schools necessary to appropriately develop and implement educational and preventive programs in working with non-disabled students and their disabled peers (Chart 2).

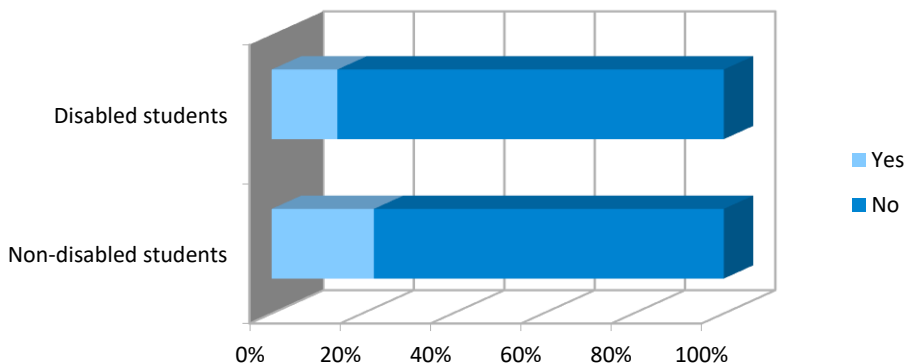


Chart 2

Knowledge and educational competences of teachers working in public institutions to implement preventive and educational programs with non-disabled and disabled students

Source: own elaboration

It turns out that as many as 77.42% of teachers are substantively unprepared to implement educational and preventive programs when working with non-disabled students, and as many as 85.48% do not feel competent to apply the guidelines for educational and preventive programs in the case of students with disabilities. This result is a kind of red flag that emphasizes the need to better prepare teachers by equipping them with appropriate educational competences – starting from preparation at the stage of academic education, through appropriately developed and at the same time universal practical training in this area for teaching staff.

The conducted research also indicates the sources of acquiring knowledge necessary to prepare class preventive and educational plans, as shown in Chart 3.

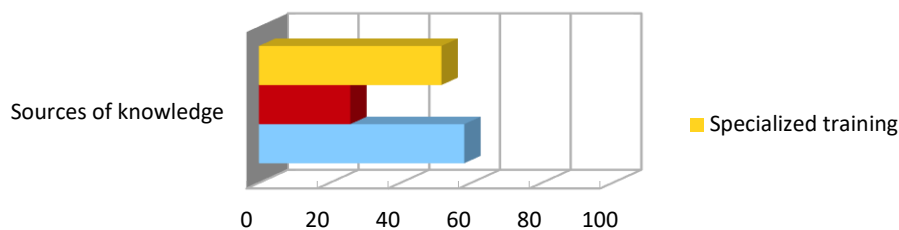


Chart 3

Sources of acquiring knowledge and skills to prepare class plans for educational and preventive activities

Source: own elaboration.

As it turns out, more than half of the surveyed teachers (58.06%) use Internet information and materials as their main source of knowledge. 51.61% of respondents use training materials in their educational and preventive practice, while only 25.81% of teachers use guides and other methodological book guides. These results also confirm previous thoughts about the need to develop generally available universal training and workshops in this area. The next questions concerned the forms, methods and techniques of educational and preventive support used in mainstream schools and their effectiveness in influencing non-disabled and disabled students. The first issue is presented in table 2.

Table 2

Forms, methods and techniques of support to prevent and eliminate inappropriate behaviour used at school

Support directions	Forms of support	N=62	%
	Conversations and support from a school counsellor/special educator/psychologist/specialists	42	67,74
	Thematic talks for students in the classroom	20	32,26
	Preventive actions and social campaigns	16	25,80
	Proactive activities - projects, competitions and other thematic activities	16	25,80
Support for students	Specialized classes developing emotional and social competences	10	16,13
	Individual work with the student	8	12,90
	Peer volunteering and peer tutoring	6	9,68
	Support for a special teacher in the classroom	6	9,68
	Calming techniques	4	6,45
	Informational school newspapers	2	3,23

Table 2
Forms, methods and techniques of support... (cont.)

Support directions	Forms of support	N=62	%
Support for parents	Talks and thematic meetings for parents	20	32,26
Support for teachers	Professional training and workshops	12	19,35

Source: own elaboration

This question had an open form because it was intended to obtain an answer based on the facts, without suggesting any forms of support.

Teachers' answers were grouped around the three directions of support observed in the answers – students, parents and teachers.

The data clearly show that most forms of support used by teachers are directed to the student. The most frequently used form of support implemented by teachers are conversations and support from specialists (67.74%). In this area, the surveyed teachers mentioned primarily conversations with school and special educators and psychologists from psychological and pedagogical counselling centres. Therefore, it is also an indirect form of support addressed to teachers.

Among the methods and forms of educational and preventive support used at school, teachers also mention: thematic talks for students in the classroom, preventive actions and social campaigns, proactive activities – projects, competitions and other thematic activities, specialized classes developing emotional and social competences, individual work with the student, peer volunteering and peer tutoring, support for a special teacher in the classroom, calming techniques and informational school newspapers, indicating the latter as the least used (3,23%).

When it comes to forms of support targeted at parents, teachers point to talks and thematic meetings for parents (32.26%) as forms of supporting school activities in the aspect of prevention and education.

As a form of support for teachers, they emphasize the importance of professional training and workshops (19,35%) tailored to the needs of the school group.

It is therefore also important to indicate which of the forms of support mentioned by teachers are, in their opinion, the most effective – as shown in table 3.

Table 3
Forms, methods and techniques of educational support for non-disabled and disabled students with the highest effectiveness in teacher's perception

Forms of support	Non-disabled students		Disabled students		Chi-square value	p
	N=62	%	N=62	%		
Conversations and support from a school counsellor/special educator/psychologist/specialists	10	16,13	10	16,13	0,014	0,905
Thematic talks for students in the classroom	16	28,05	0	0	19,312	0,000*

Table 3
Forms, methods and techniques of educational support...(cont.)

Forms of support	Non-disabled students		Disabled students		Chi-square value	p
	N=62	%	N=62	%		
Preventive actions and social campaigns	10	16,13	4	6,45	1,520	0,218
Proactive activities - projects, competitions and other thematic activities	10	16,13	8	12,90	0,013	0,911
Specialized classes developing emotional and social competences	6	9,68	18	29,03	6,749	0,009*
Individual work with the student	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peer volunteering and peer tutoring	2	3,23	4	6,45	0,602	0,438
Support for a special teacher in the classroom	0	0	8	12,90	8,149	0,004*
Calming techniques	0	0	8	12,90	8,149	0,004*
Informational school newspapers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Talks and thematic meetings for parents	8	12,90	8	12,90	0,186	0,666
Professional training and workshops	8	12,90	8	12,90	0,186	0,666

* $p < 0.05$

Source: own elaboration

As shown in Table 3, the surveyed teachers consider the most effective forms and methods of educational and preventive support in working with students without disabilities to be thematic talks with students in the classroom, conversations and support from specialists, social campaigns and preventive actions, and proactive classes in the form of projects, competitions and other activities, specialized classes developing emotional and social competences, thematic conversations and meetings with parents, workshops and training, as well as volunteering and peer tutoring. In turn, in relation to working with disabled students – as the most effective, they emphasize specialized classes developing emotional and social competences, conversations and support from professionals, proactive classes, support from a special educator in the classroom, calming techniques, thematic meetings with parents, training and workshops, and volunteering and peer tutoring.

It should also be emphasized that statistically significant differences between the perception of the high effectiveness of the above-mentioned forms of support in working with non-disabled and disabled students are particularly visible in the case of:

- conversations with students in the classroom ($p=0.000$) in favour of higher effectiveness in the case of non-disabled students,
- support from a special educator in the classroom ($p=0.004$), calming techniques ($p=0.004$) and specialized classes developing emotional and social competences ($p=0.009$) in favour of greater effectiveness in the case of students with disabilities.

This way of assessing the effectiveness of support methods for non-disabled students and their disabled peers may result primarily from the specificity of students' functioning, high complexity and variety of educational difficulties and challenging behaviours.

Discussion

The presented research shows, first of all, what are the real educational and preventive activities in public schools, the task of which is to counteract and eliminate educational difficulties of students.

The presented research shows what are the real educational and preventive activities in public schools, the task of which is to counteract and eliminate educational difficulties of students.

Moreover, the research allowed us to indicate the most effective school activities in terms of educational challenges, which in the case of non-disabled students are: parents' pedagogization, individual conversations with students, availability of specialists and preventive actions. However, when working with students with disabilities, according to teachers, individual support programs, the availability of specialists and parental pedagogy are the most effective.

The research also showed how uncertain teachers feel about their educational competences. Unfortunately, the overwhelming use of Internet sources when developing educational and preventive assistance does not lead to the use of appropriate, substantive and, above all, effective forms of support.

Moreover, the forms and methods of educational and preventive support mentioned by teachers are very general, which may also confirm the limited educational competences of the teaching staff.

Conclusions

The reforms of educational system introduced in recent years have not solved many problems related to education. Insufficient results may be related to rapid cultural, economic and social changes. These changes mean that the educational system cannot keep up with the changing expectations and needs of society (Więckiewicz, 2023).

Thinking about preventing risky behaviour in terms of more demanding forms of prevention and education directs us towards the quality of contact between the teacher and the participants. The quality of contact and the quality of preventive and educational activities depend largely on the competences of teachers. High demands are placed on them, and in order to meet them, various forms of education are necessary that would allow them to improve their personal competences, interpersonal and social skills and develop sensitivity to the needs of students. First of all, teachers and educators conducting preventive and educational activities should consciously develop skills to help and communicate well with the participants of these activities. The second group of professional skills that should be developed are those that support the correct implementation of preventive and educational activities, including workshop work skills and knowledge of the methodology of classes that activate the student. Skills from both groups are helpful and necessary both for people carrying out activities in the field of prevention and education in the aspect of universal impacts and for those who work with risk groups (Ostaszewski, 2019, p.20).

In order to effectively help students and support their emotional and social development, it is necessary to have multi-profile knowledge about the specific functioning of students with developmental and educational challenges and the ability to implement it in practical assistance activities. There is no universal method of educational support that we can fully implement in educational and preventive activities. Therefore, the art of educators should be to skill-fully adapt appropriate tools and techniques to the individual needs, capabilities, limitations and specific functioning of individual students, while at the same time universally designing towards values that are accepted and important in a changing world. All this to help each student develop social and emotional competences to the best of his or her abilities.

When choosing the right support program, the attention should be put on the quality of the content, the form used and competences. In order to strengthen competences in this area, it would be necessary to consider the possibility of creating a social pedagogue position in the institution and to strengthen the knowledge and competences of teachers with appropriate educational skills, ensuring the possibility of further training for pedagogues. Appropriate evaluation tools should also be created, unified and generally available to all teachers and specialists working with children (Zezulková et al., 2023).

It is also worth considering what actions should be taken so that parents understand the importance of the school educational and preventive program and all activities aimed at eliminating educational and behavioural difficulties for the development of their own children, teachers draw inspiration from it for their educational activities, and not to treat these programs as another unimportant document, which, however, is subject to the control of the school board.

To achieve this, changes in the Education Law are not enough, extensive educational activities are also necessary – addressed to both teachers and parents. Without them, educational and preventive programs and appropriately tailored support related to them will only be dead documents available on the website or in a binder in the school office. But that's not what education and upbringing are about (Catek, 2021).

Study Limitations

The research was conducted on a group of 62 teachers of public primary schools in the Lublin Voivodeship. Therefore, further analyses on a larger population and comparative studies taking into account differences of opinion in relation to students with different disabilities, gender or location of the institution would create a broader and more insightful picture of the presented topic.

A justified action may be to conduct research taking into account a much larger group of respondents, with different experience and competences in schools, verifying their diverse opinions.

An important research solution that complements the already accumulated knowledge is the verification of the opinions of teachers and parents regarding the effectiveness of school educational and preventive programs in eliminating the causes of educational problems, their manifestations and in securing the educational needs of non-disabled and disabled students. This will allow to see the problem from a multi-faceted perspective and thus create a basis for improving preventive and educational activities.

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Wsparcie profilaktyczno-wychowawcze uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi w edukacji włączającej w percepcji nauczycieli

Streszczenie

Celem prezentowanych badań było zebranie opinii nauczycieli uczących w klasach I–III publicznych szkół podstawowych na temat stosowanych w szkołach form, metod i technik wsparcia wychowawczego i profilaktycznego oraz ich skuteczności w zapobieganiu i eliminowaniu niewłaściwych zachowań uczniów pełnosprawnych i niepełnosprawnych. Materiał empiryczny zebrano za pomocą Kwestionariusza dla nauczycieli: Wsparcie edukacyjno-profilaktyczne w edukacji włączającej, a w badaniu wzięło udział 62 nauczycieli pracujących w publicznych szkołach podstawowych województwa lubelskiego.

Badania wykazały, które, zdaniem nauczycieli, działania wychowawczo-profilaktyczne realizowane w szkołach są właściwe w pracy z uczniami, a także, jakie formy wsparcia są najmniej i najbardziej skuteczne w pracy wychowawczej z dziećmi pełnosprawnymi i ich niepełnosprawnymi rówieśnikami.

Słowa kluczowe: wsparcie wychowawczo-profilaktyczne, problemy wychowawcze, uczniowie niepełnosprawni, edukacja włączająca.



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Cooperation of Special Education Teachers with the General Teacher in Primary Schools: A Survey of Polish Teachers

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Abstract

The cooperation of the support teacher with the general teacher in an inclusive class is one of the determinants of successful inclusive education. The aim of the research is to analyze the scope and frequency of their cooperation in diagnostic, planning, organizational and educational tasks, as well as their satisfaction with this cooperation and the challenges experienced. The correlation of these variables with teachers' qualifications, professional rank, availability of professional development, and participation in training were analyzed as well. A sample of 200 Polish primary school support teachers were surveyed by on-line questionnaire. The result shows that most of the respondents' tasks involve cooperation with the general teacher. Moreover, their professional development correlates positively with the frequency of accomplishing these tasks. The majority of respondents found this cooperation satisfactory and never experienced difficulties in this respect.

Keywords: co-teaching, elementary school, inclusive education, co-teacher.

Introduction

Students with disabilities have the right to education at all levels of the school system. Their access to education should be free from discrimination on the basis of disability. Equal opportunities in education are guaranteed by the provisions of Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006). The implementation of these provisions is ensured mainly through the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. However, this requires a variety of measures to ensure their development and social inclusion, combining the features of mainstream education and specialized support. The latest project of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education is strictly concerned with changing the role of specialized support in inclusive education (CROSP) (EASNIE, 2022). The focus is on restructuring the specialized services of mainstream schools in order to provide comprehensive support to students with special educational needs (SEN) based on the interaction of different partners. Furthermore, most studies point to collaboration or collective agency as essential elements for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Miller et al., 2020). One widely used collaborative model for specialist support is the co-teaching approach (e.g., Friend, 2007; Murawski & Hughes, 2009; Bombińska-Domżał, 2010; Jurkowski & Müller, 2018; Mouchritsa et al., 2021; Oleńska-Pawlak & Szumski, 2022; Bartuś, 2023; Strogilos et al., 2023). Strogilos et al. (2023) state that this model, despite challenges, can play a crucial role in improving teachers' professional development and student learning. Due to the autonomy of countries in terms of educational governance, the support co-teaching model is organized in different ways. In Italy, for example, the workload of a support teacher is only six hours per week (Lewkowicz, 2019). In German schools, on the other hand, a special educator is present in classes with students with disabilities for most of the lessons (Przybyszewska, 2016).

In Poland, the employment of support teachers is stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1309). Principals of mainstream schools are required to employ a support teacher in classes with pupils with a statement of the need for special education issued due to autism spectrum disorders (ASD) or disabilities coupled with ASD. The number of lessons in which a support teacher is present depends on the diagnosis of the student's needs and, in many cases, on the school's staffing capacity. The final decision in this regard is made by the school principal (Czarnocka et al., 2022). Despite the legal obligation to employ support teachers, not all schools comply. A study conducted by the Center for Education Development (Mroczek, 2021) shows that 13.5% of settings experience lack of them. This is mainly due to financial constraints (65.9%) as well as lack of specialists that can be employed (47.7%). This lack causes subject teachers to complete postgraduate

studies in special education in order to be qualified. Pachowicz's study (2020) shows that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the co-teachers surveyed have taken advantage of such an opportunity, and only $\frac{1}{4}$ of them are graduates of 5-year master's degrees in special education.

Considering the significant role of support teachers, as well as the rapid acquisition of qualifications to replace their lack, the purpose of the article is to analyze the range of tasks they undertake in cooperation with general teachers, especially tasks that require more complex skills. There is a lack of current research by Polish authors on the experiences of support teachers in this regard (Oleńska-Pawlak & Bombińska-Domżał, 2012). More recent studies address students' opinions on teacher collaboration (Szumski, 2022), opinions of general teachers on the characteristics of successful teamwork (Skura, 2018), and the practice of their collaboration with a co-teacher in a class (Jopek-Bizoń & Zawada, 2022; Bartuś, 2023) or have a limited territorial scope (Zaorska, 2022).

Status of special education teacher

Friend (2007) defines co-teaching as a collaborative model in which the general teacher and the special education teacher share teaching responsibilities. The general teacher focuses on the curriculum, while the support teacher focuses on supporting student learning, developing the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), adapting activities to students' needs, solving the problems encountered, while not always having the opportunity to decide on the content delivered to the entire class (Oleńska-Pawlak & Bombińska-Domżał, 2012; Mouchritsa et al., 2021; Jopek-Bizoń & Zawada, 2022; Paju et al., 2022; Rönn-Liljenfeldt et al., 2023a). The status of support teachers in this reciprocal collaboration is currently not so clearly defined. Most often, the special educators have a subordinate role to the general teachers who "own" their class (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016), but some studies indicate that they have an equal role with them. According to Rönn-Liljenfeldt et al. (2023b), teachers in Finland are free to design the ideal type of co-teaching, which means that the special educator can play either an assistant role or implement a co-teaching approach together with the general teacher in a co-taught class. In contrast, American support teachers surveyed by King-Sears et al. (2020) claimed that, as co-teachers, they occupy a position equal to that of general teachers. However, some differences in implementing their role were noticed by the students. Students with and without disabilities indicated that although both general and special education teachers support their learning (e.g., provide assistance, answer questions), the special educator explains the content in a differentiated way (King-Sears et al., 2020; Szumski, 2022). A systematic review of the literature suggests that both

teachers negotiate methods of collaborative teaching and thus co-create an inclusive education pedagogy in an inclusive class (Miller et al., 2020).

However, some studies indicate the gap between the theoretical assumptions of inclusive education and their practical implementation in a co-taught class. According to Ghedin and Aquario (2020), the general teachers work primarily with students without disabilities, while the support teachers provide assistance primarily to students with disabilities. They usually try to do it in a non-disruptive manner, demonstrating the prevalence of the model “one teach – one assist” (Bombińska-Domżał, 2012). This may be justified by the expertise of the special educator and the significant increase in student needs, but, on the other hand, may consequently lead to stigmatization of more challenging students with SEN.

The scope of cooperation between two teachers

Zamkowska (2017) depicts the collaboration of the support teacher with the general teacher in different roles: assessor, educator, tutor, therapist, promoter of inclusive activities, co-organizer, consultant and advisor. Collaborative tasks most often comprise joint planning and facilitation of differentiated instruction with the general teacher, which may include co-teaching or modelling (Mofield, 2020). Areas of collaboration between the general teacher and the support teacher most often include discussing students’ successes and challenges, creating and evaluating IEPs, adapting teaching materials, and consultation. The least frequent collaboration takes the form of informal conversations about students with SEN or the demands placed on them (Zaorska, 2022). The tasks of the special educator undertaken in collaboration with the general teacher also refer to arranged collaboration between students, such as peer coaching (Ackerman et al., 2023).

Pozas and Letzel-Alta’s (2023) study shows that teachers are most likely to use less demanding and less intensive collaborative practices, i.e., those such as exchanging teaching materials and information related to teaching content. More demanding collaborative practices, such as synchronization and co-creation, are significantly related to the varied teaching methods used by teachers. Teachers surveyed by Rytivaar et al. (2023) used more advanced practices in getting to know their students. They observed them together, thus co-constructing knowledge about their skills and needs. The teachers’ shared learning led to shared responsibility for the students and a better understanding of their diversity. Sharing knowledge about students reduced their workload and was beneficial for both teachers and students.

The important role of student observation and diagnosis in the cooperation between general teachers and support teachers was also highlighted by Oleńska-Pawlak and Bombińska-Domżał (2012). They found out that the accurate diagnosis of students allows for the planning of joint activities. Knowing the abilities and challenges of their students, teachers can plan lessons together, including choosing ready-made materials or creating their own adequate to the students' needs.

Cooperation between the subject teacher and the support teacher is effective in schools where the special educator is assigned to the subject rather than to the class. This allows both teachers to jointly plan the content, methods and forms of teaching and prepare additional teaching supports (Bombińska-Domżał, 2012). The subject teachers and support teachers surveyed by Skura (2018) pointed out the importance of the mutual exchange of expertise. Support teachers need input in terms of teaching and subject knowledge, while subject teachers need guidance on how best to work with students with special educational needs.

According to a study by Pancsofar and Petroff (2016), teachers do not always use collaborative teaching models that involve shared responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessment. The extent of collaboration depends on organizational factors such as the number of teachers and students they work with and professional development opportunities. Support teachers who have more regular contact with general teachers and work with fewer of them at the same time are more likely to engage in collaborative planning and teaching. Teachers who have more professional development opportunities in collaborative teaching are more likely to undertake tasks that require more collaboration. In addition, teachers who have positive attitudes towards collaboration are more likely to undertake tasks that require more commitment from both parties.

Occasionally, there are also situations that indicate a lack of good collaboration. This is the case when the support teacher does not take the initiative to actively participate in adapting materials to the content presented to the entire class, and his/her contribution is limited only to disciplining students with special educational needs if their behavior impedes the work of the teacher and other students in a class (Bartuś, 2023).

