

ISBN 2325-775X

IJPES

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

VOL. 7 / NO. 3
2018



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IJPES

International Journal of Psycho-Educational Sciences

Vol. 7, No. 3 (2018)



London
Academic Publishing

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ISSN 2325-775X (Online)

First Printing: December 2018

London Academic Publishing Ltd.
27, Old Gloucester Street
WC1N 3AX
London, United Kingdom
Email: contact@lapub.co.uk

www.lapub.co.uk
www.journals.lapub.co.uk

Company Reg. No. 10941794
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THE AUTHORSHIP OF THEIR OWN LIVES IN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: RESEARCH STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Abstract: The article presents a basic strategic framework for research on the authorship of their own lives in people with disabilities (AOL-PwD). This issue corresponds to the humanistic approach to the exploration of the phenomenon of disability, which stresses subjectivity, agency, well-being, independence, and satisfaction with fulfilling age-appropriate tasks. Previous analyses resulted in the theoretical construct and the definition of the AOL-PwD. This article aims to present a research strategy framework for the construct. The following strategic assumptions are considered: (1) universalism, (2) affirmation, (3) interdisciplinarity, (4) comprehensiveness, (5) adaptation, (6) subjectivism, (7) objectivism, (8) participation, (9) individualism, (10) pragmatism, (11) contextuality, and (12) systemness. We think that the AOL-PwD concept creates an inspiring theoretical and empirical space and fosters valuable dialogue across various fields and between rehabilitation theory and practice. The ultimate goal will be to develop an assessment and rehabilitation model of the AOL-PwD concept. Following its recommendations will make it possible to provide people with individual support determined by their subjectivity, independence, and developmental satisfaction. That model will be made based on the identified personal resources and multidimensional determinants of the social environment.

Keywords: disability, authorship of their own lives in people with disabilities (AOL-PwD), subjectivity, wellbeing, independence, developmental tasks, social support, self-determination, quality of life, participatory paradigm

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INTRODUCTION

Most frequently, the perception of human disability and attitudes toward people with disabilities result from individual experiences in interpersonal relationships as well as from mental patterns, prejudice, and stereotypes existing in the public consciousness. One of the ways to overcome them is to introduce new and important information into the public consciousness—information that will be powerful and valuable enough to change the old outlook and allow a different perception of people with disabilities and their lives. The special role of science in this regard should be pointed out: conceptual and empirical findings as well as explorations and reflection in science are important impulses penetrating the public consciousness. The ideas, concepts, or even visions of social sciences and the humanities make it possible to foster a public belief that people with disabilities—despite their limitations—have something important to offer to the world. A years-long exploration of such issues prompted devising the *authorship of their own lives in people with disabilities* concept (AOL-PwD) (Głodkowska 2015). The concept results from long-term studies that focused on aspects including the phenomenon, process, and social movement relating to the normalization of the lives of people with disabilities; the subjective rehabilitation model and the contemporary paradigm of support defining conditions for enabling people with disabilities to have independent lives; the positive image of people with disabilities; and the idea of well-being that fits in with the phenomenon of disability (e.g., Głodkowska 2003, 2005; 2012; 2013; 2014a,c,d; 2015; 2017).

We expect that the approach to people with disabilities from the perspective of their life authorship will allow building a comprehensive assessment and rehabilitation model. In this respect, we underline that the model will (1) highlight a person's potential above all and not his or her deficits; (2) provide an opportunity for a multifaceted assessment of a person's functioning instead of a fragmentary assessment; (3) probe into complex contexts and connections among various determinants; (4) provide a basis for devising a comprehensive research model; (5) explore a person's real life as subjectively perceived by him or her; (6) create a justified opportunity for people

with disabilities to participate in research as equal research partners; (7) provide important practical recommendations for designing support systems and rehabilitation programs; and (8) allow multi-layered analyses, interpretations, and designs of rehabilitation activities as well as a review of their effectiveness from the point of view of the wellness and resources of people with disabilities (Głodkowska and Gosk 2018).

The purpose of this article is to establish a strategic framework for research on the AOL-PwD. We believe that this work is an important link that leads to further stages of methodological and empirical procedures in AOL-PwD assessment, and ultimately to designing a rehabilitation and therapy model in this area. The research strategy framework formulated in this article is a crucial stage of methodological and empirical procedures in terms of further conceptualization and operationalization of the issue of AOL-PwD.

DEFINITION, THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT, IMPORTANT ASPECTS

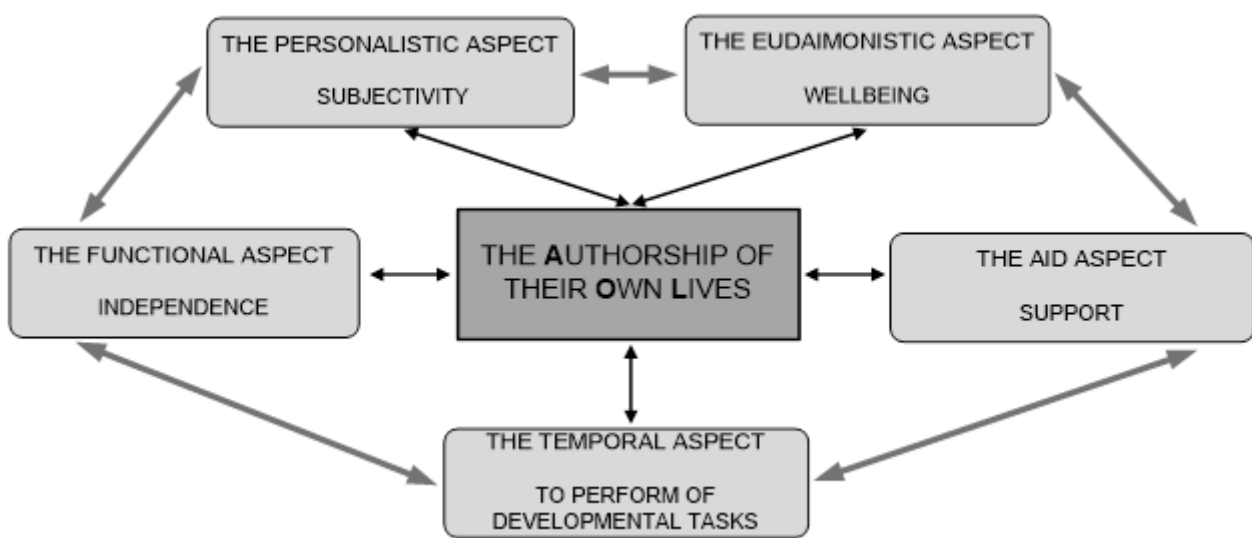
In previous papers, the AOL-PwD concept was presented, a definition was formulated, a theoretical construct was developed, and research stages and procedures were designed. According to the definition adopted:

The authorship of their own lives in people with disabilities (AOL-PwD) is a multidimensional construct that identifies their (1) subjective experiences, (2) wellbeing, (3) independence, (4) satisfying performance of developmental tasks, and (5) efficient use of social support (Głodkowska 2015, 116; Głodkowska and Gosk 2018).

The theoretical construct of the AOL-PwD includes five aspects (Diagram 1), which are interpreted in the light of appropriate theories. The personalistic aspect (to have a sense of subjectivity) clearly arises from pedagogical personalism. The eudaimonistic aspect (to have a sense of well-being) is oriented at the ideas of positive psychology. The functional aspect (to be independent) is presented from the point of view of optimal functioning theory. The temporal aspect (to perform developmental tasks) provides grounds

for interpretation based on developmental task theory. The aid aspect (to know how to use social support) allows explanation of the AOL-PwD in the light of social support theory. These aspects and meaning contexts of the construct as well as the theoretical horizons for their interpretation outline and emphasize those dimensions of the functioning of people with disabilities that explain affirmative and positive aspects of their lives (Głodkowska 2015).

Diagram 1. AOL-PwD theoretical construct
Source: Głodkowska and Gosk 2018.



We want to underline that the AOL-PwD theoretical construct relates to the paradigmatic change initiated by Robert Schalock (2004). The researcher developed an emerging disability paradigm in the perspective of personal well-being, which is the leading idea of positive psychology. Numerous authors have stressed the role of that paradigmatic change in the new approach to the phenomenon of disability (e.g., Dagnan and Sandhu 1999; Keith and Schalock 2000; Wehmeyer et al. 2003; Wehmeyer and Garner, 2003; Zekovic and Renwick, 2003; Lachapelle et al. 2005; Wehmeyer 2005; Dykens

2006; Nota et al. 2007; Shogren et al. 2006; Miller and Chan 2008; Schalock et al. 2008; Schalock et al. 2010; Verdugo et al. 2011; Morisse et al. 2013; Shogren et al. 2014; Shogren et al. 2006; Niemiec et al. 2017).

A new interpretation of that paradigm is made within the cognitive area outlined by the AOL-PwD issue. The concept presented in this article clearly emphasizes the positive aspects of the lives of people with disabilities, including their subjectivity, well-being, independence, developmental task performance, and social support use (Głodkowska 2015; Głodkowska and Gosk, 2018).

The subject of this article consistently builds the next link in the development of the AOL-PwD concept. Previous analyses focused on its conceptualization, developing the theoretical construct, identifying meaning contexts, and defining and predesigning research stages and

procedures (Głodkowska 2014a; 2014d; 2015; Głodkowska and Gosk, 2018).

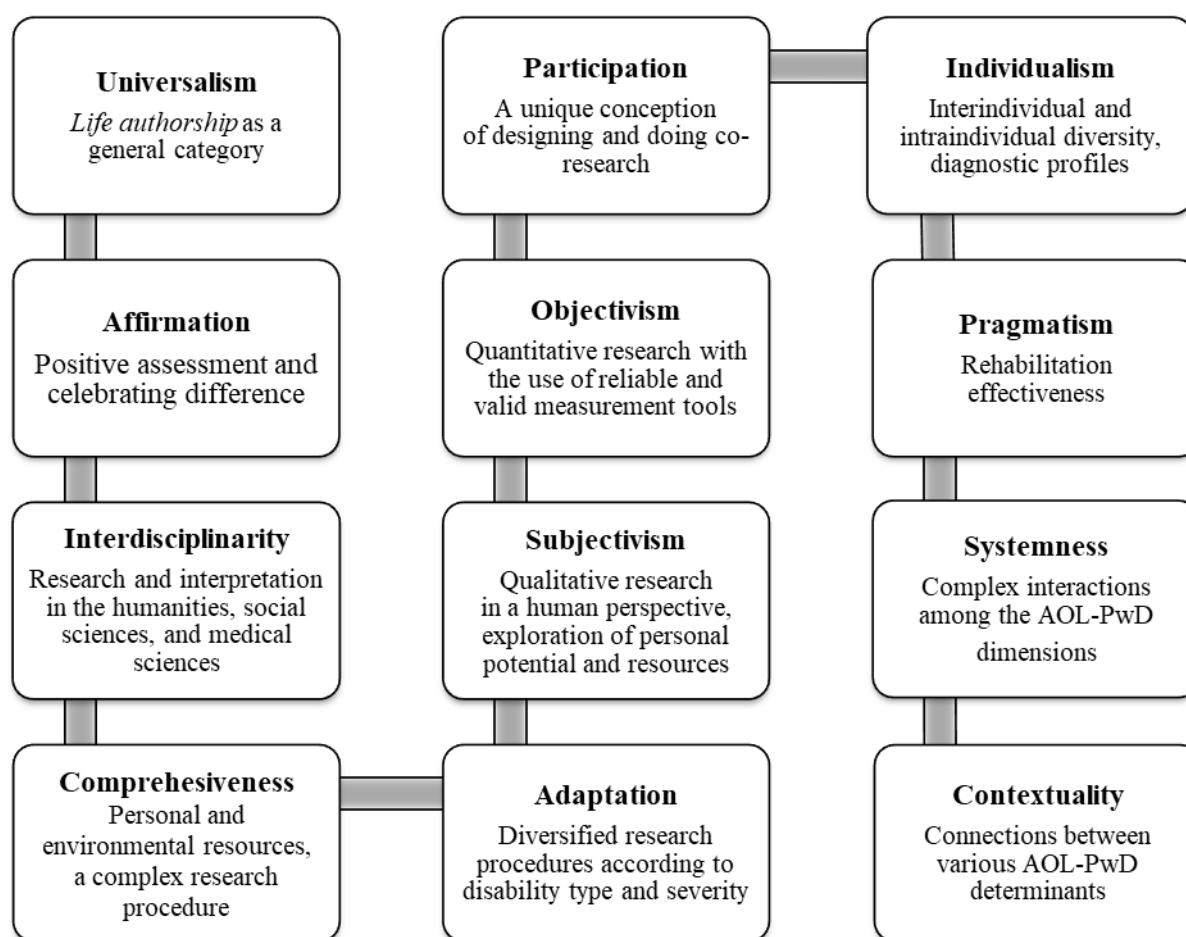
RESEARCH STRATEGY—METHODOLOGICAL BASIS

The research strategy development process needs to include formulating key methodological assumptions. The assumptions underline that *authorship of one's own life* is a category within which the experience of important human life dimensions is measured and described, including human subjectivity, well-being, optimal functioning, life task performance, and the ability to use social support. Measurement is performed with reference to a person's previous experiences and in the context of his or her living environment. It should be assumed that AOL-PwD assessment is important for rehabilitation in stimulating and improving a person's functioning, in stressing his

or her strengths in functioning, and in personal agency. It is important to point out that AOL-PwD measurement can be a source of significant findings regarding quality of life and self-determination.