Methods

The results of the above-mentioned international studies demonstrate the complex nature of the support teacher's tasks carried out in collaboration with the general teacher. These are diagnostic, educational, therapeutic, cooperative and advisory tasks. In the literature, only a few reports show the frequency with

which support teachers carry them out. The aim of the research presented in this paper is therefore to analyze the scope and frequency with which support teachers collaborate with general teachers in diagnostic, planning, organizational and educational tasks, their satisfaction with collaboration and difficulties encountered, and their determinants. The following determinants were included in the analysis: level of special education qualifications, professional ranks, opportunities for training in service and participation in training. The research problems to achieve this objective were formulated in the form of the following questions:

1. What is the scope and frequency of the tasks performed by the support teacher carried out in collaboration with the general teacher in primary school classes?
2. Are the support teachers satisfied with their collaboration with the general teacher?
3. Do the support teachers experience difficulties in their cooperation with the general teacher?
4. Does the level of qualifications and professional rank of the teachers surveyed differentiate the frequency with which they perform these tasks?
5. Do opportunities for in-service training and participation in training influence the frequency with which they perform these tasks?

The survey instrument was a scale targeted at support teachers of Polish inclusive and integrated primary schools. The scale consisted of 50 closed and demographic questions (regarding age, qualifications, length of service, professional ranks and qualifications in special education), of which 19 were used for the purposes of this article. The closed questions were classified into blocks depending on the nature of the tasks performed by the support teacher. Tasks of a diagnostic-planning, organizational, didactic and educational nature were distinguished. The answers to closed questions refer to the frequency of completion of a task and consists of a four-point Likert scale: never, rarely, sometimes, always.

The survey was conducted online between April 2021 and December 2023 using the Forms platform. A request to complete the questionnaire was posted to social media groups for support teachers. A total of 224 responses were received from respondents. Finally, a total of 200 questionnaires were analyzed. The largest age group consisted of teachers aged 30-40 years old ($n=86$, 43%), teachers with short seniority, i.e., up to 5 years ($n=84$, 42%), contract ($n=71$, 35.5%) and appointed ($n=55$, 27.5%) teachers. The vast majority obtained their qualification in special education from postgraduate studies ($n=141$, 70.5%). All respondents were employed in Polish primary schools. The differences in numbers between the groups of younger respondents with shorter work experience, lower professional rank and lower qualifications and older certified teachers

with longer work experience and higher education in special education are due to the relatively recent introduction of the compulsory employment of a support teacher in a class with a student with autism spectrum disorders (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1309), as well as the possibility of obtaining the special educator qualification in a shorter period of time, i.e. within a three-semester postgraduate study.

Table 1.
Characteristics of the sample

Variable	N	%
AGE OF RESPONDENTS		
Less than 30	42	21,00
30-40	86	43,00
41 and over	57	28,50
Over 50	15	7,50
LENGTH OF SERVICE		
Up to 5 years	84	42,00
6-10 years	48	24,00
11 years and more	68	34,00
PROFESSIONAL RANK		
Trainee/early career teacher	52	26,00
Contract teacher	71	35,50
Appointed teacher	55	27,50
Certified teacher	22	11,00
QUALIFICATIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION		
A bachelor's degree	9	4,50
Associate degree in special education	23	11,50
Two-degree or unified master's degree	20	10,00
Post-graduate in special education	141	70,50
Bachelor's / complementary master's and postgraduate degree in special education	7	3,50

Source: own research.

Due to the use of an ordinal scale, the data was described by providing counts (N) and percentages (%), and when comparing the data, the Spearman correlation was used. The statistical significance of differences was expressed as the p-value, which constitutes the lowest level of significance at which the hypothesis is rejected. The differences are considered significant for $p < 0.05$. The Statistica package was used for statistical analysis of the results.

Results

Support teachers were asked to specify the frequency of their collaboration with the general teacher on diagnostic and planning, organizational, teaching and behavior/class management tasks.

Co-diagnosing and co-planning

Effective collaboration is based on joint diagnosis and planning. Table 2 shows the results of the frequency of the joint execution of these tasks.

Table 2.
Frequency of co-diagnosing and co-planning

Factors	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Together with the general teacher, I make an initial assessment of the SEN pupil's needs and abilities.	135 (67,5)	39 (19,5)	18 (9)	8(4)	200 (100)
We meet with the general teacher to consult on joint activities	106 (53)	70 (35)	17 (8,5)	7 (3,5)	200 (100)
We agree with the general teacher to adapt the lesson to the needs of students with SEN	117 (58,50)	66 (33)	12 (6)	5 (2,50)	200 (100)
We expand the objectives of the lesson to include therapeutic goals	59 (29,65)	77 (38,69)	38 (19,1)	25 (12,56)	199 (100)
Together with the general teacher, we establish class behavior rules	118 (59)	58 (29)	17 (9)	6 (3)	199 (100)

Source: own research.

Joint diagnosis and planning involve a number of specific activities. Most of the teachers under consideration undertake them jointly with the general teacher. More than half of the respondents make an initial assessment of the SEN pupil's needs and abilities together with general teachers (67.5%), meet with them to consult on joint activities (52%), agree with them on adapting lessons to the needs of pupils with SEN (58.50%) and on classroom behavior rules (59%). In contrast, support teachers plan therapeutic goals together with the general teacher rather sometimes (38.69%) than always (29.65%). This may be because it is believed that the special educators have the relevant expertise and that they are responsible for planning therapeutic objectives and activities.

Table 3 presents the results of correlation analysis between the frequency of co-diagnostic and co-planning tasks and the respondents' qualifications, professional rank, professional development opportunities, and participation in training.

Table 3.
Cooperation in co-planning and variables

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
Together with the general teacher, I make an initial assessment of the SEN pupil's needs and abilities.	0.859	0.307	0.072	0.107
We meet with the general teacher to consult on joint activities	0.413	0.071	0.034*	0.124
We agree with the general teacher to adapt the lesson to the needs of students with SEN	0.121	0.141	0.010*	0.041*
We expand the objectives of the lesson to include therapeutic goals	0.768	0.704	0.000***	0.026*
Together with the general teacher, we establish class behavior rules	0.208	0.877	0.326	0.883

* $p < 0,05$

** $p < 0,01$

*** $p < 0,001$

Source: own research.

A significant positive, but weak, correlation was found between consultation on collaborative activities and professional development opportunities ($p = 0.034$, $r = 0.150$). Similarly, a positive, but very, weak correlation was also found between consultation with teachers to adapt lessons to the needs of students with special educational needs and professional development opportunities ($p = 0.010$, $r = 0.081$) and respondents' participation in training ($p = 0.041$, $r = 0.045$). A positive weak correlation also occurred between collaborative design of therapeutic goals and professional development opportunities ($p = 0.000$, $r = 0.263$) and participation in training ($p = 0.026$, $r = 0.158$). The support teachers who are more interested in their professional development are more likely to consult with the classroom teacher on joint activities, collaborate on adapting lessons to meet the needs of students with SEN, and expand lesson objectives to include therapeutic goals.

Organizational matters are the shared responsibility of general and support teacher. The frequency of these activities is shown below.

Table 4.
Frequency of co-organizing

Factors	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
We jointly agree on the initial principles of cooperation	141 (70,50)	46 (23)	11 (5,50)	2 (1)	200 (100)
The rules of cooperation are respected by both parties	102 (51)	81 (40,5)	16 (8)	1 (0,5)	200 (100)
We fill out the documentation together	96 (48)	55 (28)	27 (14)	20 (10)	198(100)
We jointly decorate the classroom and are responsible for it	95 (47,74)	58 (29)	25 (13)	21 (11)	199 (100)
We jointly develop cooperation between parents of students with and without disabilities	106 (54)	68 (34)	16 (8)	8 (4)	198 (100)

Source: own research.

As can be seen from the data presented in the table above, the majority of teachers (70.50%) jointly set preliminary rules for cooperation. These rules are not always respected by both sides, although slightly more than half of the respondents (51%) indicated the answer “always”, but as many as 40.5% of them chose the answer “sometimes”. This issue should be a subject of action to improve mutual cooperation. Similar responses were received to questions about joint submission of documents and organization of classrooms. Slightly fewer than half respondents (nearly 48%) always undertake these activities jointly, while nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ sometimes cooperate in this regard, and nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ rarely or never do so.

Table 5 shows the results of correlations between the frequency of organizational tasks and respondents' qualifications, professional rank, professional development opportunities, and participation in training.

Table 5.
Cooperation in co-organizing and variables

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
We jointly agree on the initial principles of cooperation	0.543	0.039*	0.568	0.356
The rules of cooperation are respected by both parties	0.888	0.938	0.382	0.922

Table 5.
Cooperation in co-organizing and variables (cont.)

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
We fill out the documentation together	0.765	0.162	0.000***	0.014*
We jointly decorate the classroom and are responsible for it	0.536	0.450	0.659	0.870
We jointly develop cooperation between parents of students with and without disabilities	0.444	0.120	0.176	0.090

* $p < 0,05$

** $p < 0,01$

*** $p < 0,001$

Source: own research.

A significant positive, but weak, correlation was found between setting initial rules for teacher collaboration and professional rank ($p = 0.039$, $r = 0.146$). A positive weak correlation also occurred between collaborative filing of documents and professional development opportunities ($p = 0.000$, $r = 0.253$) as well as respondents' participation in training ($p = 0.014$, $r = 0.174$). Teachers with higher levels of professional advancement are more likely to set initial rules for collaboration, and teachers more involved in professional development are more likely to complete the documentation jointly with the general teacher.

Planning is the basis of collaborative teaching. The table below shows teachers' responses regarding the frequency of co-teaching tasks.

Table 6.
Frequency of co-teaching

Factors	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
I conduct classes together with the class teacher	52 (26)	70 (36)	36 (18)	39 (20)	197 (100)
We analyze the learning challenges of SEN students together with the class teacher on an ongoing basis	140 (70)	44 (22)	14 (7)	2 (1)	200 (100)
We use cooperative learning strategies together	127 (63,50)	54 (27)	14 (7)	5 (2,50)	200 (100)
We jointly evaluate students' progress	124 (62)	52 (26)	15 (8)	8 (4)	199 (100)

Source: own research.

As can be seen from the data presented in Table 6, most teachers always jointly analyze the learning challenges of students with special educational needs on an ongoing basis (70%), develop strategies for collaborative learning (63.50%), and evaluate students' progress (62%). However, teachers do not always teach together. More than $\frac{1}{3}$ of them implement co-teaching sometimes, more than $\frac{1}{4}$ always, and as many as 38% do it rarely or not at all. Table 7 shows the results of the correlation analysis between the frequency of implementing cooperative teaching and the respondents' qualifications, professional rank, professional development opportunities, and participation in training.

Table 7.
Cooperation in co-teaching and variables

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
I conduct classes together with the class teacher	0,246	0,958	0,030	0,005
We analyze the learning challenges of SEN students together with the class teacher on an ongoing basis	0,359	0,013	0,264	0,553
We use cooperative learning strategies together	0,085	0,190	0,672	0,013
We jointly evaluate students' progress	0,784	0,161	0,389	0,139

* $p < 0,05$

** $p < 0,01$

*** $p < 0,001$

Source: own research.

There is a significant positive, but weak, correlation between co-teaching and professional development opportunities ($p = 0.030$, $r = 0.155$) as well as respondents' participation in training ($p = 0.005$, $r = 0.199$). Similarly, there is a positive weak correlation between the frequency of using jointly collaborative learning strategies and respondents' participation in training ($p = 0.013$, $r = 0.176$). Teachers who invest in professional development are more likely to engage in more advanced collaborative practices involving co-teaching and the use of collaborative learning strategies. In addition, a positive weak correlation was detected between the joint ongoing analysis of learning challenges of students with special educational needs and professional rank ($p = 0.013$, $r = 0.175$). Teachers with higher professional ranks are more likely to undertake these activities together.

Teaching activities are closely correlated with childcare. Table 8 presents the frequency of teachers' cooperation in the implementation of behavior/class management tasks.

Table 8.
Frequency of behavior/class management tasks

Factors	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
We analyze on an ongoing basis the behavioral problems of students with SEN together with the class teacher	148 (74)	40 (20)	12(6)	0 (0)	200 (100)
We jointly shape the positive climate of the class	161 (80,50)	32 (16)	7 (3,50)	0 (0)	200 (100)
We jointly determine the methods of shaping positive and eliminating negative behavior of students with SEN.	138 (69,7)	38 (19,19)	18 (9,09)	4 (2,02)	198 (100)

Source: own research.

Most of the surveyed support teachers undertake behavior/class management tasks in cooperation with the general teacher. They always jointly analyze the behavioral problems of students with special educational needs (74%), shape a positive classroom climate (80.50%), and establish methods for shaping positive and eliminating negative behavior of students with SEN (67.7%).

Table 9 shows the results of the correlation analysis between the frequency of implementation of behavior/class management tasks and the respondents' qualifications, professional rank, professional development opportunities, and participation in training.

Table 9.
Cooperation in mentoring- upbringing and variables

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
We analyze on an ongoing basis the behavioral problems of students with SEN together with the class teacher	0,589	0,003**	0,253	0,149
We jointly shape the positive climate of the class	0,125	0,008**	0,229	0,140

Table 9.
Cooperation in mentoring- upbringing and variables (cont.)

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
We jointly determine the methods of shaping positive and eliminating negative behavior of students with SEN.	0,897	0,990	0,427	0,200

* $p < 0,05$

** $p < 0,01$

*** $p < 0,001$

Source: own research.

A significant positive, but weak, correlation was found between jointly analyzing the behavioral challenges of students with SEN ($p = 0.003$, $r = 0.207$) as well as jointly shaping a positive classroom climate ($p = 0.008$, $r = 0.188$) and professional rank. Teachers with higher professional ranks are more likely to jointly analyze the behavioral challenges of students with SEN and shape a positive climate of the class together.

The degree of satisfaction of support teachers in cooperation with the general teacher and the frequency of difficulties in this cooperation were also analyzed. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 10.
Frequency of satisfaction with cooperation and experiencing difficulties

Factors	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
I am satisfied with the cooperation with the general teacher	126 (63,32)	52 (26,13)	18 (9,05)	3 (1,51)	199 (100)
I experience difficulties in cooperating with the general teacher	30 (15)	56 (28)	44 (22)	70 (35)	200 (100)

Source: own research.

The data presented in the table above shows that the majority of respondents are satisfied with their cooperation with the general teacher and never experience difficulties in this regard. It should also be noted that the group of teachers experiencing difficulties "sometimes" accounts for nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents.

No significant correlations were found between satisfaction with cooperation and the respondents' qualifications, their professional rank, professional development opportunities, and participation in training.

Table 11.

Frequency of satisfaction with cooperation and experiencing difficulties, and variables

Factors	Qualification in special education	Professional rank	Professional development opportunities	Participation in training
I am satisfied with the cooperation with the general teacher	0,740	0,885	0.141	0,067
I experience difficulties in cooperating with the general teacher	0,313	0,498	0,142	0,058

* $p < 0,05$

** $p < 0,01$

*** $p < 0,001$

Source: own research.

Discussion

The research presented here indicates that most of the support teachers surveyed declared undertaking most of the tasks in cooperation with the general teachers. These include diagnostic and planning activities, namely, the initial assessment of the SEN student's needs and abilities, consulting on joint activities, adapting lessons to the needs of students with SEN, and setting classroom behavior rules. These findings are in line with other research showing that cooperation in observing and diagnosing students (Oleńska-Pawlak & Bombińska-Domzal, 2012) allows them to co-create knowledge about their abilities and needs (Rytivaara et al. (2023). Teachers studied by Bombińska-Domzal (2012), Mofield (2020), and Zaorska (2022) most often jointly developed and evaluated Individual Educational Plans, planned to adapt the lessons to students' special educational needs by agreeing on the content discussed, the methods and forms of work, and preparing additional teaching aids. A significant correlation was observed between involvement in joint planning and involvement in professional development. Similar to the results of Pancsofar and Petroff's (2016) study, teachers who are more likely to take advantage of professional development opportunities are more likely to engage in collaborative planning as well.

The authors' research has proven that most support teachers jointly set initial rules for collaboration, but do not always respect them. Other organizational activities are also not always undertaken together. This includes completing the

documentation and organizing classes. For teachers supporting students from different higher-grade classes, the lack of a complete commitment to cooperating with each subject teacher may be due to the need to work with several teachers during courses conducted in different classrooms. Working with students from different grades and changing classrooms is a demanding organizational task. It also makes it difficult for support teachers to participate in the co-organization of work in each of these classes. In such a situation, the class teacher may feel more obliged to complete the documentation and care for his/her own class. This difficulty was pointed out in the study by Pancsofar and Petroff (2016). Further research presented in this article shows that participation in joint organizational activities is positively related to the level of professional rank and commitment to professional development. This indicates the importance of raising awareness of the need and capacity to cooperate in the field of organizational tasks.

The majority of the teachers concerned always engage in joint teaching activities, continuously analyzing the learning challenges of students with special educational needs, using collaborative learning strategies and assessing the progress of students, which is consistent with the results of the Zaorska study (2022). However, they do not always co-teach. Teachers who invest in professional development are more likely to engage in more advanced collaborative practices involving joint instruction and the use of cooperative learning strategies. Moreover, teachers with higher professional ranks are more likely to jointly analyze the learning challenges of students with special educational needs on an ongoing basis. This finding is in line with Pancsofar and Petroff's (2016) research. They detected a correlation between the use of professional development opportunities and the use of more advanced collaboration models. According to Pancsofar and Petroff (2016), teachers who are more engaged in professional development are more likely to undertake tasks that require more collaboration, such as collaborative classroom management, collaborative learning strategies, and collaborative assessment.

As the analysis shows, most respondents perform behavior/class management tasks together with the general teacher. In this regard, cooperation is particularly recognized by teachers of higher professions. Studies by other authors confirm this, indicating that the scope of significant cooperation between teachers is the discussion of challenges in students' behavior and the organization of peer support (Zaorska, 2022; Ackerman, 2023).

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the cooperation with the general teacher and never experience difficulties in this regard. In contrast, the results of a study by Vostal et al. (2022) indicated that general and special educators experienced difficulties in building relational trust. The suggested solution to this problem is to promote equality of roles between both teachers and develop norms to support their cooperation.

Limitations of the study

The research presented in this article has some limitations. Firstly, the survey included a small, although nationwide, group of 224 respondents. The survey was voluntary, so the questionnaire was only completed by those interested in it. Furthermore, not all questionnaires were filled in correctly, bringing the number of respondents to 200. To standardize the group, questionnaires completed by pre-school teachers were not included in the analysis. Secondly, other variables are worth considering in correlation analysis, such as the level of education, the type of disability of the student and the type of institution (public, non-public) or its location (urban, rural school). Thirdly, surveys should be interpreted with caution because they have the characteristics of subjective statements by respondents.

Conclusion

According to the survey, most diagnostic, organizational, and educational tasks are carried out by support teachers in cooperation with the general teacher. Only selected activities are undertaken in cooperation with less frequency. This applies to the appointment of therapeutic lesson objectives, which are only sometimes carried out jointly, as well as conducting lessons together. This indicates the need to make the general teachers aware of the need to accomplish during their lessons not only educational, but also therapeutic goals, and to prepare both teachers to conduct lessons together. Most of the respondents are satisfied with their cooperation with the general teacher and never experience difficulties in this regard. Teachers' professional development, understood as participation in training courses and obtaining higher professional ranks, positively correlates with setting and adhering to the rules of cooperation, joint discussion of educational challenges, the shaping of a positive classroom climate, and the use of support teachers of more advanced forms of cooperation, such as joint planning and co-teaching. It is therefore postulated that the topic of cooperative teaching should become the subject of training for both active and prospective teachers as well.

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Współpraca pedagogów specjalnych z nauczycielami szkół podstawowych: badanie polskich nauczycieli

Streszczenie

Współpraca nauczyciela wspomagającego z nauczycielem klasy w klasie integracyjnej i włączającej jest jednym z wyznaczników powodzenia tych form. Celem badania jest analiza zakresu i częstotliwości ich współpracy w realizacji zadań diagnostycznych, planistycznych, organizacyjnych i wychowawczych, a także satysfakcji ze współpracy i doświadczanych wyzwań. Analizowano także korelację tych zmiennych z kwalifikacjami nauczycieli, ich stopniem awansu zawodowego, dostępnością doskonalenia zawodowego i korzystaniem ze szkoleń. Próba 200 polskich nauczycieli współorganizujących kształcenie w szkołach podstawowych została przebadana za pomocą kwestionariusza on-line. Wyniki pokazują, że większość zadań respondentów obejmuje współpracę z nauczycielem klas. Co więcej, ich rozwój zawodowy koreluje pozytywnie z częstotliwością wykonywania tych zadań. Większość respondentów uznała tę współpracę za satysfakcjonującą i nigdy nie doświadczyła trudności w tym zakresie.

Słowa kluczowe: współnauczanie, szkoła podstawowa, edukacja włączająca, kształcenie integracyjne, nauczyciel współorganizujący kształcenie.



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Special Educators' Knowledge of the Visual Arts of People with Intellectual Disabilities – Reports from a Pilot Study

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Abstract

The aim of this text is to present a slice of pilot research on the knowledge of special educators about the artistic creativity of artists with intellectual disabilities. The research problem was to determine the level of theoretical and practical knowledge of special educators on the artistic activity of their charges. A diagnostic survey method was used on a group of 91 respondents – professionally active special educators. The results indicate a small amount of theoretical knowledge, but at the same time indicate the willingness of special educators to get involved in promoting and supporting creativity. The results may serve as a hint on how to deepen the knowledge of the issue and use the talent of a person with intellectual disabilities to increase their self-esteem, build a sense of agency and self-determination.

Keywords: visual arts, intellectual disability, special educator, art.

Introduction

The change in social attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities and the processes of social inclusion that are taking place nowadays are largely

taking place by drawing attention to the visual works created by this social group. Thus, a kind of breaking down of barriers connected with stereotypical perceptions of disability is taking place and, consequently, building up a sense of the value of their creators, but also of the works themselves. As Eva Zamojska states: 'The concept of inclusion includes the recognition of the subjectivity of people with disabilities, so it can be assumed that works whose message is of an inclusive nature are at the same time works that realise the principle of respect for subjectivity' (2017, p. 144). This is because disability, according to the constructivist approach and the theoretical assumptions of the modern model of disability, combines the understanding of such a condition both as a feature of the relationship with the environment, but also as one of the features that builds the image of a person. As Otto Speck wrote: "Intellectual disability is merely a certain characteristic of a person, who otherwise remains primarily a person like others. No person with an intellectual disability is merely disabled" (2015, p. 42). It is therefore a complex phenomenon, requiring multilateral cooperation both on the part of people with disabilities and the able-bodied part of society. According to Barbara Gąciarz: 'Recognising disability as a social construct means that, in the conditions of contemporary societies, solving the problems of disability must take into account acting at the macro-social level, creating appropriate institutional solutions and including people with disabilities in the usual mechanisms of social life, including the economy, politics or culture' (2014, p. 28). Moreover, these activities are associated, in the context of reflections on art, with a move away from an instrumental approach to creativity as a tool for therapy, diagnosis and rehabilitation (Gajdzica, 2011, p. 12). Moreover, the art of people with intellectual disabilities is very often entangled in a closed environment, it remains as if in a ghetto of the disabled community, thus it is presented in special schools, centres and social welfare homes without going beyond the pattern of the disability itself. It is also necessary to call for a separation of the phenomenon of art from the very often occurring commercial activity of selling works - handicrafts of people with intellectual disabilities at various fairs, auctions and events (Pawlik, 2016, p. 350). Janusz Kirenko (2006), stressed the great importance of the social reception of artworks for the self-development and growth of the strength of the artists' personalities. Very often, it is through the prism of evaluation of their achievements that they form self-esteem, a positive attitude towards their own disability, while breaking social stereotypes.

The level of satisfaction with life of people with intellectual disabilities is strongly linked to the attitudes towards them of people without disabilities. Personality traits and knowledge of the surrounding world determine human behaviour and determine the attitudes represented in different social situations. The formation of the attitudes themselves, on the other hand, has to do with

individual experiences, direct contact with people with disabilities and empathic feelings towards the other person. The causes of inappropriate attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities may be primarily the result of fear of difference, lack of knowledge and personal experience. They can also be caused by the prevalence of stereotypical expressions built on attributed negative characteristics. The social cognition of people with intellectual disabilities can take on a reflexive, inclusive, conscious and intentional character, not necessarily conditioned by stereotypes. Thus, these people can be perceived not only on the basis of disability-related characteristics, but as individual, unique individuals, able to find their way in different social situations. The task of special educators is therefore primarily to help people with intellectual disabilities to achieve positive life goals, using, among other things, the creative activity of artistically gifted wards.

Research methodology

The aim of the analyses, which are part of a research project on the perception of the artistic creativity of people with intellectual disabilities by special educators, was to find out the knowledge resources and proposals for changes in the support system. This learning was obtained using the method of a diagnostic survey of these educators on the artistic aspects of the social functioning of people with intellectual disabilities. Special educators are a social group with a special character. They are made up of people with already formed personality traits, intellectually mature with a developed axiological and moral sphere, aware of their abilities. They generally have precise goals they want to achieve, specific aspirations and plans for the near and distant professional future. They have fairly clear lifestyle preferences, and at the same time are still learning, acquiring new skills, undertaking different activities, and enriching their experience of relationships with others. Special educators furthermore show a willingness to reflect on their attitudes, values, aspirations.

The main research problem was formulated in the form of a question: what level of knowledge about the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities is represented by special educators? Based on the specified question, the following research problems were identified:

- what type of artwork of people with disabilities have the respondents encountered in the course of their professional work?
- at what level do they declare their knowledge of the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities?
- which terms available in the literature, concerning art of people with intellectual disabilities, do special educators associate?

- What terms do special educators know/ associate with the art of people with intellectual disabilities and which of these terms do they consider stigmatising?
- by whom do special educators believe artistic activities of people with intellectual disabilities should be promoted?
- In the opinion of special educators, is artistic creation of people with intellectual disabilities the same as art therapy activities?
- what kind of social awareness activities do special educators think would be most effective?

A diagnostic survey method was used to carry out the research. The empirical material was obtained by means of a questionnaire consisting of open and closed questions. The study involved 91 respondents who were active special educators, 87 of whom were women and 4 men. The vast majority of respondents were young people aged 20-30 (42 people - 46.2%), there were 31 respondents (34.1%) in the 31-40 age group, 17 people (18.7%) in the 41-50 age group, and only one person (1.1%) in the 51-60 group.

Results of the study

Types of creativity encountered by special educators

The research conducted provided answers to a number of questions. The first was: what types of creativity did respondents come into contact with? This was a multiple-choice question, with the option 'other' ticked - to enter your statement.

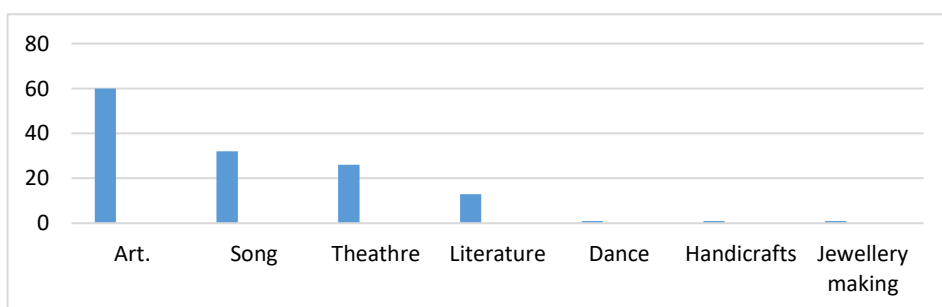


Figure 1

Types of creativity that respondents had contact with

Source: own research.

The data presented in Figure 1 shows that familiarity with visual arts was most common among the responses, with 60 indicating familiarity with arts-oriented creative activities. In second place was song with 32 indications, followed

by theatre with 26 respondents. The next indication was literature (13 people), with dance, handicraft and jewellery-making activities receiving one indication each.

The extent of special educators' knowledge of the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities

The next question referred to the diagnosis of the level of knowledge of special educators on the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities (Figure 2). This was a closed, compulsory question. Special educators indicated in 42 cases (46.2%) that they 'rather not' have sufficient knowledge about the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities. Obtaining such high results indicates that this is an issue that is worth looking into, even when developing curricula for special education. Two responses ranked at a similar level - 19 responses (20.9%) were obtained by selecting 'rather yes' and 18 responses 'I have no opinion'. 'Definitely no' was answered by 10 respondents, while 'definitely yes' was answered by only 3 respondents.

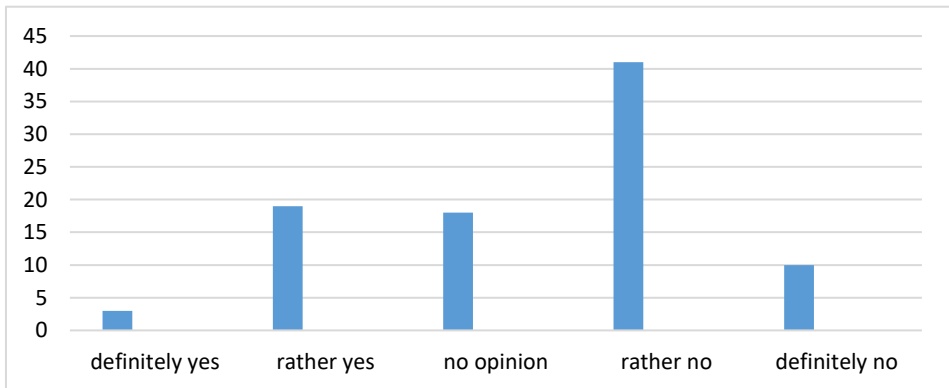


Figure 2

Special educators' knowledge of the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities

Source: own research.

Persons/organisations responsible for promoting the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities

The next question asked: by whom should the arts activities of people with intellectual disabilities be promoted? Seven options were selected based on knowledge of the involvement of individuals and institutions in the promotion of the arts of people with intellectual disabilities. An 'other' option was also selected for self-completion by respondents. This was a mandatory, multiple-choice question.

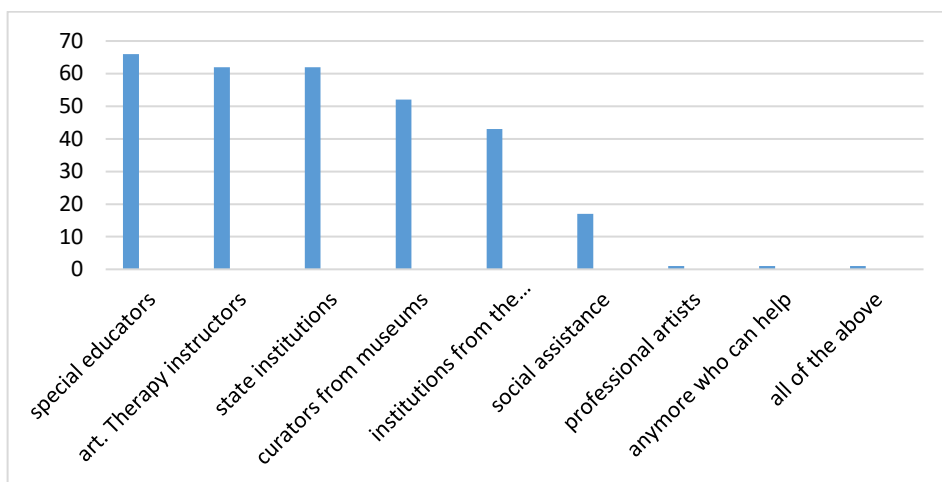


Figure 3.

Institutions/people who should promote the arts of people with intellectual disabilities

Source: own research.

The results in the chart above are interesting. Respondents identified the group they directly represent, i.e. special educators, as the people who should be concerned with promoting the arts of people with intellectual disabilities - this was 66 people (72.5%). The data obtained allow us to conclude that for the surveyed special educators it is important to take a broader view of disability, not to focus only on therapies and improvement, but at the same time talents are important and can be an excellent means to support activities aimed at inclusion. Another indication concerned art therapy instructors, which indicates that this therapy is equated with creativity. Respondents therefore have a misconception about the assumptions of this therapeutic method, which consists of helping people to create, suggesting solutions and themes for works, and thus the active participation of the therapist in the creative process. In contrast, the creativity of people with disabilities is a self-directed, individual activity, not subject to any influence or suggestions. Art therapy instructors accounted for 62 indications, or 68.1% of the respondents. State institutions received the same level, or 62 indications. According to the respondents, curators of exhibitions working in museums should also deal with the promotion of the above art - 52 indications (57.1%). Institutions from the NGO sector, i.e. foundations and associations working on a non-profit basis, received 43 indications, social aid 17. In contrast, terms relating to professional artists -1. In the questionnaire, under the 'other' option, respondents entered two answers: 'by anyone who can help' and 'all of the above', indicating the respondents' broader, inclusive view of the issue at hand.

The idea of creativity versus the idea of art therapy

The questionnaire included a question on the question: do respondents think that artistic creativity is the same as art therapy? This was a closed, single-choice question, with respondents having five options to choose from (Figure 4). Among the respondents, as many as 38 (41.8%) indicated a 'rather yes' answer, recognising that art therapy is the same as creativity, 28 people (30.8%) indicated a 'definitely yes' answer. Eight people had no opinion (8.8%). Only 6 people (6.6%) think that creativity and art therapy are separate activities ('definitely not'), 11 people (12.1%) think that 'rather not' they are the same.

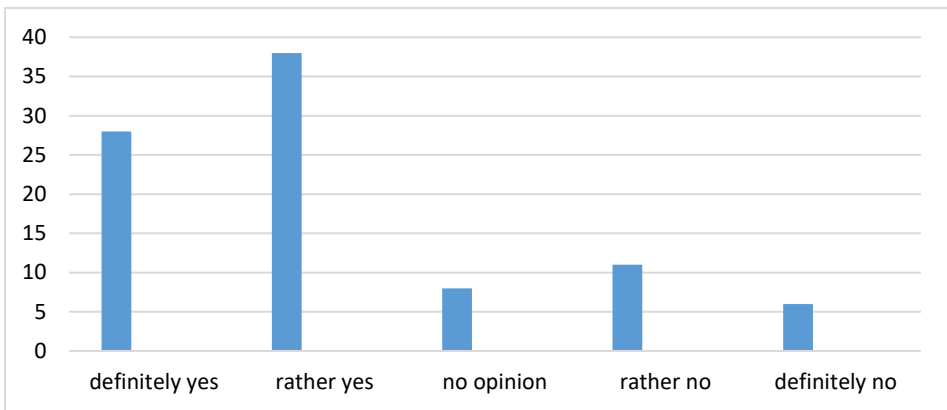


Figure 4.
Is artistic creation the same as art therapy?

Source: own research.

In addition, respondents were asked to elaborate: what differences do they see between creativity and art therapy. This was an optional question and 13 responses were received, of which one respondent wrote: 'rather none', one statement marked '-' which can also be read as no differences. Satisfactory results were obtained from the 11 statements obtained, indicating that the respondents distinguish and indicate the ideas of both art therapy and creativity. A selection of respondents' statements is presented below.

- I believe that creativity is a more independent form of activity, it is not under the control of a special educator or other specialist, it is usually initiated by the person with a disability and not that specialist.
- Art therapy, as the name suggests, has therapy as its main purpose. Creativity is not necessarily related to therapy, although it is part of it. Creativity is some kind of externalization of the author regardless of whether he or she is a person with a disability or not. Creativity can be therapy, but it can also be a way of simply expressing oneself, a way of spending free time

- Art therapy is therapy , and creativity is a work, an artistic activity.
- Art therapy is a type of therapy, the works created help one to go through a difficult process within oneself, it is dependent on momentary emotions and experiences. Creativity is an afterthought, it is not part of the therapeutic process, although it can have a therapeutic effect.
- The difference, it seems to me, is fundamental, involving the formation of a therapeutic relationship and the active role of the therapist, and the treatment of art as an object rather than a subject of activity.

The motives for undertaking creativity versus art therapy may be different

- Creativity flows from the desires, emotions and emotional states of people with NI, whereas art therapy is a form of therapy, often guiding, imposing on these people how to do their work.
- Creativity is more, 'own, individual, from the heart'.
- Art therapy - therapy through creative activities, releasing emotions, relieving tensions. Creativity of people with NI - their own artistic expression
- Art therapy is a combination of art and therapy, it has a therapeutic goal that the therapist aims to achieve. However, in art the artist can show himself, his intentions, without conforming to the goals of the therapeutic programme.
- Creativity is what a person with a disability does for him/herself, without defining a framework, without the subject of the work, without imposition from third parties. creativity comes from the need of the heart. art therapy is a form imposed from above and it is not said that a person with `NI needs or wants it.

The quoted statements of the respondents indicate a great understanding of the topic, however, it should be noted that only 11 out of a group of 91 people gave an answer that indicates the knowledge of the respondents, the remaining 80 people did not complete this part of the questionnaire.

Knowledge of terms referring to the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities

The next question was constructed in order to clarify the research question of interest. Namely, respondents were asked: which terms referring to the visual arts of people with disabilities do they know, with which words do they associate this art. It was an open, optional question and 58 responses were obtained. The answers given by the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Familiarity with visual arts terms for people with intellectual disabilities

Terms mentioned	Number of respondents
Do not know	23
Painting with 10 fingers, painting, drawing	6

Table 1.
Familiarity with visual arts terms... (cont.)

Terms mentioned	Number of respondents
Very nice, surprising, beautiful, emotional	6
Art therapy	5
Art by people with disabilities	3
Primitive, naive	2
Art of Others	2
Contemporary art	1
Paraplastic art	1
Ugly, not clear what the author means	1
Infantile	1
I have not come across a specific nomenclature with a positive slant	1
Scribbles	1
Artistically autistic	1
Integration	1
We create with passion!	1
Biennale	1
Terms depend on the experience of the recipient	1

Source: own research.

The data obtained shows that as many as 23 people do not know, do not associate with any term of visual arts for people with intellectual disabilities. Six respondents used the words drawing and painting, which indicate specific techniques of the artist's work, while 'painting with 10 squares' is a commonly used therapeutic method in special education, which is closer to art therapy than to creativity. A further 6 indications are positive adjectives referring to the final result - the created work. As many as 5 people associated art with art therapy, and the results obtained from the questions analysed above indicate a misunderstanding of creativity and art therapy. Three people used the phrase 'art of people with disabilities', which quite often appears in exhibition titles as a complement to the main title. Twice each used the terms primitive art, naïve art and others that have entered the canon of names considered theoretically sound. The remaining responses (11) represent a sequence of associations, e.g. related to exhibition names, negative feelings and statements related to the experience of the viewer of the work. One respondent wrote that he had not encountered nomenclature with a positive connotation, hence another conclusion about too sparse promotion of terms with their positive meaning.

Terms associated with the art of people with intellectual disabilities

The next question asked about the type of visual arts with which the art of people with intellectual disabilities is associated. The terms that were used to construct the question were taken from the available literature on art history and analyses of the literature on the art of people with disabilities in general.

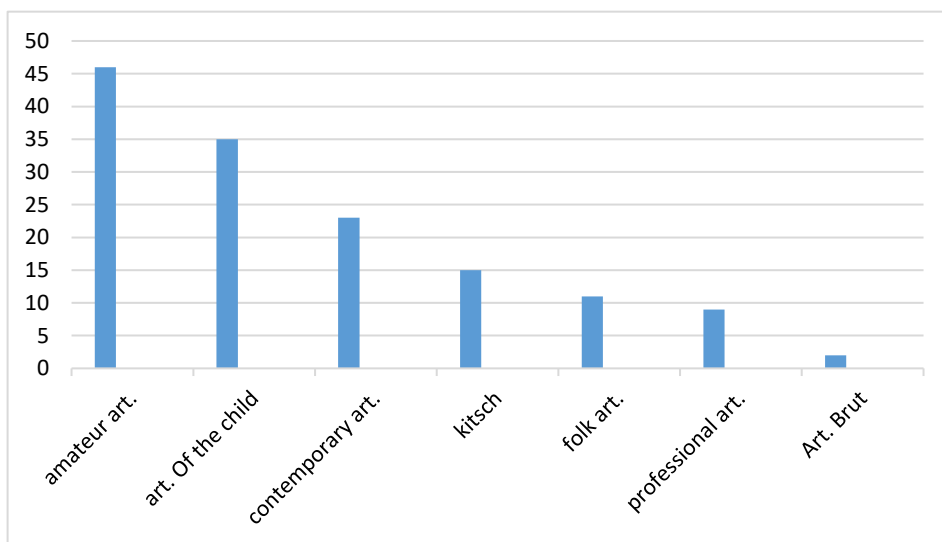


Figure 5

Types of terms associated with the art of people with intellectual disabilities

Source: own research.

According to the respondents' indications, the art most associated with the art of people with disabilities is amateur art (46 people). The artworks created by amateur artists are usually created without academic preparation in the field of theory, and are therefore created, as in the case of the artistic activities of people with intellectual disabilities, out of a pure need to create. However, amateurs very often want to match professionals in their artistic compositions, which is quite rare in the case of people with disabilities. The next most frequent indication (35 people) concerned the association with children's art. Taking into account the characteristics concerning the level of intellectual functioning of people with this type of disability, the technical level of artistic performance is sometimes close to that of an able-bodied child, so such a comparison can be considered valid. However, life experience and the emotional charge accompanying the resulting work are not without significance. It is quite different in a child and different in an adult with a disability. Another indication showed that the art of people with disabilities can be associated with contemporary art

(23 indications). In the contemporary artistic world, there are no longer any top-down trends or rigid canons of beauty. What is beautiful is what appeals to a wide audience, and the artist is not able to predict the reaction to his or her work. The results obtained may therefore give cause for optimism, as this may indicate a broader and more inclusive public perception of works of art. Another indication concerned kitsch (15) and folk art (11). These terms are quite often associated together, it is difficult to distinguish between kitsch and folk art, the boundary is very fluid. Nine respondents indicated an association with professional art. It is worth considering moving in this direction - to cause the boundaries created by society to blur precisely in the field of creativity. Unfortunately, the term Art Brut, in world art theories most strongly associated with the art of people with intellectual disabilities and schizophrenia, did not elicit positive, recognisable definitions from respondents and there were only 2 indications. The results of the survey indicate how important it is to promote the trend, activities, theories and definitions that can be used in everyday art activities under the guidance of special educators.

Terms referring to the art of people with intellectual disabilities considered stigmatising

A search of the available literature on the art of people with disabilities led to the selection of six terms appearing in popular and academic publications. The selected terms are, among other things, components of titles treating the art of people with disabilities. For example, Professor Aleksander Jackowski's almost cult publication created in 1995 entitled 'Sztuka zwana naiwną. An encyclopaedic outline of creativity in Poland.' In addition, the term 'others' is often used as the title of an exhibition or publication in academic journals. One of the first Polish exhibitions presenting the art of people with disabilities took place in 1965 at the Zachęta Gallery and was entitled 'Others. From Niki for to Głowacka'. 'Otherness' as captured in publications includes Barbara Majewska's Art Other, Art the Same from 1974 and Dorota Podgórska-Jachnik's 2007 text To Meet the Other in the Process of Educational Integration. Also, art curators preparing exhibitions to distinguish the uniqueness of artists often use the term 'other', e.g. Other Look. Art brut in Poland. Exhibition Catalogue (Wrocław, 2013: Museum of Kujawski and Dobrzyń Land). Similarly, in the case of the remaining terms, their choice was dictated by an analysis of the literature on the subject and, consequently, by their affiliation to theories that speak of the creativity of people with disabilities.