The strategy for research on the AOL-PwD began with establishing a 12-stage research strategy framework: (1) universalism, (2) affirmation, (3) interdisciplinarity, (4) comprehensiveness, (5) adaptation, (6) subjectivism, (7) objectivism, (8) participation, (9) individualism, (10) pragmatism, (11) systemness, and (12) contextuality (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2. AOL-PwD research strategy framework.



people—nondisabled ones and those with disabilities—can experience a life authored by them, as life authorship is a universal value. It is interesting to quote here the concept of Nick Watson, who argued that people with disabilities can shape their self-identity based not so much on becoming aware of their disorders and

(1) UNIVERSALISM: Life authorship as a general category

The concept starts from the assumption that authorship of one's life is a conceptual category that is characteristic of all people—both nondisabled ones and those with disabilities of various types and severity. Every person can demonstrate a specific state of life authorship, and this characteristic can be determined in relation to his or her abilities but also limitations resulting from a disability. Every person can, and has the right to, feel a sense of subjectivity, agency, and independence in his or her actions as well as feel satisfied and have hope for a good life. Therefore, assessing the AOL-PwD, we assume that all

impairments but rather on reconstructing normality (Watson 2002, 519). In this respect, it is reasonable to assume that people with disabilities take on various life challenges to achieve what is socially considered normal. In such circumstances, people develop their self-identity by being aware of the purpose of their actions, which originate in their

social living conditions. Identity is formed not to show differences, emphasize diversity, or celebrate disability, but to define disability in one's own terms and according to one's own experiences and terms of reference in the social environment (Watson 2002, 521). Characteristics and values relating to identity formation are part of every person, and their essence is connected with life authorship, too.

(2) AFFIRMATION: Positive assessment and celebrating difference

Formulating strategic assumptions for research on the AOL-PwD, we want to emphasize the value of positive assessment. It orients activities as well as rehabilitation and therapy to strengths in a person's functioning, to his or her developmental powers or "Archimedean points," and not only to disorders, impairments, or disabilities (Głodkowska 2012). It is worth referring here to Swain and French's (2000) concept of an affirmation model of disability. The authors talked about celebrating differences among people and affirming people's individual functioning in social life. At the same time, they underlined that people with disabilities can be proud of the fact that they are different from the majority of society. Swain and French argued that people with disabilities not only need confirmation of how they are different from nondisabled people, but they also expect assurance of their personal nature and recognition of their lifestyle, quality of life, and identity (Swain and French 2000, 185).

(3) INTERDISCIPLINARITY: Life authorship in research and interpretations in the humanities, social sciences, and medical sciences

The aspects of the theoretical construct of the AOL-PwD (Diagram 1) and the theories in the light of which these aspect are interpreted use social sciences, the humanities, and medical sciences as sources. We think that the exploration of those multifaceted areas of the functioning of people with disabilities (i.e., personalistic, eudaimonistic, functional, temporal, and aid areas) requires reference to interdisciplinary theoretical analyses and research in various sciences. The AOL-PwD assessment framework assumes the need for cooperation among representatives from

many scientific disciplines, including psychology, sociology, special education, philosophy, family studies, and health sciences. For it is reasonable to think that limiting research to one point of view could result in reductionism and make AOL-PwD exploration fragmentary. It could be said—after Couser (2011)—that the interdisciplinary nature of the AOL-PwD research strategy emerges from the conviction that disability can be fully understood only if it is studied from many perspectives and with reference to the various areas of life it affects. Exploration of the AOL-PwD, who each experience their disabilities in their individual ways, live in different sociocultural and economic conditions, give unique meanings to their life experiences, and adopt specific strategies to cope with their disabilities, requires interdisciplinary research analyses. It is impossible—or even wrong—to study AOL-PwD in reference to selected conceptual assumptions and theories that are characteristic of only one specific field.

Moreover, the AOL-PwD research strategy assumes exploration, analysis, and interpretation of multifaceted factors determining the sense of AOL-PwD. We assume that research will cover both personal factors and a broad social, cultural, and economic context of the functioning of people with disabilities. We refer here to aspects that include education, rehabilitation, and therapy; to the quantity and quality of interactions experienced by people with disabilities in their environment; to their socioeconomic status, cultural variables, and social support. We think that an interdisciplinary knowledge of the multifaceted functioning of people with disabilities is necessary to explore those determinants.

The practical dimension of AOL-PwD research that refers to the multilayered analysis, interpretation, and design of rehabilitation activities, as well as a review of their effectiveness from the point of view of the wellness and resources of people with disabilities, also fits in with the assumed interdisciplinarity of the AOL-PwD research strategy. We think that effective education, rehabilitation, and aid programs for people with disabilities must result from cooperation among representatives from various fields, including educators, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, physiotherapists, and therapists. Both the analysis and interpretation of previous interventions as well as working toward

new solutions need to be based on sound knowledge and practical experience of people from different sectors who provide services for people with disabilities.

(4) **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Personal and environmental resources, a complex research procedure

According to the AOL-PwD conceptualization, the theoretical construct includes five aspects: (1) personalistic, (2) eudaimonistic, (3) functional, (4) temporal, and (5) aid (Diagram 1). As shown earlier, the aspects and meaning contexts of authorship of one's life are interpreted in the light of appropriate theories: pedagogical personalism, positive psychology, optimal functioning theory, developmental task theory, and social support theory. These aspects and meaning contexts of the construct as well as the theoretical horizons for their interpretation clearly outline the comprehensive, holistic approach to the functioning of people with disabilities. At the same time, they emphasize those dimensions that explain affirmative and positive aspects of disabled people's lives.

The AOL-PwD research strategy assumes that research will cover both participants' personal functioning and the characteristics of their environment, including peer relationships, family life, educational and vocational activity, and local community. The environmental context will be explored from the point of view of providing external conditions for the development of authorship of one's life. For it should be remembered that the living conditions of people with disabilities can be of causative significance for both reinforcing and decreasing their sense of AOL-PwD. At the same time, assessing a person with disability and his or her parents/caregivers and professionals will allow a more reliable design of support in terms of its type and intensity that will follow the needs, abilities, and expectations of the person himself or herself, and not only the predictions of people in his or her social environment.

The assumed comprehensiveness of AOL-PwD research also refers to the principles of life-span theory. That is why assessment will cover people of different ages and will be appropriately adapted to the participants' age brackets. The adoption of this perspective in AOL-PwD research

can be justified by making reference to the main conceptual assumptions of life-span psychology, according to which human development (1) continues throughout human life (from birth to death); (2) is marked by intraindividual plasticity of individual mental functions whose modification degree depends on the quantity and quality of a person's experiences and his or her personal way of coping with life events; (3) always takes place in changing sociocultural, economic, and natural conditions, which individualize its course; and (4) is determined by chronological age and factors of civilization as well as nonnormative factors, which include random incidents or choices made by an individual. It is also important that the changes taking place in a person's mental life do not have to be universal or necessary; neither are they fully predictable (Straś-Romanowska, 2001). Those principles of life-span theory fit in with the AOL-PwD concept. Firstly, the AOL-PwD concept involves assessment of people at different life stages and thus at different stages in terms of developing a sense of authoring their lives. Secondly, it takes into consideration the individually varied impact of disability on the multifaceted functioning of people with disabilities, which depends on their previous experiences and their specific ways of coping with them. We think that exploration of past experiences of people with disabilities will allow a better understanding of how they perceive life authorship at the moment. Thirdly, we are convinced that various social, cultural, and economic factors may have a different impact on the way specific people with disabilities perceive their life authorship. This impact is neither explicit nor direct. Its intensity and scope may change depending on the chronological age of a person with disability or the dimension of life authorship that is being analysed. Fourthly, taking into account the subjective nature of qualitative research, we also aim to identify important events in the lives of people with disabilities that determine the uniqueness of their life trajectories and consequently influence the way they perceive their life authorship.

Research comprehensiveness will also manifest in the use of a battery of AOL-PwD measurement tools, including subjective AOL-PwD assessment by a person with disability, objective AOL-PwD assessment by a professional

or a parent, and assessment of determining factors (personal, socioeconomic, and cultural). We plan to standardize the measurement tools by adapting them to people with disabilities of various types and severity. We also intend to evaluate the psychometric value of the individual AOL-PwD measurement tools.

Additionally, the comprehensiveness of the research strategy manifests in combining quantitative and qualitative research procedures. The use of both methodological orientations allows a more solid exploration of such a sensitive phenomenon as that of life authorship—not only through objective assessment, including showing existing relationships or the strength of these relationships in quantitative research, but also through detailed interpretation with the use of qualitative research.

(5) **ADAPTATION:** Diversified research procedures according to disability type and severity

Life authorship assessment will be carried out in groups of people with different disabilities. Each group needs to have the assessment procedure adapted to group members' perceptual abilities (visual disabilities, hearing disabilities), motor abilities (motor disabilities), and intellectual abilities (intellectual disabilities). Especially when a person has difficulty communicating with the social environment, it will also be necessary to introduce alternative, nonverbal communication. Moreover, adaptation will cover disability severity as well as important contexts of developmental tasks with reference to age groups. We anticipate that the type and severity of disability as well as chronological age might determine important aspects of a person's life authorship, including his or her sense of subjectivity and agency, independence and autonomy, awareness of personal resources, and developmental task performance or ability to use social support.

(6) **SUBJECTIVISM:** Qualitative research in a human perspective; exploration of personal potential and resources

The research procedures include an assessment of the AOL-PwD based on the assessment carried out by the participants—authors—themselves in both quantitative research (measurement tool for

subjective AOL-PwD assessment) and qualitative research (structured interview). Recent changes in the scientific approach to people with disabilities allowed us to assume that the first stage of life authorship research would explore the potential and resources of people with disabilities and their immediate environment. Valuable information will relate to exploration of how people with different disabilities (visual, hearing, motor, and intellectual) as well as their parents, professional support network, and those without direct contact with them (nonprofessionals) understand the AOL-PwD concept. Identification of AOL-PwD determinants through interviews will also be of great importance (Głodkowska and Gosk 2018).

Additionally, it will be important here to explore the need for developmental reinforcement as well as to determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions with which a specific person is provided. Doing research under a qualitative approach allows a fuller exploration of the phenomenon being studied and its whole context, as the researcher is not limited by presuppositions or hypotheses. Thanks to the use of qualitative research, it is possible to reach deep into the phenomenon and broaden the perspective from which it is viewed. Even though qualitative research does not allow generalization of results, it can still enable researchers to notice the AOL-PwD aspects that are indiscernible—hidden, in a way, in numerical data resulting from quantitative research. Qualitative information is especially valuable when research aims to use interviews to develop or expand the construct of a given phenomenon to include areas indicated by the participants, which might not have been covered by the theoretical assumptions.

(7) **OBJECTIVISM:** Quantitative research with the use of reliable and valid measurement tools

The research will be conducted under the quantitative approach with the use of reliable and valid measurement tools: the Subjective AOL-PwD Assessment Scale for people with disabilities and the Objective AOL-PwD Assessment Scale for professionals and parents. We plan to standardize the measurement tools by adapting them to people with disabilities of various types and severity. We also intend to evaluate the psychometric value of the individual AOL-PwD measurement tools. At

the same time, quantitative research will cover multidimensional AOL-PwD determinants and connections with personal, socioeconomic, and cultural factors (Głodkowska, Gosk, 2018). Measurement tools designed by other authors will be used in this area of research. Detailed information relating to this issue will be presented in a separate article.

It should be noted that quantitative research allows not only explanation of a phenomenon but also testing of hypotheses about relationships among variables. It enables the researcher to remain cognitively objective and thus to formulate objective truth. The research procedure, followed with quantitative research principles in mind as far as the standardization of the tool is concerned, will allow finding out about both the AOL-PwD phenomenon and its wider context—its multidimensional determinants, including personal factors (personality traits), demographic factors (age, gender, education, vocational activity), sociocultural factors (in microsocial, macrosocial, and mesosocial dimensions), and economic factors (e.g., financial situation, housing conditions, availability of specialist equipment).

(8) PARTICIPATION: A unique conception of designing and doing co-research

Research aiming to explore the AOL-PwD and its determinants defines the nature of the diagnostic process. It requires a general research approach—a unique methodological conception—that relates to participatory research. It is a conception of designing and doing research with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Laws, Harper, Marcus, 2003).

At the beginning of the last century, Znaniecki put forward a thesis in humanistic sociology about researchers getting closer to the world of the subjects. According to Znaniecki, this ensures gaining the most accurate knowledge of the subject by using his or her experiences and interpretations. Research in the participatory paradigm has particularly developed over the last decades (Denzin and Lincoln 2009). It also covers issues relating to disabilities, e.g., inclusive research with people with intellectual disabilities, also called co-researching (French and Swain, 1997; Kiernan 1999; García-Iriarte et al. 2014; Bigby et al. 2014; Puyalto et al. 2016; Fullana et al. 2017). Co-

researching involves both university researchers, who share their research skills, and people with disabilities, who share what it is like living with a disability. Authors make attempts to use inclusive research: they develop a research strategy and identify the advisory nature, study course, and control over all stages as well as involvement of participants—academic researchers and people with disabilities (Bigby et al. 2014). The idea of inclusive research clearly changes the role of the participants; they become, in a way, authors exploring themselves and their lives. That is why to understand people with disabilities and to assess the authorship of their own lives—according to the principles of co-researching—an active, partnership - based research relationship needs to be used and the authoritarian role of the researcher as an expert need to be rejected. As Pushor (2008) stated research should be conducted with people rather than on people. The research process is at the same time a dialogical process, in which both the researcher and the participant contribute their knowledge and skills, and the research finding is the result of their cooperation (Głodkowska and Gosk 2018).

Following the participatory paradigm and dialogical principles of inclusive research, it can be assumed that it allows a thorough exploration of the meanings of the AOL-PwD phenomenon.

(9) INDIVIDUALISM: Interindividual and intraindividual diversity; diagnostic profiles

It should be remembered that research on the AOL-PwD is individually variable and diversified. That is why general aspects and individual categories can be at different levels in specific people in a given moment of their life. Moreover, assessment repeated at different times may show varied dynamics in acquiring these subjectivity- and identity-based areas of functioning: a sense of subjectivity, independence, well-being, developmental satisfaction, and the ability to use social support. It is reasonable to expect that the level of life authorship may be different depending on the type and severity of disability and may change depending on various factors that promote or hinder general development and life experiences. At the same time, it should be remembered that people can feel the need to author their lives to varying extents, which may result

from developmental conditions and the role of significant people in their lives (parents, siblings, other family members, peers, teachers, and other people). These issues, too, should be taken into account in the assessment of the AOL-PwD, thus emphasizing individualism in the research strategy.

Ultimately, the AOL-PwD methodological procedure is to produce such assessment solutions that will allow effective use of profile assessment for every person with disability so that an appropriate, individualized, developmental support program can be designed for him or her.