The task of the respondents was to indicate which of the names mentioned could be considered stigmatising for a person - an artist with a disability. The aim of the question was to identify, among the terms commonly known in the-

ories, those that, in the opinion of the respondents, should not be used and that are associated with the stigmatisation or even infantilisation of an artist with a disability. Respondents were able to indicate several terms. The question was structured as a 'multiple choice' question.

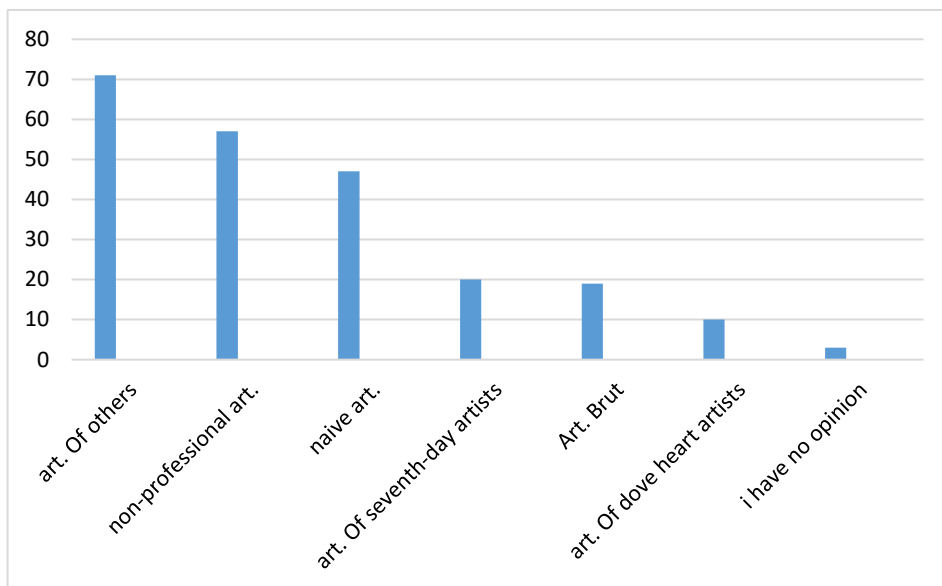


Figure 6

Terms related to artistic creation considered to be stigmatising

Source: own research.

Respondents found Art of Others to be the most stigmatising term - 71 people (78%) thought so. Non-Professional Art was mentioned in second place - 57 people (62.2%). Naive Art came third - 47 (51.6%). The next indication was Seventh Day Artists' Art - 20 people (22%), Art Brut was indicated by 19 respondents (20.9%). Art by Dove Heart Artists was indicated by 10 people (11%). Three people among the respondents 'have no opinion'.

Types of activities that could increase special educators' awareness of the visual arts of people with intellectual disabilities

The next question was to diagnose the type of need for training and awareness-raising activities aimed at special educators. Respondents were asked what kind of activities they would take part in to gain a better knowledge and understanding of the artwork of people with intellectual disabilities. A 'multiple-choice' question of four options was constructed, plus an 'other' option for self-insertion of their answer.

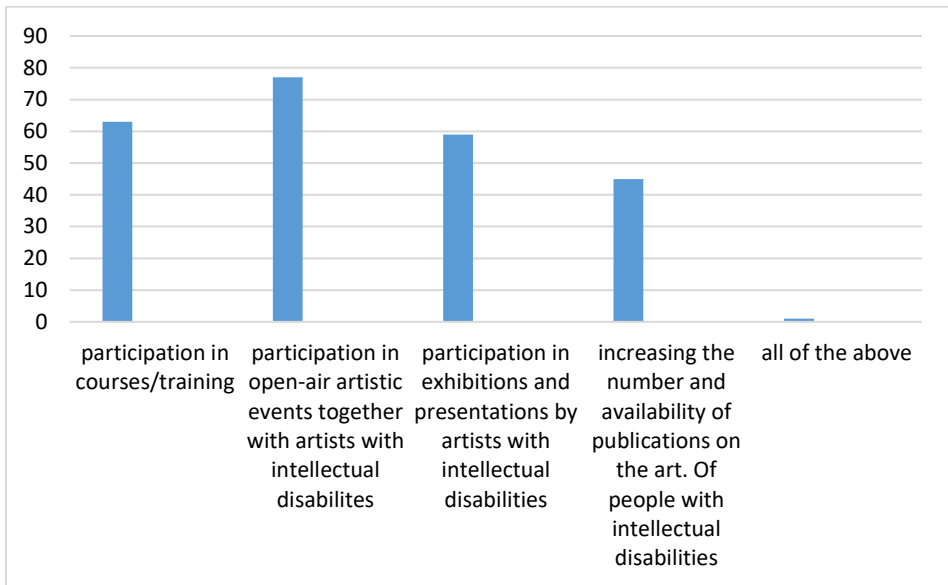


Figure 7

Types of knowledge enhancement/educational activities

Source: own research.

As many as 77 people (84.6%) would like to take part in a joint open-air art workshop, together with artists with intellectual disabilities. Among the respondents, 63 people (69.2%) said they would like to participate in courses or trainings on creativity. In third place, respondents mentioned participation in exhibitions and presentations of art by people with intellectual disabilities - 59 people (64.8%). Respondents 45 people (49.5%) said there was a need for more and more publications on the art of people with intellectual disabilities. One person used the 'other' option by entering - all of the above. Respondents did not write their own, individual ways to increase their own knowledge concerning the discussed issue.

Solutions proposed by respondents in the context of their own experiences and needs in terms of support and social knowledge about people with intellectual disabilities

As a consequence of the construction of the question concerning the need for activities to support and increase the knowledge of special educators on the subject of artistic creation of people with intellectual disabilities, an open question was asked concerning the following issue: how can special educators, using their knowledge of the creative abilities of people with intellectual disabilities, influence the improvement of social perception and social knowledge concern-

ing these artists? Due to the importance of the question, the form was constructed in such a way that it was a mandatory question (91 responses). However, not all respondents knew the answer to this question or did not want to answer it. There were 7 such situations where 'don't know' or 'hard to say' was entered. The remaining responses were grouped according to a key with the most frequent suggestions and leading (key) words.

The words 'exhibitions' and 'presentations' appeared 28 times, 'promotion' - 14 times. Respondents also highlighted education, making others aware, and passing on knowledge to the public (28 indications), showing that this aspect can be used to influence public awareness of the work of people with intellectual disabilities. Attention was also given to community involvement and the use of social media to introduce the profiles of artists to a wider audience. The majority of respondents highlighted showing the capabilities, rather than the weaknesses, of people with intellectual disabilities, and that the art they create is an excellent pretext to show and tell about their creative potential and talents. There were therefore suggestions for interaction, direct contact and communication at the level of artist and viewer of the artwork. A selection of respondents' answers, valuable for their cognitive value and the awareness and empathy of those completing the questionnaire, are presented below:

- Each of us is like art, each comprehends it in an individual way and each will notice beauty elsewhere. Each of us has a different resource - different capabilities, but the desire to develop is common to all people. Life is like art.
- Including people with intellectual disabilities in the public, social space. Showing them from a different perspective, getting society to understand their behaviour, what they are made of, how people with NI see the world and other people. Showcasing their talents and enhancing their self-esteem.
- The role of special educators is to make society aware, through a reliable message, of people with intellectual disabilities, it is an attempt to be open towards them, to get rid of stereotypes about them, social distance, misunderstanding. Raising social awareness is a very important aspect; it will certainly contribute to changing the perception of people with NI and thus improve their quality of life.

The information gathered from the individual responses of the respondents shows that special educators almost unanimously agreed that it is necessary to go beyond the walls of schools and centres with the art of people with intellectual disabilities. They pointed to the important aspect of social awareness in the context of disability, not only through theoretical talks, but above all through the possibility of experiencing an encounter with another human being who has a disability. There are a number of places on the Polish map of activities aimed at the professional promotion of art by people with intellectual disabilities, including the Tak Gallery from Poznań, the Art Brut Gallery from Lublin, the Art-Brut Gallery from Wrocław and the Art. Naif Festival from Katowice. These are venues that are thriving not only in terms of education, but above all in terms of exhibition and inclusion (Żabińska, 2022).

Discussion of the results

In the light of the analysis of the research results obtained, three main issues can be identified around which the problems and needs of the respondents in the context of the creativity of people with intellectual disabilities revolve.

The first is the theoretical knowledge of special educators about the definitions and terms commonly used in the art world, and concerning the particular type of creativity that is the visual arts activity of people with intellectual disabilities.

The second element is related to the need to build practical knowledge, on a theoretical basis, concerning the differences between creative and art therapy activities.

The third area, on the other hand, relates to solutions for supporting artists with intellectual disabilities. It was also important to identify directions in order to be able to deepen one's own pedagogical skills and knowledge of the arts.

The results presented in this study indicate that special educators do not have a very extensive knowledge of the theory of creativity of their charges, but at the same time are open to acquiring and expanding this knowledge. The analysis resulted in data showing that 64 respondents decided that art 'rather yes' or 'definitely yes' - can be identified with art therapy. Unfortunately, these data indicate a misinterpretation of assumptions and definitions regarding both art and art therapy. On the other hand, declarations of active participation in the artistic life of people with disabilities seem positive. Special educators appreciate the impact of artistic activities on the development and self-determination of a person with a disability, but also emphasise social inclusion. Therefore, the analysis of the data shows that they are aware of their deficiencies in the discussed field of knowledge, so it becomes important to involve them on a wider scale in the promotion and organisation of activities supporting Art Brut, Naïve Art, Art of Others. It is also important to increase the availability of scholarly materials on the positive effects of art on people, not only by educators themselves, but also by the professional groups and institutions they indicated in the survey. However, in order for artistic activity to be perceived socially as art, there must be a continuous change in the perception and understanding of disability itself, because, as Jurkow wrote: 'art is an area free of the division into able-bodied and disabled' (2003, p. 6). The above quote can also serve as a reference to disputes and inaccuracies in the naming of art practiced by people with disabilities. Indeed, the multiplicity of names is not conducive to a positive perception of the issue. On the one hand, human nature tends to organize and clarify (in this context - names), and on the other hand, giving one name constitutes a kind of pigeonholing, and thus the danger of a stigma. Therefore, this issue is an open path for discussion of the importance of clarifying the terms that speak of an artist with a disability.

It is furthermore crucial to point out that one of the main assumptions of special education in relation to people with intellectual disabilities is to build on human strengths. Undoubtedly, artistic activity, being a creative person falls into this category. It represents the strengths of the individual. It is therefore reasonable to ask for a wider interest of special educators in this particular area in order to be able to support more fully the building of positive self-esteem and self-efficacy of a person with intellectual disabilities.

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Wiedza pedagogów specjalnych na temat twórczości plastycznej osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – doniesienia z badania pilotażowego

Streszczenie

Celem publikacji jest przedstawienie wycinka badań pilotażowych dotyczących wiedzy pedagogów specjalnych na temat twórczości artystycznej osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Problem badawczy polegał na określeniu poziomu wiedzy teoretycznej i praktycznej pedagogów specjalnych na temat aktywności artystycznej ich podopiecznych. W badaniu wykorzystano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego w grupie 91 respondentów – czynnych zawodowo pedagogów specjalnych. Wyniki wskazują na niewielką ilość wiedzy teoretycznej, ale jednocześnie na gotowość pedagogów specjalnych do angażowania się w promowanie i wspieranie twórczości. Uzyskane wyniki mogą stanowić wskazówkę, jak pogłębiać wiedzę na ten temat i wykorzystywać talent osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną do zwiększania jej poczucia własnej wartości, budowania poczucia sprawczości oraz samostanowienia.

Słowa kluczowe: sztuki wizualne, niepełnosprawność intelektualna, pedagog specjalny, sztuka.



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Studying Pedagogical Theories. The Perspective of Pedagogy Students From Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the result of the author's own research focusing on senses and meanings attributed by Pedagogy students from Jan Długosz University (UJD) in Częstochowa to studying pedagogical theories. Pedagogical theories (currents, trends) as one of pedagogy research areas are interesting for an academic for many reasons. This area stands out by its diversity, various dilemmas or controversies. This diversity motivates academics, but also students, to multiply their cognitive activity. Exploring this world, learning about and understanding senses and meanings attributed to it is within the area of pedagogical exploration, whose direction is determined by, among others, the hermeneutic journey chosen by the author (hermeneutic method with interpretative analyses corresponding to it). The choice of such a research path is the result of the aim of the research set by the author as well as the subject matter and research problems.

Keywords: theory, pedagogical theories, pedagogical hermeneutics, students.

Introduction

In pedagogical literature the term *theory* is used interchangeably with such terms as paradigm, pedagogical perspective or discourse (Śliwerski, 2021, p. 31).

“What for some researchers is the explanation of some laws or regularities, which determine invariable or probable relationships, for others it is extracting some knowledge about them, generalizing it and integrating it, for some others it is a way of inferring as to some relationships, and still for others a theory is a presentation of some postulated vision of image of the world (normative theories) or finally it is a theoretical reflection encompassing epistemological and ontological aspects of a given knowledge branch” (Śliwerski, 2021, p. 31). Regardless of those different definitions, each theory can be defined as a concise system, a system of “relatively ordered assumptions to generate, regulate, distribute and operate specific forms of truth” (Śliwerski, 2018, p. 23). Diversity is a word that reflects the state/ order of the world of pedagogical ideas from the end of 1970s, among others, in Western Europe, or 1990s in Poland. Some scholars emphasize that nowadays each theory is equally legitimate. All the attempts to smuggle one’s theory as the “only” one, according to the above statement, become “an unauthorized interpretation of phenomena or theories and a will to gain power. None of these individual interpretations can be superior to others, similarly there are no “better” or “worse” theories” (Śliwerski, 2018, p.23). Diversification of theories is noticeable not only within the very scientific discipline, but also within its sub-disciplines. Tendencies to diversify theories are also noticeable within particular paradigms (see Rubacha, 2005, p. 68). Due to that fact, it is more and more difficult to describe “a given paradigm in the category of its constant determinants. It is rather possible to talk about the multiformity of a given paradigm, mainly in terms of more specific problems” (Rubacha, 2005, p. 68). This fact brings about further consequences. The general premises of paradigms organize the map of pedagogical theories on the one hand, whereas diversity that occurs within particular paradigms opens the door to new leads, new perspectives of the world of education, educational practice, on the other hand (Rubacha, 2005, p. 68).

Thus, learning about pedagogical theories is not a simple task for Pedagogy students. It is a kind of special meeting with the world of pedagogical diversity, learning about, e.g. new pedagogical trends, currents, directions (and this article focuses on this theoretical area), noticing the correlations of pedagogy with other disciplines, relations between theory and practice, exploring the qualities constituting it, multitude of languages describing it, languages used by it, it is discovering the identity of pedagogy as a science. Paradigm maps, for example, turn out to be very helpful in this challenging journey. The paradigm map by Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan, encompassing humanism, interpretivism, structuralism, functionalism, on the basis of which sets of premises explaining the object of research of pedagogy (educational practice) were placed, is quoted most often. In this way, the paradigm map of pedagogy was developed. It consists of the humanist version of paedocentrism, the interpretive version of pae-

docentrism, the structural version of didascalocentrism, the functional version of didascalocentrism (Rubacha, 2005, pp. 62-63).

Students' engagement in this type of meeting, understood as something "more than ordinary contact" (Śliwerski, 2012, p. 199), which is part of the inter-determinist approach (Śliwerski, 2012, p. 199) is treated by the author as an introduction to a hermeneutic journey, within the framework of which there are attempts to comprehend the world of education, i.e. to explore senses and meanings organizing it, to discover the conditions for educational opportunities, conditions of such knowledge and such experience which are truly educative, i.e. form a subjective identity (Śliwerski, 1998). During that journey, there is not only an attempt to comprehend pedagogical diversity but also a human being. Hermeneutics is the art of human self(understanding) (Gadamer, 1985, p. 17), it is a way of human existence in the world, a way of exploring and understanding the world, part of the scientific space (Reut, 1995, p. 29).

Referring to education developed in this way, many questions naturally arise, for instance: What is the meaning of this journey (hermeneutic journey into the world of pedagogical theories) in the education of future pedagogues? What is the meaning of studying pedagogical theories (currents, trends) for pedagogy students? I looked for the answers to these and other questions (placed in the further part of the article: Methodological assumptions) in the essays of pedagogy students from Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, titled *The need and way to study pedagogical theories. Theoretical implications in pedagogical practices*. The essays were written at the end of the course Introduction to Pedagogy.

The collected essays reveal the students' inner thoughts with regard to studying pedagogical theories (among others, currents and trends), the meaning they attribute to them, showing which theories are relevant to them, which ones they would like to realise in their professional space, in their private life, which ones are inspirational for pedagogical activity, and which ones regard the complexity and the multi-paradigm nature of pedagogy as science. Those individual interpretations hide not only the students' knowledge of pedagogical theories, the meaning they attribute to them and the activity of studying them, but also a particle of human experience, their own. For me, a researcher, the students' essays (understood as cultural/ objectified expressions/ forms of human spirituality) are a kind of code that expresses, among others, their attitude to a given subject matter, the story about themselves, about a human being. They are the material of cognition and the source of understanding.

Understanding is one of the main processes of human life, the basic element of hermeneutics seen as the theory of understanding and interpretation, and one of the scientific methods helpful in exploring the socio-cultural area. The method based on understanding the researched phenomena is a process, which engages "all human mental powers" (J. Such, 1999, p. 15), not only the intellec-

tual sphere. In professional literature there are many procedures regarding the process of understanding and as a result, various forms of hermeneutics are distinguished. The path of research procedure adopted by me is close to the assumptions of pedagogical hermeneutics that has its roots in philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-George Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur (I shall write more about it in the part "Methodological assumptions"). Thus, the adopted path of research concerns an attempt to read senses and meanings attributed by UJD Pedagogy students to studying pedagogical theories. Taking into account the above, the aim of this article is to share the research results, conclusions and invite the readers to a dialogue in the topic addressed.

Methodological assumptions

Pedagogical theories (currents, trends) as one area of pedagogical research are interesting for a researcher for many reasons. This area is characterized by high diversity, various dilemmas or controversies. Diversity motivates academics as well as pedagogy students to multiply their cognitive activity. Exploring this world, learning about it and understanding senses and meanings attributed to it lies within the area of pedagogical research whose direction is determined by, among others, the hermeneutic journey chosen by me. Hermeneutics fits into the area of qualitative research. Within the framework of this research, the researcher tries to answer such questions as: What is the meaning of what is happening? What is the sense of what is happening? This scientific path helps to understand the human world, the world of culture (of which it is a part, which it co-creates), and what follows, the world of education.

Exploring senses and meanings hidden in cultural texts¹ (among all, in creations, situations, events, behaviours, people) defines the direction for most of my research journeys. As a pedagogue, I am interested in unveiling senses and meanings building the world of education. Hence my engagement in pedagogical hermeneutics described as a pedagogical theory of understanding and interpretation (general meaning) and as a methodological orientation (narrow meaning).² As H. H. Krüger emphasizes, in science, hermeneutics "occupies – in its

¹ Cultural text is understood more broadly here, not only as a record, but also as an event, e.g. educational one, a specific social reality, phenomenon, cultural creations, for instance, words, sentences, beliefs, symbols, metaphors, metonymies, signs, looks, films, paintings, sculptures, gestures, clothes, etc.

² At a general level, it takes into account "the significance of understanding and interpretation in education and pedagogical research and the influence of pedagogical experiences on understanding and interpretation" (Milerski, 2011, p. 12). In a narrower meaning, it takes into account understanding and interpretation as methodological categories referring to "the process of identifying senses and values organizing educational reality and its interpretation" (Milerski,

developed from as a method of comprehending meanings – a central position among qualitative pedagogic scientific research methods” (H. H. Krüger, 2005, p. 148). In a discussion making applied research methods in the social sciences the focus of its attention, hermeneutics, as H. H. Krüger notices, is one of the significant methods (H. H. Krüger, 2005, p. 148)., and “as philosophical hermeneutics, interested in understanding experience of the world as a whole, it also offers a meta-theoretical framework of reference for qualitative social research (H. H. Krüger, 2005, p. 148; Adamska-Staroń, 2018, p. 101).

Taking into account the aforementioned approach, qualitative research is designed to be “empirical-analytical cognitive activities based on direct, personal experience. A researcher collects empirical material on their own, and subjects it to analysis and interpretation, using appropriate qualitative methods at all stages of research project realization” (H. H. Krüger, 2005, p. 7). Planning one’s research journey, there is no thought about discovering a given phenomenon, as it is in case of quantitative research, but a desire to understand.

Understanding takes many shapes. Wilhelm Dilthey³ captures hermeneutic understanding as an attempt to comprehend spiritual life, i.e. spiritual structure of human personality via objective expressions of spiritual life. In his view, understanding can be realised in two ways (Milerski, 2012, pp. 119–138): by observing people, their attitudes, behaviour, ways of being in the world and via objectified cultural expressions. In both cases, understanding cannot regard interpretations of one-off acts of action (one of the conditions for understanding to be a scientific method). Each understanding directs its efforts to something individual (Milerski, 2012, pp. 119–138). However, it should be noticed that in the elementary it is aimed at the singular and psychologically subjective, while in the hermeneutic the understanding of the elementary is put in the context of “the overall elements of spiritual life, cultural creations – texts, forms of social life, customs, mythical stories” (Milerski, 2012, pp. 119–138). Dilthey’s hermeneutic understanding encompasses three moments: transposition, reconstruction of spiritual states, recreating experience (Dilthey, 2004, p. 201). Understanding of external manifestations of spiritual life reconstructed in the experience was referred to by Dilthey as “interpretation” or “rendition” (Milerski, 2012, p. 65). From this perspective, hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation

2011, p. 13). Focusing on the methodological aspect, I bear in mind that hermeneutics has also an epistemological (F. Schleiermacher, W. Dilthey) and ontological dimension (M. Heidegger, H.-G. Gadamer, P. Ricoeur) - Adamska-Staroń, Łukasik, 2012, pp. 119-138).