(10) PRAGMATISM: Rehabilitation effectiveness

According to preliminary arrangements, research findings will be of diagnostic importance in terms of (1) exploring the understanding of the AOL-PwD concept in people with disabilities, in people working with individuals with disabilities, in people without direct contact with them, and in parents—people who deal with their child's disability on a daily basis; (2) exploring subjective life authorship assessments based on qualitative research; (3) exploring objective life authorship assessments based on quantitative research; and (4) identifying multidimensional life authorship determinants and connections with personal, socioeconomic, and cultural factors.

Based on the methodological tasks relating to the quantitative research, a battery of tools to measure the AOL-PwD will be developed. The tools will be evaluated for their psychometric value (reliability, validity, and normalization). Then it will be possible to use them in diagnostic tests. They will also be a valuable means to determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation and therapy, in terms of how they reinforce the sense of life authorship.

We stress again that the assessment of people with disabilities and their parents/caregivers as well as professional support network will allow a more reliable design of support that will be adapted to the needs, abilities, and expectations of people with disabilities themselves and not only to what their environment predicts.

(11) SYSTEMNESS: Complex interactions among the AOL-PwD dimensions

Systemness indicates multidimensional interactions among the individual aspects of the

AOL-PwD (subjectivity, well-being, independence, developmental tasks, and social support), which are then expanded within the research categories. The AOL-PwD aspects and categories constitute a specific system with its own individual and unique organization and network of relationships. This testifies to the unique way a specific person with disability perceives his or her life authorship. This manifests in the system of meanings people with disabilities give to their lives: What does it mean to them to author their lives? How do they understand their subjectivity? Are they satisfied with their lives? Where do they see their independence? Are they satisfied with their achievements? How effective is the support they are receiving? It could also be said that AOL-PwD systemness is a complex and unique ecosystem of a person with disability. Therefore, life authorship can be directly related to the micro-, macro-, or mesosystem, and the situation of a specific person can be analysed in that context.

(12) CONTEXTUALITY: Connections among various AOL-PwD determinants

It is important that research analyses take into account complex contexts and connections among various life authorship determinants. This set of references needs to be explored to understand the way a specific person perceives the aspects of his or her life authorship. The patterns of factors that reinforce but also weaken the sense of life authorship are important in this area. The family as well as experiences relating to education, therapy, support received within the immediate environment, availability of social and cultural resources, and peer relationships play a special role here. Additionally, the exploration of contexts and connections should take into consideration changes in developmental task performance, which may be significant for a sense of subjectivity, satisfaction with life and achievements, and independence as important AOL-PwD aspects.

Shogren (2013) emphasized that the research perspective—and the social perspective as well—requires that the interrelated contextual factors that have an impact on the findings of scientific research, social policies, and individual achievements of people with disabilities and their families be taken into account in the conceptualization of disability, diagnosis, and

classification. According to the definition of context proposed by the author, it is a construct that “integrates the totality of circumstances that comprise the milieu of human life and human functioning” (Shogren 2013, 4). In research, context can be perceived as an independent variable that includes personal and environmental characteristics that are not usually subject to modification (e.g., age, gender, culture, ethnic origin, and family). Among intervening contextual variables, Shogren (2013) listed organizations, social policies, and social practices that can be influenced and properly managed to improve the functioning of people with disabilities and their families. As an integrative construct, context constitutes a certain framework for describing, analysing, and interpreting various aspects of human functioning relating to personal and environmental factors as well as social policy planning, implementation, and improvement.

From the point of view of this AOL-PwD characteristic, it is also important to consider the degree of acceptance of one’s disability. Due to different experiences or developmental tasks that change with age, a given person may be in different places on the continuum between full acceptance and lack of acceptance of his or her disability. Assessing the level of this variable will be of scientific importance—not only in terms of defining where a given person is at the moment, but also as a relevant factor that explains his or her sense of life authorship.

It should be pointed out that identifying multifaceted life authorship determinants corresponds to the principles of disability studies, in which researchers clearly stress the diagnostic and rehabilitative value of life contexts of people with disabilities (e.g., Campbell & Oliver 2013; Swain et al. 2013). Therefore, the theoretical, methodological, and empirical development of the AOL-PwD concept requires that contextual references be identified, which is necessary to understand how a specific person perceives the aspects of his or her life authorship.

CONCLUSION

The issue of the authorship of their own lives in people with disabilities (AOL-PwD) is a humanistic concept of assessment and rehabilitation. It fits in with the trend in disability

exploration that participates in creating a positive, causative image of people with disabilities in society. We think that the idea of disability perception from the point of view of AOL-PwD attains another important goal, too. It enables people with disabilities to view themselves and their lives in a different way, not only from the angle of limitations, disorders, or deficits but mainly through the lens of subjectivity, agency, personal resources, independence, and satisfaction with fulfilling age-appropriate tasks, which are essential aspects of authoring oneself and one’s life.

The theoretical analyses performed to date substantiated the AOL-PwD concept, developed the construct, pointed to the meaning contexts of the AOL-PwD aspects, and planned research stages and procedures. This article discussed methodological issues—formulating important assumptions for the AOL-PwD research strategy. The following strategic assumptions have been made: (1) universalism (AOL as a general category); (2) affirmation (positive assessment and celebrating difference); (3) interdisciplinarity (AOL in research in the humanities, social sciences, and medical sciences); (4) comprehensiveness (personal and environmental resources); (5) adaptation (diversified research procedures); (6) subjectivism (qualitative research); (7) objectivism (quantitative research); (8) participation (co-research); (9) individualism (diagnostic profiles); (10) pragmatism (rehabilitation effectiveness); (11) systemness (complex interactions among the AOL-PwD dimensions); and (12) contextuality (connections among various AOL-PwD determinants). We think that the concept of the AOL-PwD creates an inspiring theoretical and empirical space and fosters valuable dialogue across various fields and between theory and practice of therapy and rehabilitation.

The ultimate target is to develop an assessment and rehabilitation model of the AOL-PwD. Following its recommendations will make it possible to provide people with individual support determined by their subjectivity, independence, and developmental satisfaction. That model will be made based on the identified personal resources and multidimensional determinants of the social environment. We point out a special situation here that is cognitively and methodologically inspiring.

The development of the life authorship assessment and rehabilitation model offers a unique circumstance: a person with disability is not only the recipient and executor of the support program designed for him or her, but actually participates in its development, providing important diagnostic information about himself or herself and his or her life and also becoming the author of subsequent planned activities.

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CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS WITH ELDERLY INFORMANTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: SELECTED ASPECTS OF GERONTOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

Abstract: The article presents the problem of conducting interviews for research and educational purposes with elderly people. It is not the purpose of the article to analyze the process of collecting interviews for clinical purposes in medical sciences. The article refers only to the epistemological issues in social sciences. The importance of proper interviewing elderly people is related to the planning of formal, informal or non-formal educational support for them (Kargul 2001) or on the other hand, for the purpose of data collection in qualitative research such as educational ethnography. In both cases, pedagogues should have deep knowledge about both the interview performance and the specificity of conducting interviews with the elderly informants, with respect and knowledge about the state of functioning of their health, cognitive skills etc. It is also particularly worth considering the problem of collecting data with informants having dementia or mental illnesses or being in need of particular sensitivity from the researchers. The article introduces the problem of educational needs of people in late adulthood, synthesizes the characteristics of elderly people as informants, taking into account their cognitive performance, health-related requirements or chronic diseases. In addition, the content includes procedural recommendations for the practice of data collection with informants in late adulthood (Tokaj 2005; Talarska & Wieczorowska-Tobis 2012) – after 60-65 years of age.