³ It should be emphasised here that a turn to philosophical hermeneutics was initiated at the beginning of the 19th century by F. Schleiermacher, who developed general hermeneutics as a theory of art of understanding. W. Dilthey, referring to Plato’s hermeneutics, which studies the metaphorical nature of language and its importance in comprehension, clearly transports the subject matter to the area of epistemology.

or rendition. Assuming that understanding is the method of interpretation or rendition, hermeneutics is simultaneously the theory of understanding (Adamska-Staroń, Łukasik, 2012, pp. 119–138; Cf. B. Milerski, 2012, p. 65). Understanding is seen here as a mental process taking shape of a hermeneutic circle, traveling between reference to the part and reference to the whole. It is a form of cognition “on the way.” Dilthey made hermeneutics a method of cognition in the humanities as a science of human spirituality. He gave hermeneutics an epistemological dimension and inscribed it in the broad field of historical knowledge. Dilthey’s hermeneutics opens new horizons of understanding the nature of comprehension, and in this way the horizons of understanding a man as an event in history, man-interpreter and man-participant of this history (Sawicki, 1996, p. 10-18).

From the perspective of Martin Heidegger, understanding is perceived as a way of being in the world of one who understands, i.e. Dasein. By posing the question about the world, “What is the way of being of the one that exists only through understanding?” (Ricoeur, 1989, p. 206), Heidegger gave hermeneutics the ontological dimension. Self-understanding, or making use of Heidegger’s terminology, pre-understanding constitutes here a condition of understanding others and one’s own situation of being-in-the-world. Pre-understanding as the anticipation of understanding lies at the foundation of the hermeneutic circle by Heidegger. This philosopher brought the hermeneutics of the time to a new path, which was continued “in his own way” by his student Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer, similarly to Heidegger, emphasized that understanding is not based on empathizing with the other person’s position/ experiences, but it is “an agreement as to the matter in question” (Gadamer, 1993, p. 353). In this perspective, understanding takes into account an interpreter’s individual position. The interpreter is not able to fully step into the role of the author of the text, among other things, because they are “entangled” in certain socio-cultural relations, they are “under the influence of the socio-cultural context and a set of individual traits characteristic only to them” (Sawicki, 2012, p. 81). Thus, this individual “perception” of the world, “unique pre-understanding and understanding” should be taken into account in the process of understanding (Sawicki, 2012, p. 81). Every person is unique, a certain micro-world. “This horizon, accompanying an individual in every moment of their life, on the one hand seems to limit the possibility of understanding, and on the other hand, constitutes its condition. The specificity of Gadamer’s definition makes it an inalienable privilege of human existence, through which the author captures hermeneutics as something deeper than just a method” (Sawicki, 2012, p. 81; Gadamer, 1993, pp. 255–258).

Paul Ricoeur made a text the main point of reference of his hermeneutics. For Ricoeur, a text constitutes the source of knowledge about culture, man and the world. He understood a text as a space within which he tried to combine

beliefs both of epistemological and ontological nature that hermeneutics should realise (Baszczak, p. 11). He undertook a task of integrating philosophical hermeneutics and hermeneutic philosophy. Ricoeur understood the programme of text hermeneutics as “certain abolition (in the Hegelian sense) of differences and incompatibilities of both hermeneutic approaches. This argument could be put, using G. Scholtz’s terminology, as an opposition between philosophical hermeneutics (here: epistemological approach) and hermeneutic philosophy (here: ontological approach). P. Ricoeur proposed a synthesis, discerning the inadequacy and problems of each option” (Baszczak, pp. 7, 8, 11). As a consequence of this way of thinking, understanding was for Ricoeur a complex act, a special process which has its beginning in “naïve” understanding called guessing (using Heidegger’s or Gadamer’s terminology, naïve understanding/ guessing can be treated as pre-understanding). At a further stage, “there is looking for the justification of this guessing, and then it is necessary to get to deep semantics of the text, discover its meaning. And the whole process of interpretation ends up with critical understanding, i.e. showing text references, its existential references (Ricoeur, 1989, p. 179). Then, the text becomes the space within the framework of which one broadens one’s horizons of possible being-in-the-world, discovers new possibilities of self-knowledge, building one’s own existence. For Ricoeur, to understand “is more than repeat the act of speech, to reconstruct it in a similar event; it is also to create a new event, starting from a text in which the primary event was objectified” (Ricoeur, 1989, p. 161). Ricoeur does not regard the discovery of the text’s sense as the end of a journey. One has to proceed from what the text “says” (its general sense) to what it “talks” about, what it refers to (the text’s meaning). Only critical understanding being the completion of structural analysis can do that. Treating structural analysis “as one of the phases, indispensable as it mediates between naïve and critical interpretation, then it will prove possible to frame explanation and understanding as two different phases of the same hermeneutic process (Ricoeur, 1989, p. 178).

Common elements discerned in the aforementioned views let us notice that in hermeneutic cognition the object of understanding is therefore always that which is individual but taken in the context of the whole. It is the context that determines the meaning of the text. It can be assumed that there is no meaning outside the context. The context in itself also constitutes the object of interpretation. There is no single general understanding “in the sense of producing scientific statements independent of space and time” (Krüger, 2005, p. 144), and thus a requirement characteristic of positivist science theory (H.H. Krüger, p. 144). Hermeneutic understanding of the text happens “within some culture and some time (...)” (Jakubowski, 2006, p. 97). Pre-understanding/ naïve understanding (guessing) lies at the foundations of such understanding (Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur), i.e. experiences, existential experience, life itself which “is

not fully knowable by the researcher themselves, and that it is intertwined, in a way that is hard to make sense of, with the intuition of meaning (or meaninglessness) of a given phenomenon” (Ablewicz, 2003, p. 127).

The structure of understanding is usually described as circular. Circular motion encompasses two aspects of hermeneutic understanding. The first one concerns initial understanding. It means that while getting immersed into the cultural text, one has to get aware, recognize their own existing knowledge in its historicity. Thus, the text should not be approached without any premises. Initial understanding experiences expansion via interpretation of a given text, which consequently contributes to its better understanding. At the second stage, initial understanding is updated. If the interpreter is still looking for a full reading, understanding of the text, feels unsatisfied, they can make a circular motion again. Then, the distance between them and the text is reduced. Hermeneutic difference – as a structural moment – belongs to every hermeneutic situation (Kruger, 2005; Adamska-Staroń, Łukasik, 2012, pp. 119–138).

As a consequence of choosing a particular research procedure, adopting certain rules (Such, 1986, pp. 9–19; Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 1997, p. 21), there emerges a particular scientific model (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 1997, p. 21; Such, 1986, p. 14, pp. 9-19), a particular way of being in the world of science, a certain paradigm. The research undertaken by me, together with its ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions falls within the scope of idealist-subjectivist orientations, in the interpretative paradigm (Rubacha, 2005, p. 63). Entering this scientific area is linked with acknowledging the perspective of ontological and methodological anti-naturalism and the subjective nature of the object of study. It means that I accept the thesis on the existence of differences between a naturally occurring entity and a cultural entity. Consequently I believe that entities forming the socio-cultural world can be studied, among all, with the help of the following methods (Adamska-Staroń, 2018; Adamska-Staroń, Piasiecka, Łukasik, 2007, p. 71): the method of forming and criticizing hypotheses, also known as the hypothetical-deductive method, the method of an empirical nature referring to facts, the reductive methods also of an empirical nature (enumerative induction method or elimination method, the method of idealisation and gradual concretization, as well as methods characteristic only for socio-humanistic sciences: the method of humanistic interpretation, the historical-comparative method, the hermeneutic method (Such, Szcześniak, 1999; other classifications of research methods e.g. in: Babbie, 2004; Rubacha, 2005, Rubacha, 2008; Krüger, 2005).

The first two methods are directed towards the objectivist description and explanation of socio-cultural phenomena, they are also characteristic for nature sciences, while the remaining group of methods takes into account the subject factor and is dedicated to social-humanistic sciences (Jankowska, 2001, p. 187;

cf. Adamska-Staroń, Piasecka, Łukasik, 2007, pp. 71, 72). A naturalist as well as a representative of social and humanistic sciences are interested in discovering the existence of a certain objective order among entities studied by them,⁴ but the difference lies in the fact that “the first one studies things – facts independent of human judgements and actions, the latter one – entities created by a human being in experience and action – values” (Jankowska, 2001, p. 187; Adamska-Staroń, 2018; Adamska-Staroń, Piasecka, Łukasik, 2007).

Epistemological assumptions derive from ontological and methodological ones. I assume that knowledge is what comes from, for example, a researcher’s personal experiences (Adamska-Staroń, 2018; Adamska-Staroń, Piasecka, Łukasik, 2007; Jankowska, 2001, p. 188), their vicarious experience (Hałas, 1991, pp. 26–27), or the ones coming from data “closed” by the participants of socio-cultural life in various narrations: verbal (e.g. in essays or autobiographies), visual (e.g. in arts or graphics), musical (e.g. in symphonies or rock songs), behavioural (e.g. in dance or pantomime) as well as from observations of social experiences recorded, among others, in arts (Znaniński, 1974; Jankowska, 2001). Expressions taking forms of different narrations as symbolic-cultural entities embody the characteristics of a particular symbolic-cultural activity (Adamska-Staroń, Piasecka, Łukasik, 2007; Adamska-Staroń, 2018). I treat essays written by UJD Pedagogy students as just such expressions, symbolic-cultural entities, carriers of different kinds of senses and meanings. In case of the aforementioned study, it is about senses and meanings attributed by the Pedagogy students to studying pedagogical theories, thinking about pedagogy, they are also a source of new horizons, ways of thinking about education, ways of being in the educational space useful in building the educational world/ order.

Hermeneutic reflection performs “the criticism of thinking conscience, translating all its abstractions, together with scientific cognition, again into the whole of human experience” (Gadamer, 1979, p. 118). Hermeneutic reflection, like any other, is limited, yet it does not diminish its value if an individual/ a researcher is aware of this limitation (Gadamer, 1979, p. 118).

The choice of the research path is a consequence of the research goal set by me, the subject and the research problem. My goal was to learn about and understand senses and meanings attributed by UJD Pedagogy students to studying pedagogical theories. Thus, the subject of the research were senses and meanings attributed by UJD Pedagogy students to studying pedagogical theories. Consequently, the main research problem emerged: Which senses and meanings do UJD Pedagogy students attribute to studying pedagogical theories? Naturally, more detailed questions followed:

⁴ The boundaries of objectivism were described by F. Znaniński in *Humanizm i poznanie*, vol. 2, PWN, Warszawa 1991. In this book, the author makes an attempt to reconcile the objectivist and subjectivist positions, doing it with the help of value categories and humanistic coefficient. (Znaniński, 1984; see also Jankowska, 2001).

1. Which pedagogical theories are significant to the students participating in the research?
2. Which theories would the charges like to realise in their professional and personal life?
3. What paradigm do the pedagogical theories recognized by the students fit in?

The aforementioned hermeneutic method with its corresponding descriptive and interpretive analyses was helpful in realizing the research goal and looking for the answers to the research questions. As a result of my decision taken, I have tried to get to know and comprehend senses and meanings attributed by UJD Pedagogy students to studying pedagogical theories, “closed” in their essays, to grasp their various reflections, thoughts, experiences, interpretations, to get to know and comprehend the socio-cultural space chosen by me.

The analyses and interpretations within the adopted method are governed by specific rules. However, these rules do not form stiff frames, “may occur in a different order and intermingle with each other” (Śliwerski, 2012, p. 165), determining such a research path that is not distinguished by rigorous ruthlessness. It is important which scientific approach the researcher represents, their willingness to understand a given phenomenon. Humbleness, a critical approach to one’s own discoveries, reasonable distance that “shall defend the text against the interpreter’s subjectivism and their apodictic individuality, and shall allow the interpreter to keep their sensitivity not only to glaring issues, but also to details highlighting the specifics of a given issue” (Tischner, 1989, pp. 43–44). Despite certain arbitrariness, introducing certain modifications, for example “enforced” by the peculiarities of a studied text, the researcher should get familiarized with the map of hermeneutic rules helpful in analysing and interpreting cultural texts, so that cognition does not take on a colloquial dimension. The rules that constituted a compass for me originate from proposals defining a methodological research procedure concerning the way of understanding and interpreting the text, given, among all, by Dilthey (2004), Heidegger (1994), Gadamer (1985, 1993), Ricoeur (1989). The analyses and interpretations did not happen in stages but in a circular manner consisting in interweaving of various stages (Rubacha, 2008, p. 260). The adopted strategy was, generally speaking, based on a scientifically depicted scheme (Szahaj, 1994): the author – the text – the interpreter – interpretations, exposing the text and the interpreter. This strategy lets the interpreter go beyond the so-called author’s intentions, respecting these intentions at the same time (Tischner, 1989). Gadamer emphasised that “it is impossible to translate a text from a language to a language, not speaking oneself” (Gadamer, 1979).

The research encompassed first year, full-time and part-time UJD in Częstochowa Pedagogy students in the years 2021-2024.

The research material consisted of the aforementioned essays on *The need and way to study pedagogical theories. Theoretical implications in pedagogical practices*. The essays were written individually. On the whole, I collected 94 papers. A big number of data made me reduce it. The rule being its foundation was: the principle of saturation of information about a given research field (Krüger, 2005, p. 161). The activity of reducing and ordering the research material in qualitative research is regarded as selection and interpretation (Kawecki, 1996). Taking the above into account, I analysed and interpreted 23 works.

Results

The analyses and interpretations of the Pedagogy students' essays led to answering the main and detailed research questions. They let the researcher notice that the future pedagogues attributed significant importance to studying pedagogical theories. In their opinion, immersion into this pedagogical world makes sense not only in the context of professional preparation for their future job, but also in the context of personal development. The researched students made an attempt to enter the hermeneutic space, to talk to pedagogical texts in the sense referred below.

In the hermeneutic perspective, not only a person but also their works can invite one to conversation. These are cultural texts, i.e. among others, words, sentences, beliefs, judgements, assumptions, myths, metaphors, symbols, signs, looks, gestures, attire, films, music, poems, drawings or scientific/ pedagogical theories. The text may take the shape of "You" that talks. Similarly to a direct conversation, what the text "says," "what it talks about" may constitute the answer to some question (Gadamer, 1993, p. 353). Text comprehension consists in the recipient discovering its sense (they discover what the text "says"), looking for its meaning (they discover what it "talks" about), discovering and understanding this question (Gadamer, 1993, p. 353). The difference is that in the conversation with the text, unlike the direct one, it is the recipient/ interpreter that reconstructs the question that the text is supposed to answer (Gadamer, 1993, p. 353; Folkierska, 1995, p. 172). Depending on life, developmental, educational experiences, one's competencies, pre-judgements, pre-assumptions, the recipient may unveil different questions, thus receiving different answers (Jakubowski, 2006, p. 135). The recipient opens themselves to the text by studying, analysing, interpreting and comprehending it, but the text also opens itself to the interpreter endowing them with a variety of information, experiences, thoughts, reflections, questions. What happens in that space can be called an event. There is a "conversation" between the subjects of this event. The conversation, its language is "the medium that we owe our existence to. Conscience is

never language-less, the world happens in speech” (Gadamer, 1993, p. 353). Every participant of this event wants to understand that “speech”, hence the attempts of its interpretation and comprehension (Cf. M. Adamska-Staroń, M. Piasecka, B. Łukasik, 2007). In my view, this is the attempt undertaken by UJD Pedagogy students.

Immersing themselves into the world of pedagogical theories, giving sense to this sort of activity, they discovered/ became aware of many aspects important to them in the context of professional preparation and personal development. Below, I shall quote the most common issues raised in the students’ statements.

Studying pedagogical theories in the charges’ view promotes the acquisition of substantive knowledge, which provides justifications for practical activities, for instance, theories help one understand why some methods (e.g. upbringing, education) are more effective than others. What is more, they draw attention to the fact that exploring the world of pedagogical diversity fosters gaining knowledge about oneself and another human being. Such a journey, in the charges’ opinion, inspires them to deepen and update subject knowledge, knowledge about themselves, other people, culture they participate in, encouraging them at the same time to pose different types of questions, important in education, personal life, the socio-cultural space. Questions, as Ryszard Łukaszewicz remarks, are not less important than searched answers, they are the result of a reflexive approach towards oneself or an encountered entity. Questions gather layers of curiosity and motivation. The gained knowledge can be treated as “reframing questions on one’s journey” (Łukaszewicz, 2011, p. 17). The most interesting things happen “at the crossroads of posed and noted questions, and questions that live, authentically and independently “inhabit” our heads when we remember that the world is not only perception but also interpretation” (Łukaszewicz, 2011, p. 17). The students’ remarks show that the knowledge gained while studying pedagogical theories lets them understand a broader socio-cultural context where education takes place, enhances self-understanding, understanding of another individual, encourages to independently interpret received information, reflexive being in the world, including the educational space (cognitive aspect, i.e. exploring pedagogical theories to know, interpret, understand, ask).

Studying theories offers an opportunity to use the gained knowledge practically. The knowledge of pedagogical theories, in the charges’ view, supports their professional preparation as well as teachers’ work. Theories help to create educational programmes, materials, organize the educational process in a thoughtful, effective and efficient way. Thus, they may contribute to improving the quality of the educational process (upbringing and educating). The knowledge about pedagogical theories offers an opportunity to reflect on one’s own practice, life-

long improvement of one's competencies and skills. Theories support practical activities, help to become reflective practitioners who are able to analyse their actions, draw conclusions and introduce changes to their work, be creative and innovative (operational aspect; reflexive practice, i.e. exploring pedagogical theories to act, to be a reflexive practitioner).

The knowledge of pedagogical theories, in the charges' view, awakens the desire to strive for community, to be with another human being, makes one more sensitive to social and cultural differences, more willing to understand another human being, the Different, as well as the natural world. Pedagogical theories may help to look at oneself from someone else's perspective, to look at one's own culture differently. Thanks to this, "I" can be joined with "You" and the group "We" (inclusive, communal aspect, i.e. exploring pedagogical theories to live in a community).

The students' opinions show that studying pedagogical theories, understood as Buberian *Opposite* awakens the desire for self-exploration, triggers the need of self-improvement, to realise one's own plans, intentions, create one own expressions, develop one's passions. A passion "is the basis of motivation, inspiration and engagement (...)" (Z. Melosik, 2019, 12) which accompanies us at all stages of projects realised by us, it is the source of our freedom and power as far as creating our own space is concerned (Z. Melosik, 2019, 12). Encouraging such activities, pedagogical theories foster the building of a conscious being on the border of inside and outside, discovering one's own talents, possibilities, teach courageous thinking in order to become capable of active self-realisation, to consciously discover and build one's identity,⁵ to develop one's spirituality, one's own self by (among other things) accomplishing supra-personal tasks to "become a conscious and creative member of a social, national, cultural and global community" (Z. Kwieciński, 1996, p. 31) (regulatory aspect, i.e. exploring pedagogical theories to be).

The analyses and interpretations of gathered material show that the most appreciated, noticed pedagogical theories (currents and trends) by the students are existential pedagogy, intercultural pedagogy, pedagogy of culture, Maria Montessori's pedagogy, inclusive pedagogy. The currents and trends described by the students as crucial fit into two paradigms: paedocentrism in its interpretative version and paedocentrism in its humanistic version. Thus, the students appreciate both theories that are less engaged into criticizing the social foundations of education (paedocentrism in its interpretative version) and those that are called radical critical theories (paedocentrism in its humanistic version). The students identified as meaningful education understood as "conscious educational activity aimed at strengthening the child's construction of subjective

⁵ In his book *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności*. Impuls, Kraków 2013, Zbyszko Melosik develops thoroughly the subject matter of adolescent identity.

meanings given to the surrounding reality” (interpretativism) (Rubacha, 2005, p. 67), as well as education understood as “conscious educational activity aimed at strengthening the child’s free development and removing its social barriers” (Rubacha, 2005, p. 66). In the first perspective (paedocentrism in its interpretative version), the educator grants the educated the right to autonomy, creates conditions to develop individual interpretations of the world, looking for and reaching knowledge by their own paths (Rutkowiak, 1992; D. Klus-Stańska, 2001). Educational processes are treated here as “interactions aimed at understanding and constructing educational reality via negotiations between the educator and the educated” (Rubacha, 2005, p. 64). In the second perspective (paedocentrism in its humanistic version), educational processes are linked with liberating individuals from *status quo* imposed by society, based on inequalities (Rubacha, 2005, p. 64).

The students would like to realise the aforementioned pedagogical theories/ currents and trends both in their personal life and professional space. At the same time, they emphasized that they are also open to other pedagogical perspectives, and declared to constantly update their knowledge in this area. The knowledge of pedagogical diversity, awareness, attentiveness to new needs in education, the results of the latest studies, reflection shall let them be flexible in adjusting their educational methods (of upbringing and education) to individual needs of their pupils/ charges, create inspiring educational environments, or develop strategies friendly to all the participants of the educational process.

Summary

The essay analysis and interpretation let me notice that studying pedagogical theories (currents, trends) makes sense as it constitutes the value of its own for the Pedagogy students (autotelic importance of studying pedagogical theories/ currents and trends), but it also has its practical values (instrumental importance of studying pedagogical theories/ currents and trends). In their essays, the students emphasized that the world of pedagogical theories is worth their attention and interest, it is needed in the context of their personal development and preparation for their future pedagogue profession. Thus, comprehending cultural texts, here pedagogical theories, by the students, discovering their senses and meanings became for them the way of learning not only about the educational world, conditions of educational opportunities, conditions of such knowledge and experience, which are truly educative, but also about the world in general and about themselves.

For the Pedagogy students the worlds of theory and practice are not in opposition to each other, they do not fight each other but they negotiate, co-exist, support each other. Theory, as they emphasized in their essays, provides them

with basic knowledge and understanding, which are indispensable in practice, whereas practice lets them use this knowledge in real situations, which in turn lets them understand theory better. Theory provides them with the framework that facilitates decision making, problem solving in a conscious, mindful and reflexive way. Practice based on sound theory is more effective. The theoretical space may inspire to adopt new approaches and solutions, thus, it favours innovations. Practice verifies theoretical approaches.

Although some students indicated that the journey through this theoretical world is not easy, engaging in that type of journey, in my view, let them become reflexive travellers, exploring various pedagogical ideas, perspectives, mental constructs that they describe and define. It can be concluded that the journey into this world offered them an exceptional opportunity of learning about and understanding cultural diversity. It showed them that exploring the world of pedagogical theories may help them find the sense of their own existence, the sense of their own coexistence in the world, including the world of education, the sense of creating it. For the future pedagogues, it means the possibility of thinking “in their own way”, crossing the boundaries of their own world, opening to, e.g. new situations, new experiences, to another person, another culture.

Such a journey lets them make (extra)ordinary connections between distant ideas, it becomes conscious participation in culture consisting in experiencing, interpreting, creating. It also invites them to the world of emotions, feelings, imagination, wisdom, to the area “in between”. The students’ essays are, therefore, not only the source of knowledge and understanding senses and meanings they gave to studying pedagogical theories (currents and trends), but they are also the source of knowledge of the world they participate in. Realising such pedagogy offers students an opportunity to discern ideas, thoughts, beliefs constituting pedagogical theories. Thanks to that, the future pedagogues “have got an opportunity to be co-creators and not only consumers of pedagogical knowledge” (Łukasik, Adamska-Staroń, 2015, p. 177). They showed that participation in the world of pedagogical theories is both reflexive and relational.

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Studiowanie teorii pedagogicznych. Perspektywa studentów pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Jana Długosza w Częstochowie

Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zaprezentowanie wyników badań własnych, koncentrujących się wokół sensów i znaczeń nadawanych przez studentów pedagogiki UJD studiowaniu teorii pedagogicznych. Teorie (prądy, kierunki) pedagogiczne jako jeden z obszarów badań pedagogiki są dla badacza z wielu powodów interesujące. Obszar ten wyróżnia duża różnorodność, rozmaite dylematy czy kontrowersje. Różnorodność mobilizuje badacza, ale także studenta pedagogiki do zwielokrotnienia swojej aktywności poznawczej. Odkrywanie tego świata, poznawanie i rozumienie przypisywanych mu sensów i znaczeń mieści się w obszarze poszukiwań pedagogicznych, których kierunek wyznacza, m.in. obrona przeze mnie podróz hermeneutyczna (hermeneutyczna metoda wraz z odpowiadającymi jej opisowo – interpretacyjnymi analizami). Wybór takiej ścieżki badawczej jest wynikiem postawionego przeze mnie celu badania, przedmiotu i problematyki badawczej.

Słowa kluczowe: teoria, teorie pedagogiczne, hermeneutyka pedagogiczna, studenci.



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Good Practices in Military Cybersecurity Training

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Abstract

The aim of the article was to determine the impact of good practices in the area of IT on the training of soldiers in the area of cybersecurity. To reach the goal, the author's article characterizes the training centres and forms in the Armed Forces in the area of cybersecurity and determines the impact of a growing number of IT core and dedicated services as well as technical-organisational solutions for command support systems on the process of training offered to soldiers of the army of communications and information technology in the area of cybersecurity. As for his practical goal, the author chose to identify the likely direction of change in the way training is provided in terms of the implementation and expansion of ICT systems and services operated. In his article, the author presents the capabilities that military ICT specialists should achieve in order to perform their tasks effectively, and characterizes good practices used in the ICT support system. The cognitive aim of the article was identifying determinants affecting the process of specialized training of communications and information technology troops in line units. The research problem was formulated by the author in form of the question, "What were the differences between the training of IT specialists in civilian and military environments?"

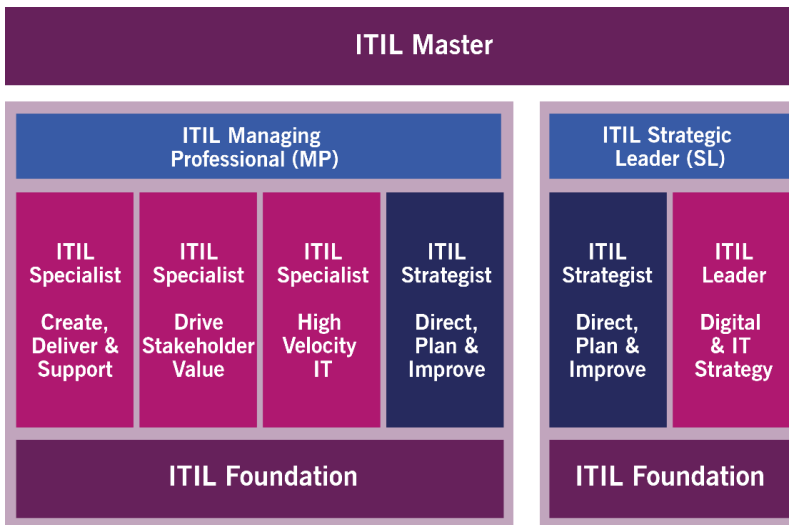
Keywords: good practices, training, cybersecurity, IT, ICT, information security, administration, Help Desk, Service Desk.

Introduction

The Internet and digital Technologies accompanying it have become our inseparable companions. The digital space has also colonized the areas associated

with a clearly human dimension (Borawska-Kalbarczyk K., 2024, p. 49). It is not different in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland. ICT systems used by Polish soldiers during peace missions and while training provided services in accordance with the idea of Federated Mission Networking (Bogdański, 2022, p. 49), and were supported by Technology for Information, Decision and Execution superiority. The idea of Federated Mission Networking was based on the code of rules for IT departments, i.e. Information Technology Infrastructure Library. ITIL is a commonly accepted set of best practices developed to support organisations in benefiting from IT services by adjusting them to business strategies. The British government created ITIL in the 80s of the 20th century. At that moment their aim was to define a set of norms, which would allow to improve the efficiency of IT. As time went on, ITIL rules gained popularity and its new versions were released. In 2019, Axelos company released the latest version called ITIL 4, characterized with a more holistic approach to Information Technology Service Management, offering more freedom of adjustment (ITIL Foundation 2018, p. 7). Certification begins with ITIL4 Foundation course, and it could be completed with 5 more trainings and certification exams: ITIL Specialist: Create, Deliver&Support, Drive Stakeholder Value, High Velocity IT. Strategist: Direct, Plan & Improve, Leader: Digital & IT Strategy.

Table no 1
ITIL Master Trainings



Source: <https://www.compendium.pl/info/2023/itil-w-wersji-4-juz-dostepny> (access: 29.11.2024)

Obtaining the first four certificates results in receiving ITIL Managing Professional title, while the last two in ITIL Strategic Leader title. If a given person ob-

tains both titles and files an appropriate application proving their practical experience in the area of ITIL, showing their long-term participation in practice implementation, there are granted they highest possible title in the hierarchy, i.e. ITIL Master.

The Author of the article posed the research question: How can good practices developed in IT departments of governmental institutions and corporations be used in training future and active soldiers in the armed forces? Activities, and what follows, soldier training differ substantially from processes taking place in the civil environment. The Polish Language Dictionary defines training as a set of lectures from a given subject, organized in order to complete one's education or information from a given field (Słownik, 2024). Thus, in the author's view, the training process in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland is a set of activities, a cycle of processes allowing for broadening and gaining further theoretical knowledge and practical skills from a particular field or discipline. IT competencies are already built in uniformed classes from the first stage of acquiring candidates for the Armed Forces (Ostolski, 2020, p. 190). The content of the training addressed to candidates and professional soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland is regulated by appropriate laws, including first of all the act of March 11, 2022 on the homeland defence, which defines candidates' and professional soldiers' preparation for professional military service (Ustawa, 2022, p. 78). Nevertheless, the aforementioned act reads that the training can also take place at universities, schools and training centres other than military.

The aforementioned act provides a general outline of the legal basis for training in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland. As for the range of training, with the order on the implementation of the Programme of training of IT and ICT troop subdivisions, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces provided a framework for the training of soldiers already serving in the armed forces in the IT and ICT corps that the author is interested in (Rozporządzenie MON, 2023). The document is intended for subdivisions of IT and ITC troops and constitutes the basis for planning and organizing the training process (Program szkolenia, 2017, p. 2). In the author's opinion, knowledge and skills from the area of cybersecurity should be required from all soldiers, especially those serving in command battalions, which has been emphasized many times by the author during his classes run for candidates for battalion commanders.

The author performed his observations during the biggest military training operations, for instance, those under the code name of Dragon-15, Anakonda-16, Dragon-17, Anakonda-18. The studies presented in the article have also their origin in interviews with experts, conducted by the author as part of the study exercises organised by the Academy of Military Arts in the years 2022-2024. These were the exercises under the code name of Świder-22, Brama Mazwowska-22, Twierdza-23, Świder-23, Brama-23, Twierdza-24. The author's studies realised

during the biggest military training operations show that the main task of a specialized command battalion is achieving and improving their abilities to secure the operation of the command post and to develop and operate ICT command support systems. On the basis of document analysis, interviews and observations, the author concluded that command battalions lacked soldiers specialists of the personal corps of cryptology or cybersecurity, but they only consisted of the aforementioned soldiers of IT and ICT personal corps. These were the soldiers employed at their positions in the ICT Support Centres and selected soldiers operating equipment such as ICT Nodes, Mobile Digital Communications Nodes, Portable and Transportable Satellite Terminals, radio stations. What is more, specialist administrators were employed only in selected command battalions in newly formed administrator teams.

The condition for safe operation of ICT command support systems is appropriate preparation of ICT and IT soldiers, especially in the area of cybersecurity. Sound theoretical knowledge and practical skills of ICT or IT specialists also allow them to gain competence in cybersecurity.

The aim of the article is to define the impact of good practices in the area of IT on soldier training in the area of cybersecurity. To reach his goal, the author's article characterises training centres and forms in the Armed Forces in the area of cybersecurity, and estimates the impact of increasing IT core and dedicated services as well as technical-organisational command support systems solutions on the training process of ICT and IT soldiers.

As for his practical aim (Pelc, 2012, p. 15), the author wanted to identify the likely direction of change in the way of training as far as implementation and development of ICT systems and service operation is concerned. He outlined the capabilities that military IT specialists should achieve in order to perform their tasks effectively, and characterised good practices used in ICT support systems, i.e. Help Desk and Service Desk.

The cognitive aim was to identify determinants influencing specialist training processes of ICT and IT troops in line units. To answer the question, "How can good practices developed in IT departments of governmental institutions and corporations be used in training future and active soldiers in the Armed Forces?" the author presented **the research problem** in form of the question, "What were the differences between the training of IT specialists in civilian and military environments?"

Military and civilian environments

IT specialist training in military and civilian environments differs mainly in its context and specific requirements deriving from the nature of realised tasks. In the military environment, national security is priority. IT specialist military train-

ing should include specialist issues from the area of cybersecurity, defence against cyber attacks, and safe information exchange. The author's studies show that the aforementioned subject matters are not implemented systemically but only within the framework of in-service training. IT specialists in the army can be engaged in specialist fields such as satellite communication, intelligence analysis, or designing systems supporting military operations. IT military specialists must comply with severe ethical and legal rules, especially in the context of cybersecurity (Ostolski, 2021, p 79). Serving in the armed forces is strictly regulated by state secrets regulations. IT military specialists are trained to fieldwork and are ready to react fast to changing situations. It requires an ability to adjust to different work environments. IT military specialist training often includes using highly-specialised tools and technologies, which are adjusted to unique military requirements. Military IT specialists must understand the organizational structure and decision processes within the armed forces, which is crucial for effective integration of technology and operational goals. Military IT specialists can participate in combat training and simulations in order to test their abilities under near real-life conditions. In the author's opinion, the training should begin with a solid foundation in computer science, including operational systems, computer networks, data bases. IT specialists should be familiar with the latest IT technologies and trends. For obvious reasons, IT specialist training in the civilian environment does not include the content concerning dedicated services used for the needs of building a combined picture of the operational situation. An IT specialist acquired for the Armed Forces from the civilian environment, realizing tasks in the military environment, should complete their knowledge in the area of ICT command support systems and control of combat assets, battle-field simulation systems or specialist services of logistics support.

Training forms

Military IT and ICT specialist training for the needs of improving cyberspace security of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland should be realised systemically with regard to the military specialization in ICT corps. The selection of the right candidates should be a very important factor. These are graduates of technical secondary schools, electronic and information technology technicians, specializing in programming, IT, ICT, mechatronics, automation or electronics technology. In the author's view, candidates selected in such a way should be subjected to training in military centres whose division was presented by the author with the help of the act of March 11, 2022 on defence of the homeland.

In the author's view, the main role in the training of future and current personnel should be played by military centres, which can be divided into universi-

ties, non-commissioned officer schools, training centers and units. Among universities there are: War Studies University, Jarosław Dąbrowski Military University of Technology in Warsaw, the Naval Academy, Military University of Aviation in Dęblin and Tadeusz Kościuszko Land Forces Military Academy. During his studies on the training in the area of cybersecurity, the author analysed training programmes in selected non-commissioned officer schools: Non-commissioned Officer School of Land Forces in Poznań, Non-commissioned Officer School of Aviation in Dęblin, Naval Non-commissioned Officer School in Ustka, Non-commissioned Officer School of Military Police in Mińsk Mazowiecki, Non-commissioned Officer School of Special Forces and Sonda Non-commissioned Officer School in Zegrze and Toruń. Moreover, during the research, the following institutions were also operating: Land Forces Training Centre in Poznań, Training Centre of Engineering and Chemical Forces in Wrocław, Artillery and Armament Training Centre in Toruń, Air Force Training Centre in Koszalin, Engineering and Aviation Training Centre in Dęblin, Naval Training Centre in Gdynia, Special Forces Training Centre in Cracow, Artillery and Armament Training Centre in Toruń, and Communications and Informatics Training Centre in Zegrze. Due to high specialization of the military centres, the author described only selected studies and courses in the Military Faculty of the War Studies University in Warsaw, Jarosław Dąbrowski Military University of Technology in Warsaw, and the Communications and Informatics Training Centre in Zegrze.

Training of officer cadres

The War Studies University in Warsaw trains civilian students and it used to educate post-graduate soldiers and qualification course participants. The Higher Staff Course was dedicated to candidates for the position of staff officers of tactical and operational-strategic level with the rank of lieutenant colonel. The aim of the course was preparing officers to take over service positions in command and staff structures of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland (AFRP) (Program szkolenia, 2017, p. 2), while the aim of the Battalion Commanders Course was preparing officers to take over positions of battalion commanders or their equivalents. During a 4-month training, the participants of the Higher Staff Course and the Battalion Commanders Course had 10 hours of lessons in cybersecurity, including 4 hours of lectures and 6 hours of classes. The subject matter of cybersecurity was also discussed during classes in ICT and IT, and specialists of the personnel corps of Communication and IT and Cybersecurity, within the curriculum of Command of Types of Forces, additionally discussed cybersecurity during supplementary 30 hours of classes. The author's research also included the analysis of a specialist offer of the Military Faculty which educates also civil-

ian students in the 1st and 2nd degree studies in the field of Command and Defence, and in post-graduate studies in the field of Defence and Security of Cyberspace. Within the framework of specialist training during their 1st degree studies in the field of Command, students learnt about cybersecurity in the Elements of ICT Support in Command course, lasting 40 hours: 10 hours of lectures and 30 hours of classes. On the other hand, within the framework of specialist training during their 1st degree studies in the field of Defence, students learnt about cybersecurity in the courses of Security Basics of ICT Systems Architecture and Fundamentals of ICT networks and systems, 60 hours in total, including 20 hours of lectures and 40 hours of classes, also non-stationary ones. As for the educational aim in post-graduate studies in the field of Defence and Security of Cyberspace, it was to educate military and civilian personnel in the field of cybersecurity to solve problems in the area of security of processed information at different levels of command as well as state command (Program studiów, 2017, p.2). When it comes to specialist post-graduate studies, their basic module offers the courses in ICT Systems and Networks, IT Support of Decision Processes, Hybrid Activity in Cyberspace. What is more, the main module offers courses in Cybersecurity and Protection of Confidential Information and Personal Data.

Moreover, in the offer of post-graduate studies of the War Studies University one could find weekly specialized courses for simulation system operators, i.e. Joint Theatre Level Simulation, a five-day specialized course for technical administrators, and a training scenario in the module supporting exercise management in the Joint Exercise Management Module.

Jarosław Dąbrowski Military University of Technology in Warsaw educates within the framework of civilian, military and post-graduate studies and within the framework courses for the Ministry of Defence. As for the first degree civilian studies, the biggest number of classes concerning cybersecurity could be found in the studying programme for IT specializing in Information Management Systems, Internet Multimedia Technologies, Cryptology, Mobile Computer Systems, ICT Networks and IT Systems. As for military studies in the field of IT, there were three specialisations: Cryptology, ICT Networks and IT Systems. It is worth mentioning the first and second degree studies in Electronics and Telecommunication with their specialization in IT Systems.

The offer of post-graduate studies at the Military University of Technology addressed to junior officers includes the biggest number of classes devoted to cybersecurity in the study programmes in the field of Organisation and Operation of IT Systems for officers meant to take over specialist positions in the area of ICT Systems Operation.

When it comes to courses organized by the Military University of Technology, the biggest number of classes devoted to cybersecurity was included in the course programme for Operating Communication and IT Systems. The course

was dedicated to officers occupying positions in the Command and Communications Support Section at the brigade headquarters. A monthly course in the Administration of ICT Networks and Managing Data Bases is worth mentioning. It was addressed to professional soldiers of the personal corps of communications and information technology who occupied positions in the special division. As for cybersecurity, one might find useful another course in the field of Operating ICT Systems and Network Administration for the soldiers of the personal corps of communications and information technology occupying administrative positions. Another course including the element of cybersecurity was called the Communications and Information Systems of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland destined for junior officers of the personal corps of communications and information technology occupying positions in the staff and security divisions. A monthly qualification course called Construction of Military Communications and Information Technology Systems was also precious in terms of cybersecurity content. It was addressed to officers with the second degree university education who planned to take over positions classified to the rank of major in the personnel corps of communications and information technology in the technical personnel group.

Training of non-commissioned officer cadres

The training of non-commissioned officer cadres was also crucial. The author's studies show that the Communications and Informatics Training Centre in Zegrze was leading the way in training NCOs in cybersecurity. The main task of the Centre was training of communications cadres for the needs of the Polish Armed Forces:

- professional soldiers and military workers at professional development courses;
- soldiers in preparatory service;
- students of officers' college;
- non-commissioned officer school students;
- students of the Faculty of Electronics and Cybernetics of the Military University of Technology – participation in training;
- students of the Faculty of Mechatronics of the Naval Academy – participation in training.

The most valuable courses as for theoretical knowledge and practical skills from the area of cybersecurity were those educating in the Administration of ICT Networks addressed to administrators of ICT networks, and development courses regarding the Basics of Windows Operating Systems Administration. The author's observations show that basic courses should be conducted for all IT

specialists, and further specialist courses for particular, selected groups. The scope of knowledge should be closely connected to a given specialisation.

Commercial training

The Communications and Informatics Training Centre in Zegrze significantly modified its offer during the studies in question. Its priority became courses specializing in commercial training based on Cisco company technologies geared at operating services offered in military ICT systems, based on Microsoft's commercial technologies (Bogdański, Zelichowski, 2013, p. 5). As for technologies, Cisco Centrum offered a broad range of certifications and courses focused on various areas of computer networks. The choice of a particular training depended on soldiers' tasks. Here are a few popular Cisco certifications that could be obtained at Cisco Centrum: Cisco Certified Network Associate is a basic certification, directed mainly at persons at the beginning of their career in computer networks. It included basics of configuration, operation and maintenance of Cisco network. Other advanced courses were conducted based on the Expert Cyber Security Training Center and commercial centres. Cisco Certified Network Professional Certification was destined for intermediate network specialists. There were different CCNP paths available, such as Routing and Switching, Security, Data Center, etc. Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert is one of the most advanced Cisco certifications. CCIE concentrated on advanced design, implementations and maintenance skills for wide-area Cisco networks. On the other hand, Cisco Certified Cyber Ops Associate, i.e. the most advanced cybersecurity certification, confirmed the knowledge and skills needed by the teams of Security Operations Center to detect cybersecurity threats and react to them. The Cyber Ops Associate training and exam included the knowledge and skills concerning cybersecurity issues, security monitoring, analysis based on hosts, analysis of network intrusions as well as security policies and procedures. The author's research shows that the training potential of the Communications and Informatics Training Centre in Zegrze ended up with basic courses. Similarly, the centre realised Microsoft technology courses to a limited extent. On the commercial market, training centres offered various courses, both online and stationary, encompassing the area of system, cloud, application management and software development. Here are some basic Microsoft courses and certifications which might be interesting for various cybersecurity professionals: Microsoft Certified Azure Fundamentals is a certification for persons who would like to gain basic knowledge on Microsoft Azure cloud platform. Modern Desktop Administrator Associate is a certification for specialists dealing with Windows systems administration in corporate environment. Microsoft Certified Azure Administrator Associate broadens cloud administrators' knowledge on configura-

tion, management and monitoring of Azure services. Microsoft 365 Certified Modern Desktop Administrator Associate course is dedicated to cyber-specialists dealing with configuration, management and security of Microsoft 365 environment. What is more, knowledge from the field of cybersecurity focusing on detection and reaction to incidents is crucial. Taking into account a broad range of courses, at the beginning of one's professional path the author recommends courses in two basic areas: courses in network and systemic solutions based on Cisco products and courses in server systems and Microsoft services. As for complementing one's knowledge, one should focus on solutions (Bogdański, Barański, 2014, p. 167) from the area of virtualization if they are not based on Microsoft solutions. In each area, there are technology sub-areas and levels. What is more, the research shows that training needs were much bigger than the capacity of military training centres. The research shows that not all soldiers meet minimal requirements as far as basic technical knowledge is concerned. Acquiring candidates from the corps of professional privates can be an efficient and effective solution. The studies also show that a preferred career path in the officer corps was a training limitation. The first position for the academy graduate was a platoon leader. After a three-year term as e. g. a communication or command platoon leader, officers were forced to complete their knowledge gained during their studies as the scope of their professional duties made their current knowledge obsolete, and skills acquired at the academy needed constant practice. A precious source of observation for the author concerning practical skills in the area of using good practices was the preparation process for the biggest practice in the Polish Army in the years 2016–2023 and its realization in the area of ICT support.