Keywords: social sciences, education, qualitative methodology, ethnographic research, interview, informants, elderly people

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INTRODUCTION

Elderly people are regular participants of educational processes for seniors in Poland and abroad. They regularly participate in clubs of seniors, Universities of the Third Age and other forms of support and continuing education. Usually, participation in formal or informal ways of activating older people is preceded by conversations with those who want to participate in selected forms of activation or support. In addition, older people, and females and males participate more or less regularly, as interlocutors in qualitative research, conducted by college students or more experienced researchers from social sciences in general.

The following article analyzes important elements related to key problems accompanying the collection of data for educational, supportive or qualitative research among informants both gender in their late adulthood. The content includes theoretical analysis related to human aging from the educational perspective, and methodological analysis of data collection, when informers in e.g. educational ethnography are females and males in late adulthood. The article indicates the threads of conducting interviews with informants, older people who are getting old without disabilities and people experiencing certain health problems related to age or people experiencing a chronic illness. These three types of contexts that accompany the gathering of qualitative data with seniors become important elements of the researcher's knowledge and constitute support in his/her professional preparation for entering the area where interlocutors reach older age (Tokaj 2005; Talarska & Wieczorowska-Tobis 2012) as a time over 60-65 years old.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

AGING FROM EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The justification for undertaking methodological issues related to collecting data among the elderly for the purposes of lifelong education or conducting qualitative research has its serious justification for the participation of people in late adulthood in various educational activities in Poland and in the world. Elderly people, depending on the state of functioning, well-being and state of

health, have obvious needs in terms of various forms of formal, informal and non-formal education.

Adamczyk (2017) believes that nowadays the traditional perception of life is limited to the following areas: youth - education, adulthood - work, old age - free time. Lifelong learning covers all forms of education: formal, informal and non-formal. Changes in the social structure make it necessary to transform facilities dealing with education. Hrapkiewicz (2009) indicates that a large group of people over 60 years of age, after finishing their professional activity, strives to continue their educational development. They are perceived by educational institutions that create proposals tailored to the needs and capabilities of elderly people. Bonk et al. (2013) writes about the aging of society and the increasing participation of older people in educational and activating activities. Tylikowska (2013) distinguishes the assumptions of education of an elderly person, and rightly states that one should initially ignore the untrue Polish myths about old age such as "old age not joy", because such beliefs remain in the memory of elderly people, blocking their potential. According to the author, care should be taken to develop seniors, because it causes self-acceptance of their lives, gives spiritual peace and joy of today (Tylikowska, 2013). Sikora (2013) distinguishes, in turn, the needs of elderly people in the field of education. Among them are "technical knowledge and skills (computer, ATM, personal accounts, cell phone, music equipment, TV, video); health (coping with health problems, getting information, mainly from doctors); rest and entertainment (developing new interests, but also existing ones); Subjects related to life (dealing with financial, inheritance, legal matters)" (Sikora, 2013, 44).

AIMS, FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATION OF THE ELDERLY PEOPLE

Halicki (2009) believes that all educational activities conducted among older people should strive to achieve specific, defined goals. The basis of education is support in maintaining the independence of life and satisfaction with life. An important area is also the acquisition of new knowledge and competences. A frequent element of education is also encouraging elderly people to take actions for the benefit of others in order to

gain a sense of participation in social life (Halicki 2009). Levasque and Minniti (2006) distinguish five models of education for the elderly: "Vellas" (classical, French), Anglo-Saxon, Chinese, South American, North American (Levasque and Minniti 2006). According to Delahaye and Smith (1998), the educational strategies that elderly people take can vary. The authors indicate that in the initial phase of education they prefer structured forms with a high degree of dependence on the person conducting the classes. Later, however, they willingly use less formal ways of acquiring knowledge.

Kargul (2001), Leszczyńska - Rejchert (2015) indicate a threefold system of satisfying the educational needs of older people. The authors emphasize that lifelong education of seniors includes a triple education system: formal education - (teaching and learning within the school system), non-formal education - (otherwise extra-school, organized educational activities taking place outside the formal education system), non-formal education - (the process of shaping personality throughout life, as part of everyday experiences, upbringing influences of environments, and mass media) (Kargul 2001; Leszczyńska-Rejchert 2015). Leszczyńska-Rejchert (2015) indicates that it is worth learning in late adulthood in the areas of media education, legal education, health education, leisure time education, education about modern technologies (Leszczyńska-Rejchert 2015).

The educational activity of elderly people also has several basic functions. Dubas (2013) distinguishes the following functions: instrumental, social, cultural - civilizational, auxological, axiological - theological, emancipatory, felicitic, biographical, existential. Maciejasz et al. (2015) write that in relation to conducting educational activities with the participation of seniors, it is important to emphasize and see the impact of the aging process on the intellectual and social functioning of older people. Szarota (2004) emphasizes that it is very important to consider physical or psychological changes when conducting individual or group educational activities (Szarota 2009). The author continues that the unfavorable cognitive and intellectual changes progressing with age are of particular importance of care. This applies, among others involution of perception processes

(receiving information and stimuli), processing experienced impressions and received information, as well as changes in thinking processes (analysis, synthesis, generalization and abstraction) and memorizing. Memory disorders, as well as the orientation in time and space in the elderly, also affect the nature of the educational relationship, according to Szarota (2009).

CHALLENGES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Walker (1993), as well as Hughes (1995), write that during the implementation of education with the participation of seniors, many difficulties may arise. Barriers may concern personal attitudes and attitudes of older people to the educational process. Due to personal biographies, experiences of older participants can be characterized by different attitudes (positive or negative) to education or any support. Persons may adopt, for example, passive attitudes and not demonstrate involvement in educational activities (Walker, 1993). What may affect the attitude of the teacher, pedagogue, should in such situations show activity and create the right dimension of the relationship. Piśula (2014) writes that the nature of the current (family, health, financial) situation of an elderly person may also constitute a barrier to involvement in lifelong education. Therefore, the teacher must approach the subjects individually and flexibly shape the entire educational process. Piśula (2017) highlights also the meaning of vocational activity of seniors.

Tanner (2005) notes that barriers of a communicative nature are an extremely important area of emerging difficulties during lifelong education. The emerging communication barriers between the educator and the elderly can hinder the exchange of information and understanding. Communication barriers may include, inter alia, language issues or cultural differences (Tanner 2005). In the case of older people, communication barriers may also appear as a result of physical difficulties such as hearing or sight problems. Communication problems are also related to the nature of the relationship. Tanner and Harris (2008) also write that an elderly person may have some concerns about the nature of the relationship between the elderly student - teacher and senior student - a group of students, which results in closing down, adopting a passive attitude or

withdrawing from participation in educational activities. There may also be difficulties of an emotional or perceptual nature. The information overload in the case of long and complicated tasks and tasks may also be a difficult situation. The authors emphasize that the basis for creating educational programs for the elderly is reflection on the needs and abilities of people from the above social group (Tanner and Harris 2008).