Good practices in the area of ICT support

Within the framework of their practice under the code name of Anakonda or Dragon, IT specialist soldiers played the role of Service Desk operators in the Network Operations Center. Service Desk is an organizational unit or a role played by a team of selected people, responsible for functional support of IT applications and IT troubleshooting – both hardware and software. Service Desk is one of the components discussed in the Information Technology Infrastructure Library. The centre of network management is one or more locations where network monitoring, operation or management is performed via a computer, ICT or satellite network. The practice under the code name of Anakonda or Dragon allowed for observing relations between administrators of the organiser's level and local ones. The cooperation required detailed instruction of the latter. The supervisors noted the need for both basic and specialist training as well as complementing ones in the area of cybersecurity. As the studies illus-

trate, in the first stage, Help Desk units – contact points, points of basic technical help should be established within the framework of brigade command battalions, and division command battalions should get support from Service Desk, which should perform incident management, problem management, and change and configuration management tasks. Within the framework of Service Desk operating for the benefit of the division command post, there should be a contact point. In the next stage, depending on the nature and tasks of a military unit, there should be the next point established and responsible for service level management, availability and capacity management. In the author's opinion, establishing new ICT support points in accordance with good practices of the Information Technology Infrastructure Library should, in the long run, give a significant improvement in productivity and efficiency of carrying out the set tasks. ITIL is a set of publications including the best practices of managing IT services. The results of the research in form of observations and also these based on questionnaires and interviews with experts presenting good practices developed in IT departments of governmental institutions and corporations can be used in training soldier candidates and active soldiers of the Armed Forces. ICT systems operated during missions and trainings were provided in accordance with the idea of Federated Mission Networking (Bogdański, 2022, p. 49). The idea of Federated Mission Networking was based on the code of proceedings for IT departments. Information Technology Infrastructure Library made it possible to introduce the following:

- the automation of request handling processes;
- batch processing, which allowed for the execution of certain workloads at a scheduled time;
- planning IT tasks executed in the right time, taking into account the needs concerning process handling, automation of open systems, servers and databases;
- issues concerning the reduction of the number of task executed manually, to enhance process handling;
- proactive monitoring in a service perspective;
- transfer of centrally manager tasks from the first-level Help Desk to the Service Desk and seizing the opportunity for better soldier cooperation.

Sound theoretical knowledge and soldiers' practical skills should be supported by specialist software, also commercial one.

Conclusion

The author of the article conducted his research during the process of training future soldiers and active professional soldiers. He observed practical activities executed during the biggest military practice under the code name of Ana-

konda or Dragon in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland. The author performed his observations also during communications and IT army practice under the code name of Aster, which directly preceded the biggest practice managed by the General Command and the Operational Command of the Armed Forces Types. The aim of the article was to determine the impact of good practices in the area of IT on soldier training in the area of cybersecurity. To reach that aim, the author characterized training centres and forms in the Armed Forces in the area of cybersecurity, and defined the impact of a growing number of core and dedicated IT services as well as technical-organisational solutions of command support systems on the training process of communications and IT army soldiers in the area of cybersecurity. The increased use of IT technologies in military operations was a natural evolutionary step. Previously independent, galvanically separated ICT and computer networks, thanks to the IP platform currently converge to one common ICT network. The issue of command process support is gaining importance. The growing number of ICT services and technologies had a substantial impact on the evolution of the training process. As a practical aim, the author of the article wanted to determine the likely direction of change in the way training is provided in terms of implementing and expanding ICT systems and operated services. The studies show that commercial courses and trainings should supplement training forms provided by the Ministry of National Defence.

The main emphasis should be put on good practices in the area of IT. On the basis of his research, the author claims that the influence of this type of courses is crucial for proper management of services in a network-centric environment. The multitude of services enforces systemic actions in the line with schemes. What is more, the author presented the skills that military IT specialists should acquire in order to execute their tasks effectively, characterized good practices used in the system of ICT support, i.e. Help Desk and Service Desk. The cognitive aim was to identify determinants influencing the process of specialized training of communications and IT troops in line units. The research problem was presented by the author in form of the question: What were the differences between the training of IT specialists in civilian and military environments? The performed analysis showed that the training of IT specialists in civilian and military environments differed in particular requirements deriving from the nature of tasks that soldiers were given. In the military environment, security is a priority. On the basis of the research, the author concluded that the training of IT specialists for the needs of the Department of National Defense should encompass specialist subject matters from the area of cybersecurity, defence against cyber attacks and safe information exchange. The author's research also shows that the aforementioned topics were not realised systemically but only within the framework of in-service training. Military IT specialist often have to comply

with strict ethical and legal rules, especially in the context of security, and defence in particular. Military service is strictly regulated by regulations on state secrets. Military IT specialists training often encompasses using highly-specialised tools and technologies that are adjusted to unique military requirements. In the author's opinion, the training should begin by solid foundations in the area of IT, including operational systems, computer networks, databases. IT specialists should be familiarized with the latest technologies and trends in IT. Within the framework of his research, the author conducted the analysis of future soldiers' training in the context of administering IT services used during this training, with the emphasis on the issues concerning cybersecurity. The conclusions drawn from the research dictate that specialized courses led by experts in cybersecurity be organized, beginning with the courses covering the rudiments of cybersecurity such as threat identification, risk analysis, network security. The next stage of the training should cover the subject matter regarding information security and data protection, e. g. specialist courses including the areas such as system penetration, intruder detection, malware analysis, security event management. Practical elements should be introduced, for instance, attack simulation, practical labs and scenarios, so that specialists could gain practical experience.

As for the practical dimension, in the first stage, Help Desk units should be established within the framework of brigade command battalions, and Service Desk should be also established in division command battalions. It should realise tasks in the field of task management, problem management, change and configuration management. Service Desk operating in support of the division command post should be established as a point of contact. In the next stage, depending on the nature of operations and military unit tasks, it would be advisable to consider establishing other units responsible for service level management, availability management, and capacity management.

In the author's opinion, the approach to building ICT support units in accordance with Information Technology Infrastructure Library should in the long run contribute to substantial improvement of capacity and efficiency in realizing basic tasks. As for cybersecurity, the key point for communication and IT troops specialists should be developing skills to effectively use secure leased stationary capacity managed by the Cyberspace Defense Forces Component Command. What is more, it is important to achieve the ability to integrate the stationary and mobile transmission segment by building access points at communication hubs. Developing the ability fostering cooperation of ICT support units in line units with the organizers of ICT systems in operation is key. As the research results based on questionnaires and interviews with experts prove, good practices developed in IT departments of governmental institutions and corporations can be used in training future soldiers and active soldiers in the Armed Forces.

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Dobre praktyki w zakresie wojskowego szkolenia z obszaru cyberbezpieczeństwa

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu było określenie wpływu dobrych praktyk w obszarze IT na szkolenie żołnierzy z obszaru cyberbezpieczeństwa. Aby osiągnąć cel autor w artykule scharakteryzował ośrodki i formy szkolenia w Siłach Zbrojnych w obszarze cyberbezpieczeństwa oraz określił wpływ zwiększającej się liczby informatycznych usług podstawowych i dedykowanych, a także rozwiązań techniczno-organizacyjnych systemów wsparcia dowodzenia na proces szkolenia żołnierzy wojsk łączności i informatyki w zakresie cyberbezpieczeństwa. Jako cel praktyczny artykułu autor przyjął określenie prawdopodobnego kierunku zmiany w sposobie szkolenia w aspekcie wdrażania i rozbudowy systemów teleinformatycznych oraz eksploatowanych usług. W artykule autor przedstawił zdolności, jakie powinni osiągnąć specjaliści informatycy wojskowi w celu skutecznej realizacji zadań, scharakteryzował dobre praktyki wykorzystywane w systemie wsparcia teleinformatycznego. Celem poznawczym artykułu było zidentyfikowanie determinantów wpływających na procesy szkolenia specjalistycznego wojsk łączności i informatyki w jednostkach liniowych. Problem badawczy autor sprecyzował w postaci pytania: Jakie były różnice pomiędzy szkoleniem specjalistów informatyków w środowisku cywilnym a wojskowych?

Słowa kluczowe: dobre praktyki, szkolenie, cyberbezpieczeństwo, informatyka, teleinformatyka, bezpieczeństwo informacji, administrowanie, Help Desk, Service Desk.

REVIEWS

RECENZJE



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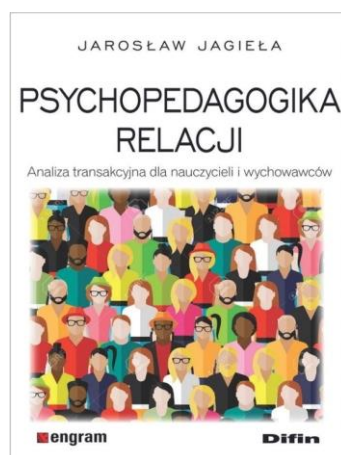
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**[Review of the book], Jarosław Jagieła (2023).
*Psychopedagogika relacji. Analiza transakcyjna
dla nauczycieli i wychowawców.*
Wydawnictwo Difin, 561 pp.**

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In the introduction to his monograph, Jarosław Jagieła articulates the purpose and goals of his research. He emphasizes the relevance and importance of his work for teachers and psychologists. The author mentions several reasons for writing the monograph. One of these reasons is the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the negative effects of forced remote interactions on human relationships. Many studies have been published on this topic, both before and during the pandemic. These include works by Kim & Thayne (2015), Xu, Chen, & Chen (2020), and Beaunoyer, Dupéré & Guitton (2020). Jagieła notes changes in the younger generation's lives due to the trauma of isolation. He expresses concern about their future. I agree with



the author. A key task for psychology and education is to create ways to bring back natural communication between teachers and students as society returns to normal.

Why use the term "natural"? Recently, increasing scientific research has encouraged active use of machines in educational communication (Edwards & Edwards, 2017). Moreover, some researchers promote collaboration between teachers, students, and pedagogical agents—digital teachers. Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are claimed to support processing natural human language and improve communication between students and pedagogical agents, particularly in developing human qualities such as emotions (as cited in Sikström, Valentini, Sivunen, & Kärkkäinen, 2022).

However, from an educational perspective, I consider this approach inappropriate. Behaviourally, it may achieve intended outcomes, but psychologically and relationally, it could lead to harms such as "digital dementia" (Spitzer, 2013). Experience has shown that during the pandemic, both schools and teachers became distanced from students, with the internet replacing direct interpersonal relationships. Reduced contact with others increases suspicion toward people. Maintaining this situation may cause defensive attitudes, creating a negative cycle. Isolation leads to suspicion, causing defensive responses that further heighten suspicion and isolation—a self-fulfilling prophecy. The psychopedagogy of relationships, analysed through the lens of transactional analysis—a theory fundamentally based on describing relationships—is particularly useful for addressing and analysing the issues discussed in this book.

From the very beginning of his work, the author clearly indicates that Transactional Analysis (TA) is not limited only to examining communication processes between people. Education today extends beyond interactions solely between primary participants (teacher-student). The author exceeds his original goal, which fits well with our views. So, the author looks to TA theory. He believes it can help improve relationships, according to him and members of the British Transactional Analysis Society. This is the main purpose of the book. The author rightly emphasizes that in the space of "post-leadership," restoring interpersonal communication using TA will be essential. He refers to humanity's oldest message—"In the beginning was the Word"—to emphasize that interpersonal relationships are the starting point for everything essential in human life. Within educational settings, the art of teacher-student relationships creates the school as a social institution, just as marital relationships create parenthood through the same relational art. Together, these relationships form a "social triangle." The strength of attraction between the sides of this triangle and its overall functioning depends on relationships shaped by categories such as essence, need, encompassing form, mysticism, and the "innate You." It is difficult to disagree that the teacher-student relationship is the most crucial social interaction, serv-

ing as the foundation for the student's further educational path and quality of future life. To fulfil this role, teachers must possess appropriate skills (Jakimiuk, 2015) and competencies (Madalińska-Michalak & Górska, 2013).

It is important to remember that according to Eric Berne, the author of TA, the life script begins forming through relationships between the child and their parents and grandparents between the ages of 3 to 6. The non-directive communication style between teacher and student, which the author states "minimizes anxiety levels in school situations," is shaped during early childhood and should later dominate interactions in schools. Our practical experiences have consistently confirmed that children raised in an atmosphere of trust and love at home require the same approach in the school environment. Schools are (or should be) centers of kindness, positive relationships, recognition, and respect. Indeed, the greatest challenge during such interactions is obtaining positive feedback from teachers. Negative feedback can lead to conflicted relationships with students (Allen et al., 2011, 2015). Additionally, successful transactions between teachers and students are significantly influenced by how students perceive various aspects of the school environment (Wang & Eccles, 2013). Therefore, like the author, I am convinced that research supports the importance of further exploring the TA concept. Prominent Polish educators support the TA approach. Their work shows it is valid and useful.

In characterizing interpersonal relationships, Jagieła draws on classifications by other researchers (Wojciszke & Doliński, 2011, p. 356) and clearly connects them to both positive interactions (such as helping others and mutual attractiveness) and negative interactions (e.g., aggression). It is hard to disagree with the author's claim that understanding, and communication should form the basis of interpersonal relationships. Like the author of the book, I agree with distinguishing between interpersonal communication and interaction, which involves action. Based on a broader understanding of interpersonal relations, Jagieła convincingly argues that the quality of these relationships significantly affects our lives and our functioning within society. Moreover, we believe that the quality of interpersonal relationships also shapes the overall quality of society, influencing citizens' levels of awareness. Improving communication quality by providing accurate, unbiased data as a foundation is desirable. Thus, quality communication in classic "person-to-person" dialogue helps build bonds and can further develop into communication between individuals and groups, ultimately enhancing interactions between individuals and society.

One of the fundamental axioms highlighted by the author is the assertion that dialogue, manifested through interpersonal transactions between various ego states of individuals, is the cornerstone of TA. Such dialogue conveys information and simultaneously builds relationships, for instance, between a mentor and students (a group of individuals). As my extensive experience in secondary

schools and universities shows, this approach is relatively time-consuming and costly. However, it remains the most effective system for acquiring competencies. Parents should often use this approach in the family education system. The book's author emphasizes this point, rightly highlighting that effective dialogue must respect the dignity of the transactional partner. Based on this, Jagieła accurately notes that a school is more than just a home or part of the educational system traditionally seen as an interaction space between teacher and student—it encompasses everything occurring "through words" between teachers and students. This approach requires all participants in the educational process to treat each other equally and collaboratively.

Jagieła recommends building interpersonal relationships based on dialogue while avoiding communication barriers. Incidentally, the analysed book is particularly valuable because its author, an experienced practicing psychotherapist, provides practical recommendations (listed at the end of the book). One of the author's most valuable recommendations, in my opinion, involves overcoming challenging relationships, captured in the idea: "If you do not wish to change your attitude towards me, I will change my attitude towards you." I also consider it important to address the topic of relationships with students' parents within the context of TA. Contemporary educational science and teachers themselves pay significantly less attention to this issue than the globalized and digitalized environment demands. Moreover, the honest and sincere admission by teachers that meetings with parents are among the most stressful elements of their job deserves recognition. In this context, Jagieła emphasizes the importance for teachers to "create an atmosphere free of authoritarian judgments or statements full of advice and instructions." This aspiration remains largely a goal today, yet it is crucial to strive towards it.

According to Jagieła, TA, with its conceptual framework, can greatly assist in building effective teacher-parent communication. In today's digital school age, we should find new ways to talk to parents. While much progress has already been made (e.g., electronic gradebooks, social media groups), this is not sufficient for building truly effective relationships. If internet tools are to be utilized, educational electronic platforms should be developed to facilitate more frequent video conferences with parents, for example, monthly. It is also essential for representatives of school administration, or even extracurricular educational institutions, to participate in the communication between teachers and parents. By applying a thoughtfully implemented and clear understanding of TA theory, effective communication that acknowledges the interests and needs of all stakeholders—not only teachers and parents—can be achieved. It is worth noting that the book's author is among the few researchers who recognize and emphasize the relationship between the core principles of TA and the humanistic message. The author points to a clear interaction between TA and Positive Psychol-

ogy (PP), suggesting this could become an interesting subject for future research. Regarding TA terminology, it is important to highlight that Jagieła authored the Dictionary of Transactional Analysis (Jagieła, 2017), which facilitates a deeper understanding of this scientific field. I am also impressed by the broad range of TA methods presented, which allow both psychotherapists and teachers to formulate accurate diagnoses. The author outlines specific TA-related diagnostic categories, such as behavioural diagnosis, phenomenological diagnosis, historical diagnosis, and social diagnosis, that address individual problems effectively.

Alongside traditional methods and techniques of TA, Jagieła also presents the latest methods, which are currently undergoing testing and will be introduced into scientific circulation after further research. He also mentions the application of modelling methods. The author interprets TA theory as a comprehensive theoretical model, encompassing numerous other frameworks, patterns, and theoretical constructs. Moreover, Jagieła, with his extensive research experience in TA, rightly emphasizes that TA is not limited solely to the Parent-Adult-Child (P-A-C) model. He points out that TA includes various other models inspired by traditional and contemporary psychological schools. Without neglecting the list and content of traditional TA approaches, the author focuses on a new direction—Relational Transactional Analysis (RAT). Among the essential foundations of this concept, he emphasizes the special role of relationships in interpersonal interactions, and the significance of subjectivity and unconscious processes within these relationships. These aspects primarily relate to psychotherapeutic work but, as the author points out, can also apply to teacher-student relationships. However, transferring these ideas directly to educational settings, especially regarding "empathetic transactions," although theoretically possible, requires careful consideration and specialized research. Therefore, the author clearly defines the main application areas of TA as psychotherapy, counselling, coaching, and organizational improvement, highlighting Educational Transactional Analysis (EAT) as a distinct area.

Jagieła convinces readers of the close connection between therapeutic and educational approaches within TA. With extensive professional experience in both education (pedagogy) and psychotherapy, the author formulates key doctrinal principles of Educational Transactional Analysis (EAT), which undoubtedly merit special attention from educational researchers. He supports his viewpoint with an analysis of therapeutic and educational research conducted in the field of TA over a significant period (1963-2010).

When discussing the functional division, the author, based on research (Stewart & Joines, 2016, p. 27), clearly explains that the structural model describes "what," while the functional model explains "how" and how it can be observed. However, as the author notes, recent views among TA specialists advocate for a clear separation of the structural and functional models, which was

not present in the original concept. I favor the traditional approach as it better illustrates the connections between TA and educational theories. In the following paragraph, the author clearly presents, using illustrative models, situations in which some Ego states can be excluded or blocked from the general Parent-Adult-Child (PAC) structure. Similar to the author, we often tend to idealize the Adult Ego state, but Jagieła himself emphasizes that some degree of contamination by other states is inevitable. From a psychotherapeutic perspective, Jagieła examines in detail, supported by illustrations, the importance of working on the integration of the Adult Ego state as an attempt to connect the adult aspects of thinking, feelings, and experiences. He highlights the importance of certain models in educational processes without detailing exactly how and when to apply them. Further, the author revisits the topic of personality integration and associated educational objectives. Using the concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos, he associates these classical ideas with transactional states: Ethos arises at the intersection of Parent and Adult states; Pathos represents a combination of Child and Adult; Logos occupies a central position in second-order structural analysis, interpreted as Adult within Adult. Each of these ancient concepts is aptly identified by the author as a guideline for educational activities, conveniently classified and presented in a table.

From his dual perspective as a psychotherapist and educator, the author thoroughly describes conditions of the relationship between the Self and Family—one of the oldest yet unresolved and thus pressing educational issues concerning parent-child relationships. From the TA viewpoint, teachers frequently activate the Parent ego state due to their caregiving and normative roles. The Adult state is central to teachers' professional activities, while the Child ego state also plays a crucial communicative and expressive role when working with children. The author provides a detailed analysis of ego states within the learning process. Understanding this content by teachers, teacher educators, and even students is essential for achieving educational goals, such as clear and effective communication aligned with a permissive ego style and preventing authoritarian approaches in lessons and seminars while acquiring both general and specialized competencies. The communication model presented by the author can practically support these objectives.

Jagieła skillfully and consistently describes various types of transactions—parallel transactions, crossed transactions, hidden transactions, and transactional devaluations—supplementing these descriptions with graphical illustrations for better understanding. This helps beginners encountering TA concepts for the first time grasp their purpose and practical application, while experienced researchers can refresh their understanding of these constructs. The author illustrates their application in teacher-student transactional situations. Jagieła does not overlook the critical issue of conflictual transactions, relevant

to both psychotherapy and pedagogy. I am particularly impressed by his depiction of the positive aspects of functional conflicts, where transactional participants (in the fourth transactional position—"I'm OK, You're OK") reconsider their positions toward each other. In an educational context, the author aptly cites Danish educator Jasper Juul, who asserts, "There is no such thing as a difficult class, only relationships between teachers and students."

Jagieła provides valuable advice to teachers from a TA perspective, recommending the technique of "grounding" during sudden and heated disputes. This approach helps teachers remain objective rather than reacting impulsively and thoughtlessly. He also cites practical advice from Gary Victor, emphasizing that effective teachers must understand the communication process and reflect on their interactions with students. Jagieła supports his theoretical insights with contemporary communication models such as the Process Communication Model (PCM) and The Three-Phase Model (TPM).

Finally, the author discusses a group of transactions considered most effective in school contexts. Among these, he highlights the "Bull's Eye" transaction, focused on "hitting the target," and the "3C Model," which stands for care, closeness, and compatibility. Particularly insightful is the author's analysis of transactions between parents and adolescents. Jagieła rightly notes that this developmental stage often involves misunderstandings, tensions, and challenging moments due to young people's striving for autonomy and independence, alongside their ongoing, objective dependence on parents. These factors contribute to transactional conflicts. From a pedagogical perspective, understanding how to prevent such conflicts is crucial.

One significant issue in psychopedagogy is the construction of effective teacher-student relationships based on TA. According to the author, a crucial aspect of this relationship involves teachers actively using various ego states—not limiting themselves to the Parent and Adult states but also including the Child state. I fully agree with the author that, when selecting a communication style and ego state, teachers should adhere to the principles of a realistic educational philosophy, viewing students as individuals entitled to self-determination and self-realization. However, we must also emphasize to students—and this is crucial—that they have not only rights but also responsibilities. Foremost among these responsibilities is learning, which requires perseverance and diligence. It is worth agreeing with the author that one of the goals of interpersonal communication is to promote recognition, respect, and the evaluation of achievements by others. Isolation in a school environment may foster a sense of individuality and autonomy, but it does not allow for the development of community and support. The concept of a "stroke"—a form of recognition—is discussed, highlighting the importance of being noticed and appreciated by others and the willingness to focus attention on perceiving others. The early develop-

mental need for physical touch and affection is later symbolized through words in the form of various types of recognition signals. The author illustrates positive and negative recognition signs in tables for comparison and analysis.

The author provides examples of recognition signals in teacher-student relationships, including sympathy, antagonism, antipathy, and indifference. Referring to Oswald Summerton, he states that participants in such transactions can recognize and acknowledge each other on five levels of interaction: Parent-Parent, Adult-Adult, Child-Child, Parent-Child, and Child-Parent. At the same time, the author highlights the significance of teacher recognition, describing it as positive and unconditional acknowledgment that helps young people build self-confidence and develop self-affirmation. Another form of recognition—positive but conditional strokes—often dominates teacher-student interactions. These strokes support a sense of competence by reinforcing specific behaviors. This most commonly manifests through teacher rewards because of expected behavior. In the absence of unconditional attention, students seek emotional support through conditional words. Upon receiving such recognition, students may come to believe—and this is a crucial point—that praise from a teacher is earned only through achievements and obedience. If students do not receive recognition, they may strive to gain attention in any form, even negative, simply to be noticed.

From a pedagogical perspective, the author also describes the consequences of excessive use of recognition signals. He notes that receiving positive but conditional strokes—without the presence of unconditional ones—often leads to workaholicism in adulthood. In educational terms, it is important to consider that, like Eric Berne, the author rightly believes that negative recognition signals contribute to the development of psychological games in the future. Thus, a key factor in overall well-being is whether individuals receive positive strokes. Based on this, the author identifies three teacher personality types according to Zbigniew Zaborowski's model: elevating, exchange-based, and diminishing. Teachers who effectively use positive recognition signals typically exhibit an elevating orientation. They help others and are committed to reducing tension and conflict, aligning with the TA position of "I'm OK, You're OK". The author of the book proposes creating rules for the positive exchange of strokes, specifically addressed to teachers, namely: give genuine strokes; ask for the strokes you need and want; accept the strokes you wish to receive; reject strokes you do not wish to receive; and give positive strokes to yourself.

Analyzing pedagogical literature, the author equates positive strokes with the concept of affirmation. However, from the perspective of a practicing teacher, Jagieła cautions that strokes should be given to children carefully and thoughtfully, as they do not always yield beneficial outcomes. He encourages teachers to follow the principle: "Give sincere strokes to others, especially students, as often as they truly serve a purpose." This guiding principle, effectively

articulated by the author, can rightly be considered one of the fundamental rules for teachers in the realm of motivation—what he refers to as "psychological stimulation."

One of the most insightful and positive aspects of Jarosław Jagieła's book is its structure and organization of the material. This allows for a comprehensive discussion of the examined phenomenon from theoretical, methodological, and practical perspectives. At the end of each chapter, the author presents research findings—both his own and those cited from other sources—demonstrating clear connections between theory and practice. The absence of this connection has often been a point of criticism in pedagogical research, and unfortunately, in many cases, this criticism is well-founded. In one of the chapters, the author focuses on a fundamental issue—life positions. Without understanding this concept, the rest of the book would be difficult to comprehend. The author rightly observes that life positions form the foundation for the values a person perceives in themselves and their environment. They also serve as a basis for justifying or explaining one's decisions and behaviors. Any researcher in personality psychology or social pedagogy has likely pondered whether anything is more important for an individual than having a life position aligned with the fundamental values of society.

The author partially addresses this question by stating that "life positions are sometimes referred to as basic, life, or existential attitudes." The four positions (I'm OK, I'm not OK, You're OK, You're not OK) can appear in four different combinations and result from common behavioural patterns. As the author notes, "someone in the position of 'I'm OK – You're OK' is considered a winner in TA psychology." While TA theorists agree that this is a desirable position, Jagieła points out that what being "OK" means can vary significantly from one person to another. At the same time, the author raises thought-provoking questions: "Does this not create a temptation to impose our own model on others? Do we not seek to influence them to fit into assumptions we have hastily constructed?"

The author provides a clear answer on how to approach such situations: "Therefore, a person must first be understood in the uniqueness of their life history, without immediately applying labels, oversimplified models, or, most importantly, attempting to impose a specific way of being in the world." For those new to TA, Jagieła references Eric Berne's perspective, which presents a straightforward interpretation: 'I'm OK – You're OK' leads to success; 'I'm OK – You're Not OK' results in arrogance; 'I'm Not OK – You're OK' leads to depression; and 'I'm Not OK – You're Not OK' represents the futility of existence.

When picking up a book or encountering an intriguing title online, we often ask ourselves: What will reading this work offer me? That is why I always begin by reading the author's introduction, which helps determine whether and why I need the book. After reading Jagieła's interpretation of his book's purpose,

I immediately recognized its relevance—both to the broader context of contemporary society and to the ongoing development of psychology and pedagogy, which I integrate with axiology into axio-pedagogy. The result of my research and analysis of the key ideas presented in Jarosław Jagieła’s monograph has led to this concise review. I highly recommend this monograph not only to researchers studying the scientific aspects of pedagogy and psychology but also to educators and practitioners in the fields of teaching and upbringing.

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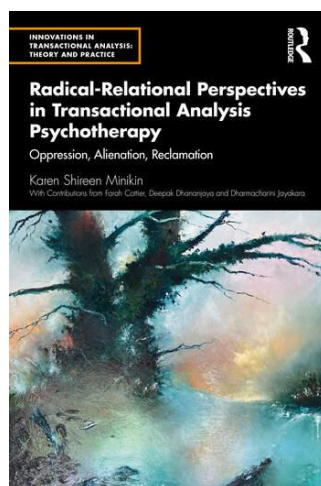
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The reviewed book is part of the publishing series titled “Innovations in Transactional Analysis: Theory and Practice”, published by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. Karen Shireen Minikin presents a courageous and deeply humanistic approach. Her work inspires reflection and action. The book is not only a handbook for therapists but also a call for a more just and empathetic world. From the beginning, the author encourages including socio-cultural contexts and political perspectives in psychological practice. To support her approach, she uses knowledge from history, geography, anthropology, developmental psychology, and psychotherapy. Minikin shares



her personal experiences as a woman of dual cultural heritage. She describes dialogues and encounters with Black and Asian colleagues. Additionally, she provides clinical examples and references from politics and media.

The author moves fluidly from macro to micro perspectives, from the street to the therapy room, and from the individual to the community. Periodically, she includes fragments of her personal history, travel memories, personal anecdotes, and illustrative cases. These elements complement and simplify the content, making the book accessible and easy to read.

The first part of the book, *Alienation*, includes six chapters. It begins with explanations of fundamental concepts and revisits the theme of alienation as defined by Steiner and colleagues in 1975. The author identifies alienation as the primary source of stress, suffering, and trauma in society.

In the first chapter, *"Why Relational? Why Radical?"*, readers find a summary of concepts developed by Eric Berne and Claude Steiner. For those less familiar with Transactional Analysis (TA), this chapter provides a useful review of the theory's basic concepts, a brief history of its origins, an attempt to explain its popularity, and an overview of its development from inception to the present day. Central to this chapter is Steiner's concept of alienation, which he defines as the culmination of two processes: "oppression" and "deception." According to the author, alienation is fundamentally relational, which supports the assertion that alienation underlies all social and psychological suffering. The radical aspect referred to in the title (the transactional equivalent of anti-psychiatry) arises from accepting this definition, implying the need to deconstruct our assumptions and consequently reconsider our approaches within social and psychological disciplines. Alienation is relational in that it involves connection, interaction, and subjective responses. The concept of alienation implies the existence of both an oppressor and an oppressed individual. Oppression diminishes the sense of autonomy and distances us from understanding internal experiences. Despite the fundamental assumptions of TA—"I'm OK/You're OK; people can think and people can change"—there are developmental barriers that can only be explained by considering the often-neglected socio-political context. This socio-political context significantly influences psychotherapy by shaping the understanding of mental health as a systemic issue and highlighting the impact of social structures, capitalism, and historical narratives on individual experiences. The author emphasizes the necessity for therapists to consider clients' social histories and the broader socio-political climate in which they live. This perspective promotes a relational and radical approach to psychotherapy, recognizing that psychological change requires awareness of and engagement with these contextual factors.

Chapter Two, "The Premise of Alienation", begins with a personal story related to the author's father and the historical context surrounding the creation

of Pakistan. Minikin shares her surprise upon discovering the many "unspoken" elements in her family and how uncovering these significantly deepened her relationship with her father. At the same time, she describes the context of her upbringing and the path she has taken in life. The author recognizes that her reflections on alienation in radical psychiatry were influenced by her father's insistence on ideological and relational detachment from parts of their family history. This personal journey illustrates how individual stories and family heritage intertwine with broader social and political contexts, highlighting the impact of alienation at both personal and collective levels. Through comparisons of motherhood in African and European contexts, the author demonstrates how familial and societal expectations often dictate that mothers embody unconditional love and responsiveness. These expectations stem from traditional gender roles and social norms that idealize maternal sacrifice and caregiving. Such expectations are reinforced by cultural narratives equating a mother's worth with her ability to provide emotional and physical care, often leaving little room for individual needs or imperfections. Additionally, these cultural frameworks can alienate mothers by placing the primary responsibility for child-rearing upon them without adequate social support or recognition of their challenges. The chapter also references clinical examples involving men who commit violence against their partners. Minikin describes how heterosexual men often enter therapy confused and distressed, unable to understand why they engage in abusive behavior. Experiences of relational, social, political, and cultural alienation can cause therapy-seekers to feel disconnected from their sense of self, community, and support systems, deepening their anxiety and isolation. These forms of alienation can manifest as difficulty understanding emotional struggles, complicating the articulation of needs or experiences within therapy. Furthermore, therapists risk re-traumatizing clients if they overlook these broader contexts and focus solely on individual issues. This chapter powerfully emphasizes the significance of external factors contributing to individual suffering.

Chapter Three, "*Oppression*", begins by describing the current geopolitical state of the world, reflecting on the post-lockdown period, stress caused by Brexit, and the war in Ukraine. The author considers the complexity of writing about oppression and examines the psychological and social consequences of oppression, especially in war-torn regions and marginalized communities. This chapter includes a description of the mental health crisis in the United Kingdom, highlighting systemic inequalities and the inadequacy of current therapeutic approaches. This section may be somewhat controversial, as it offers clear criticism of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which is a cornerstone of psychological support in the UK. While acknowledging the value of CBT, the author questions its widespread implementation to the exclusion of other therapies. She argues that excessive intellectualization can obscure the realities of social inequalities,

which are potential root causes of depression and declining mental well-being. The discussion is enriched with statistical data demonstrating the link between belonging to excluded groups and experiencing psychological difficulties and disorders. The chapter identifies script recordings as sources of these issues, describing them as a legacy of deeply unprocessed emotional material inherited from our parents, experienced through interactions with them. The author explains how fragmented experiences and overwhelming contexts from past generations are passed down unresolved, becoming part of the grandchildren's heritage. This chapter clearly illustrates the usefulness of TA in broadening our understanding of psychological problems and approaches to therapeutic support.

Chapter Four, *"The Colonising of Lands and Minds: Things Fall Apart"*, similarly to previous chapters, begins with historical references highlighting sources of oppression. The chapter offers extensive criticism of colonialism, capitalism, and fascism. Colonialism is depicted as a process of identity theft, opening the oppressed individual's mind to the oppressor. This initiates a specific symbiotic process, where a dynamic dependency creates a complementary relationship, disabling certain states of autonomy. This description is particularly compelling, illustrating an unusual application of TA on a macro level, providing insight into the overall process of colonization. The narrative transitions smoothly from the historical context of colonialism to discussions about scripts and cultural trauma. Minikin highlights a specific issue arising in psychotherapy, where the survival imperative forces identification with the oppressor, resulting in the loss of parts of one's script and identity. Losing parts of oneself signifies not only a loss of content, function, and process but also the loss of a sense of self. Such a loss amounts to a deconstruction of personal history—a catastrophe from which recovery may not be possible. This chapter presents another example of TA's application on a broader scale. Polish readers may connect these discussions with historical periods in Poland involving systemic attempts at cultural transformation. The chapter includes numerous examples from the author's therapeutic practice, illustrating the consequences of script transmission and the impacts of partial script loss.

Chapter Five, *"Transgenerational Trauma"*, co-authored with Dharmacharini Jayakara, describes intergenerational trauma. The author shares a painful experience familiar to many parents—the inability to shield their children from problems they themselves have not resolved. Intergenerational trauma is portrayed as somewhat enigmatic and resistant to rational explanation. To illustrate this phenomenon, Minikin refers to her own experiences and those of people around her. The chapter includes examples primarily drawn from the experiences of Black women, demonstrating how profoundly past events can influence the scripts of subsequent generations. A significant part of the chapter is structured as a distinctive, somewhat educational dialogue among the women described.

These examples effectively highlight script recordings, allowing readers to draw parallels with their personal histories.

Chapter Six, *“Partition and Intergenerational Hauntings”*, co-authored with Farah Cottier, addresses contemporary views on colonialism. The author reflects on the transactional aspects of this phenomenon. The ability to disregard others, especially individuals of a different skin color, involved an internal reevaluation within the minds of colonizers and the creation of a particular dynamic, where the colonized became dependent on the colonizer. Minikin suggests that these processes remain active in contemporary communities, metaphorically referring to them as “hauntings”. To thoroughly illustrate this phenomenon, she extensively describes the historical partition of India, and the tremendous suffering experienced primarily by women. She then smoothly transitions into contemporary issues and the legacy of colonialism experienced in Britain today. The Partition of India severely disrupted identity, as people nearly overnight shifted from being Indian to Pakistani, leading to feelings of alienation and confusion. Many individuals faced trauma, loss, and challenges in adapting to new cultural landscapes, further complicating their sense of belonging. This fragmentation of identity continues to impact subsequent generations, contributing to ongoing struggles with cultural and national identity amidst the colonial legacy. The historical accounts and experiences presented by the author effectively demonstrate the significance of transgenerational scripts.

Part Two, ***Radical-Relational Reformation***, addresses key questions: If alienation is considered the central challenge, what must we focus on to heal? Is liberation from alienation sufficient? If so, what elements can lead to a sense of freedom, meaning, or recovery?

Chapter Seven, *“From Social Liberation to Radical-Relational Reformation”*, revisits the previously discussed radical approach to psychotherapy. It moves away from the belief that problems reside solely within individuals and reaffirms the importance of a broader perspective, fully recognizing society's impact on individuals. Again, the author references Steiner's concepts, arguing that if oppression and deception lead to alienation, it is deceptive to believe that individuals exist independently of society. Treating individual depression while ignoring the associated social processes perpetuates this deception. Steiner argued that awareness of this deception liberates the mind but often results in anger. To ensure this anger is not destructive, the motivation and energy it generates can be effectively channeled through connections with others who have similarly suffered. The current era, marked by societal polarization on a scale rarely seen, demonstrates people's willingness to take risks for the greater good. This chapter further references the history of TA and the evolving ideas of Eric Berne. Minikin emphasizes that we are transactional beings, often needing to choose between belonging and independence, pride and potential rebellion. The neces-

sity for compromise and the difficulty of reconciling conflicting desires can lead to a position described as "I'm almost OK." According to the author, one path out of this position is engaging in social actions, which—although potentially idealistic—can expand our relational experiences, explore new psychological territory, and ultimately help us return to the position of "I'm OK."

Chapter Eight, *"Reclamation: Coming Out of Exile"*, returns to Eric Berne's concept and the process of life-script formation. The author describes this process as negotiating between maximizing the chance of receiving love while minimizing the risk of losing it. Thus, it is simultaneously creative and destructive and may develop within potentially oppressive social systems. Minikin shares from her professional experience that clients' attitudes and decisions often initially appear odd or self-destructive. However, over time, these choices can reveal themselves as uniquely creative strategies for coping with situations that seem otherwise insurmountable. This chapter includes practical therapeutic examples illustrating this phenomenon. By expanding on the definition of alienation, the author provides examples showing how exploring previously unnoticed aspects of external oppression and recognizing the social context can facilitate personal growth.

Chapter Nine, *"Working with Dissociation, Enactments, and Re-enactments"*, describes experiences of dissociative processes resulting from traumatic events. Minikin shares insights from therapeutic practice, illustrating how dysfunctional behaviors can be passed to children through script transmission, creating problems that defy rational understanding. She also shares her own experiences of a "freezing" state as a defensive response with unknown origins, likely inherited from her father, who witnessed terrifying events during the partition of India. The chapter explores this phenomenon more broadly, identifying a cycle of freezing and powerlessness that can extend from individual issues across generations, especially when encountering authority figures. Clinical examples provided in this chapter illustrate how exploring external contexts can foster personality integration. Additionally, the chapter contains moving historical descriptions of violence experienced by women, demonstrating how these past experiences continue to impact subsequent generations.

Chapter Ten, *"Is Liberation Possible? Radicalising Relational Psychotherapy and Counselling"*, authored by Deepak Dhananjaya, explores therapeutic work with women from the lowest castes in India or those outside the caste system. Such women, labeled "untouchables," represent one of the most oppressed groups globally. Dhananjaya shares reflections on alienation and liberation, critically examining traditional perceptions of liberation. He illustrates his efforts to work both radically and relationally within his therapeutic process. Dhananjaya candidly confronts his capacity for domination, demonstrating profound humility and self-reflection. Drawing from personal experiences of exclusion, the au-

thor highlights the considerable challenge therapists face in providing unconditional support. He emphasizes the difficulty marginalized groups encounter in achieving the transactional analysis stance "I'm OK/You're OK" when constantly subjected to public ostracism or hatred. Dhananjaya proposes an approach to psychotherapy for excluded groups that integrates psychoeducation with the roles of therapist and activist. The chapter includes a detailed description of his therapeutic work with a group of twenty Dalit women within a TA framework. According to Dhananjaya, recognizing the internalized "not-OK" beliefs toward oneself and others is key to transformation. For genuine change to occur, individuals must confront and challenge the societal structures and relationships that perpetuate mutual positions of "not-OK." This chapter clearly embodies the radical stance promised by the book's title. It concludes by advocating a shift in defining mental health, emphasizing the necessity to consider individual contexts and environmental factors. Therapists, according to Dhananjaya, must become aware of how their perceptions of mental health often reflect their privileged social positions.

Chapter Eleven, *"The Relational-Radical and the Radical-Relational"*, addresses the current geopolitical situation, illustrating how societal pressures can lead to polarized views and a rise in nationalist tendencies. The chapter also summarizes key themes presented in earlier chapters. The central conclusion advocates shifting away from the traditional health-illness continuum toward expanding awareness. Emphasis is placed on therapists' willingness to challenge themselves, broaden their frames of reference, and adapt their perspectives regarding clients and transference situations, while still maintaining clear boundaries within their own minds.

Karen Shireen Minikin and her co-authors' book offers a profound journey through time, continents, and cultures. It is certainly not a book for everyone; readers seeking simple explanations and clear diagrams will not find them here. The text moves beyond typical TA descriptions into historical, political, and cultural reflections. It strongly criticizes colonialism, capitalism, and oppression, presenting a distinctly feminist perspective, with several references to Karl Marx, which might deter some readers. However, readers willing to explore these narratives, immerse themselves in histories of diverse regions, and experience the vivid perspectives of marginalized groups will discover an extraordinary and complex portrayal of psychotherapeutic practice integrated with active advocacy for those most in need. This narrative provides valuable insights beneficial for practical applications of TA. Minikin highlights psychological inequalities, showing how some social groups not only face external discrimination but also carry life scripts that hinder personal development. According to Minikin, awareness of how these factors affect our lives is essential; without this understanding, achieving true liberation remains challenging.

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Tradycyjnie zastosowania AT w teorii, praktyce i podejmowanych badaniach sprowadzają się najczęściej do takich dziedzin, jak: psychoterapia, poradnictwo, usprawnianie struktur organizacyjnych firm i korporacji oraz edukacji. Jednak, śledząc literaturę, można dostrzec znacznie szersze obszary wykorzystywania wiedzy wynikającej z tej koncepcji. Niektóre z nich mogą wydawać się czasem wręcz egzotycznie i odległe od tego wszystkiego, co zapoczątkował Berne swoimi pierwszymi pracami. Oto niektóre z licznych kontekstów, które – być może – zaciekawia osoby zainteresowane wykorzystaniem AT w dziedzinie własnych badań i dociekań?

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