Sienkiewicz-Wilowska (2013) indicates, as also important in older age, that the essential role is played by the past, but also the uncertain future. The elderly person experiences and meditates on the beginnings and subsequent stages of their current life, also feels a constantly approaching end, which has a huge impact very often on changes in the spiritual area (Sienkiewicz-Wilowska, 2013). Sherron and Lumsden (1990) show that this is of course of great importance in the context of creating conditions for lifelong education for the elderly. Halicki (2009) indicates that seniors may have problems with motivation and involvement in educational activities. It is also important to recognize individual needs in the area of interpersonal contacts, according to Halicki (2009). The author continues, that changing the family structure (death of a spouse, children who are moving out) may affect the perception of the world of elderly people. Persons in such situations will seek contacts with others. They will look for solutions that will help in dealing with new living conditions. Spigner-Littles and Anderson (1999) write that gaining knowledge in the elderly age is to create oneself on the basis of previous life experiences (Spingner-Littles and Anderson 1999).

ELDERLY INFORMANT CHARACTERISTIC

A participant of discussion, an informant in older age is an interlocutor at a certain age, and functioning condition, experiencing or not chronic diseases. Knowledge about the individual needs of interlocutors in late adulthood can improve both the process of establishing bonds in the field, conducting interviews and ensuring psychological security for interlocutors, the elderly. What is the phase called late adulthood? Straś-Romanowska (2005) believes that late adulthood is the time when a person ages, that is, old age (Straś - Romanowska 2005). Pikula (2013) writes that old

age is defined as the period of life of the system following the mature age, characterized by a decrease in vital functions and a number of morphological changes in individual systems and organs"(Pikula 2013, 24). According to Talarska and Wieczorowska-Tobis (2012) "it is very difficult to clearly define old age. Most of it is still associated with health problems, dementia and dependence on the environment. However, since attention has been paid to the fact that old age is the next stage of ontogenesis, more and more emphasis is put on the realization that disability and dependence are not its inherent elements"(Talarska and Wieczorowska - Tobis 2012, 256).

AGE

According to Talarska and Wieczorowska-Tobis (2012), the criterion of age is used to define the old age. The authors indicate that the old age begins with the age of 65, although according to WHO it starts with the age of 60. The authors note that the state of functioning of two 65-year-olds may differ, therefore the calendar criterion has some limitations. Authors Talarska & Wieczorowska - Tobis (2012) and especially Kijak and Szarota (2012) argues that in the criterion of the calendar age there is a division into "early old age (65-74 years or 60-74 years, depending on the beginning of old age) and late old age (from the age of 75)"(Kijak and Szarota 2012, 256). However, according to Tokaj (2005) "the beginning of the aging process, despite the huge advances made by science, seems to be elusive, thus the exact determination of the threshold of old age is still impossible. However, it should be noted that among gerontologists and representatives of other sciences interested in the issue of old age, the prevailing view is that the border separating the maturity from the old age runs between 60-65 years of age "(Tokaj 2005, 41).

TRIAD OF FUNCTIONING

The aging of informants can develop in three basic ways indicated by Duda (2012). These are: favorable aging, normal aging and pathological aging.

- healthy aging - is characterized by the fact that people who are aging in this way are cheerful

and satisfied with life. They are happy to make contacts with young people, optimistic about life and society, and what they see themselves as young people. They are mentally fit, with no major function restrictions, do not get ill chronically. In most cases, they die a natural death.

- normal aging - aging is accompanied by the presence of discreet, usually chronic, disease symptoms presented in healthy aging.
- pathological aging - aging with a visible share of diseases. (Duda 2012, 4 - 5)

According to Pędich (1986), an inherent feature of the stage of life in late adulthood is illness or discomfort. The author distinguishes the division of diseases accompanying the elderly:

- older-aged diseases, which have already started in young or middle-aged, have been going on for many years, and do not show significant differences in the elderly.
- diseases that have already begun in the elderly age, but are not directly related to the aging process. In general, they have a different course from similar diseases in younger age and require slightly different treatment.
- pathological processes caused by aging itself, appearing in late adulthood and generally not found in younger people (Pędich 1986, 286).

COGNITIVE SKILLS

Collecting data during interviews with older informants requires the researcher's vigilance on the physical and cognitive functioning of informers. It is important both during individual FTF talks and interviews during focus groups. An investigator who can notice fatigue and signs of fatigue should stop the interview and return to the content after the rest period. Vigilance on manifestations of psychological functioning will prevent the unintended exploitation of older informers.

Adamczyk (2017) indicates that "a wide knowledge of the rules of their psychophysical functioning, which allows to accurately determine their real capabilities and needs, also in the field of education, is important in working with older people. According to Krakowiak et al. (2011) it is essential to look at the physical, social, mental and spiritual functioning of the elderly. It should be

added that Kilian (2015) indicates that older people show a different approach to education than younger students. Educational activity in the case of older people often plays primarily a socialization role (Kilian 2015), so this attention should be taken into account when collecting verbal data. Percy and Withnall (1994), write that it is extremely important for older people to be in contact with others, to be in a groups, to act together. At this stage of life, there is some blurring between science and socialization. The authors' note confirms the legitimacy of collecting data among older people using focus groups.

Physical fitness of older people, important to be taken into account by data gathering researchers, is a category analyzed, among others, through Skalska (2011), Krakowiak et al., (2011), Duda (2012) and Parnowski (2013). The authors agree that as a person grows older, decreasing motor skills results from the deepening physiological changes associated with old age, injuries, chronic diseases, as well as the negative impact of the environment and lifestyle. Skalska (2011) writes that "lowering physical activity is associated with a significant deterioration and functional limitation and an increase in the incidence of chronic diseases. Deficiency in late adulthood is usually defined as the difficulty in performing one or more self-service activities, such as: independent bathing, dressing, eating, using the toilet, and the ability to move"(Skalska 2011; Krakowiak, et al. 2011, 112-113). These comments make the researchers' vigilance for individual needs and performance during the interview.

Cognitive functioning, which is important when collecting data with elderly informers, is a matter worth deeper analysis and the necessary knowledge of researchers going to perform the FTF interviews. It seems necessary to know about the cognitive functioning and cognitive processes of the elderly, and their efficiency, which can be crucial when conducting conversations under the assumptions of a safety of environment.

The characteristics of cognitive functioning were analyzed by Birren (1964), Straś-Romanowska (2005). The authors point out that "with age, the sensitivity of the senses is weakening. It was found that from about 40 -50. years of age the threshold of sensitivity to the sense of sight, hearing and taste is gradually decreased.

Only pain sensitivity remains relatively constant" (Birren 1964; Straś-Romanowska 2005, 270). Cavanaugh (1997), Straś-Romanowska (2005) indicate changes such as: "weakening both the selectivity of attention and the ability to concentrate, extended reaction time to visual and auditory stimuli and the time of performing activities, both simple and complex. In addition, the slowdown of response time is a reliable and universal psychophysical indicator of aging for authors" (Cavanaugh 1997; Straś-Romanowska 2005, 270). Because the cognitive processes of seniors are weakened in terms of the accuracy of sensory perception, attention and thinking, it is recommended that the data collector should think carefully about the construction of questions, which should be simple, and uncomplicated. It is worth remembering that the weakened concentration of informants requires taking breaks and rest, which the researcher should observe.

CHRONIC DISEASES PROBLEMS

Particular attention should be paid to the problems of collecting data during conversations with older people suffering from chronic somatic or mental illness. Chronic diseases require threefold attention. First, compliance with the ethics of data collection (obtaining the necessary consent from legal guardians in the case when the elderly person is incapacitated). Second, ensure the most appropriate safe environment and space when collecting data. Thirdly, openness and acceptance of the non-specific behavior of the interlocutors and the content they say. The researcher should also have knowledge about the subjective way of conceptualizing yourself and your state of health, everyday life by interlocutors with chronic neurodegenerative or mental diseases.

Kostka (2009), Borowicz (2015) write that in the elderly suffering from chronic diseases, limitations of physical activity are observed, which in turn leads to a decrease in their functional efficiency and deterioration of their health. Balicka-Kozłowska (1986) additionally indicates the deterioration of hearing, sight and limb performance (Balicka-Kozłowska 1986). According to the author, "the environment seemingly changes its physical characteristics: with each year and month the same stretch of road becomes longer and bumpier, floors are growing

constantly, kilos weigh more, all seasons become colder, people around are becoming increasingly quiet and more blurred and your own hand becomes shorter when you want to reach for something" (Balicka-Kozłowska 1986, 163). According to Skalska (2011), Krakowiak, et al. (2011) emerging disability in late adulthood limits the autonomy of older people. The authors believe that an older person's guardian should be ready to provide support by meeting physical needs, but also to provide mental assistance through conversation and ensuring a sense of security (Skalska, 2011; Krakowiak, and other 2011).

Blicharski & Bukasiewicz (1976) write that chronic disease can occur in people at every stage of life. They usually occur in the elderly and contribute. for this, among others decreased immunity and general weakness of the organism (Blicharski and Bukasiewicz 1976). "A chronic disorder is considered to be any disorder that has at least one of the following features: deviation is permanent, leaves permanent disability, is caused by permanent pathological changes, requires specialist rehabilitation, and any predictions will require long-term supervision or care in the future or he needs it already" (Krakowiak et al. 2011, 19). One of the groups of chronic neurological diseases occurring in late adulthood is dementia. According to Bogusławski and Drat - Gzubicka (2011), Krakowiak, et al. (2011), dementia, as disease of the brain obstruct the process of remembering, communicating and reasoning. Dementia is more widely defined by the WHO and means that it is a syndrome caused by a brain disease, usually of a chronic or progressive nature, in which cognitive functions such as memory, thinking, orientation, understanding, counting, learning ability, functions are disturbed. language, the ability to compare, evaluate and make choices. Consciousness is not disturbed. The impairment of cognitive functions usually accompanies, and sometimes precedes, lowering control over emotional and social reactions, behavior and motivation" (Krakowiak, et al. 2011, 25). In late adulthood, dementias associated with Alzheimer's disease are also present in participants of educational activities (Borowska-Beszta and Urban 2014).

Another disease in late adulthood may be atherosclerosis. The consequence is, among others: hypoxia of the heart, typical heart attack,

hemorrhagic stroke (Moszczyński 1997) Trailers and later effects of stroke may be vomiting, headache, convulsions, paralysis of the body, speech and visual disturbances, as well as falling of the corner of the mouth (Moszczyński 1997). Another disease associated with atherosclerosis occurring in the elderly, indicated by Bogusławski and Drat - Gzubicka (2011), Krakowiak, et al. (2011) is a stroke and its effects in the form of paresis, disorder of the senses and others. In addition, in late adulthood, not only dementia health requirements may arise, but also mental health problems such as very late-onset of schizophrenia diagnosed after the age of 75 accompanied by delusions, change of moods, distrust of neighbors, friends, family members (Borowska-Beszta 2014) or depression among the elderly, accompanying m.in. Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, cerebrovascular disease, stroke (Parnowski 2013).

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

DATA COLLECTION WITH THE GERONTOLOGICAL POPULATION

Bigby (2004) and Kaźmierska (2004) emphasize that the qualitative approach in research provides a holistic, explanation and understanding of the functioning mechanisms of the respondents by taking into account the broad situational context (Bigby 2004). When research serves the purpose of implementing changes in the lives of participants, the research, as research meant as action research within educational practice. The research activity based on this model considers a specific action directed not only at the attempt to answer how the reality is, but also at the question of how to improve the status quo and the everyday lives of research participants.

Collection of verbal data will require the researcher to take into account general assumptions of data collection ethics (Creswell 2009; Flick 2010; Rapley 2010; Jemielniak 2012), emphasizing the characteristics of a potential purposive sample - a group of elderly people as informants. This means among others: their age-related needs, sex, the current state of psychological and social functioning, health condition, whether as older people experience disabilities, chronic diseases, including

neurodegenerative diseases, psychoses, depression, affecting the state of senses functioning, thinking, mood, cognitive processes. Because the three variant ways of aging indicated by Duda (2012) shows also that aging can occur in a "healthy" way, with minimal dysfunctions, diseases or as aging with present diseases, the researcher's skills are necessary, related to empathy, vigilance on the behavior and wellbeing of the informer and his/her safety. Interview, previously written or orally agreed, what means that the elderly person got to knowledge of the purpose of interview, duration, data destiny, coding and anonymization of personal data - should proceed in serenity, without rush, time pressure and in a friendly atmosphere based on the willingness to listen carefully. Data collection can sometimes be difficult due to emotions of the informant related to health problems (diseases including dementia, Alzheimer's disease, very late-onset schizophrenia) or experiencing loneliness due to life circumstances. Data collection should be done in a tactful and friendly manner and should not cause discomfort or disturbance to participants – elderly informers.

ETHICS OF INDIVIDUAL OR FOCUS GROUPS INTERVIEWING

The ethics of FTF data collection during individual or focus group interviews, when the informants are elderly people (who are non-disabled, disabled, or with chronic diseases) does not deviate from the assumptions indicated by researchers and social science methodologists in relation to other vulnerable groups in the population. In any case, the need to create bonds in the field is described in details by Rapley (2010), Angrosino (2010), Flick (2010) and related to obtain the written formal consent or by choosing the option mentioned as verbal consent (Green and Bloome 1997) of informants to participate in the interview. In addition, researcher must also obtain the necessary consents of persons who are legal guardians of interlocutors (in the case of incapacitation) or managers of daytime or stationary facilities as places of data collection.

The consent forms should contain, among others: purpose of the interview, duration, topic of conversation, explanations regarding the anonymisation of personal data (when the informant prefers the anonymous interview

option). Moreover, the consent to the types of recording of verbatim data (audio, camera, video). In addition, preliminary information should clearly and simply indicate the way of recordings storage, or their eventual destruction within the time set by the researcher (e.g. 6 months) from data collection, what emphasizes Rapley (2010). The consent should also indicate the way the researcher will use the transcripts of the interviews. Some attention should also be paid to the fact that participation in the study of older people as informants should be completely voluntary, which means that the researcher should flexibly adapt to clear wishes to change the date of the interview or respect the total refusal to participate in the interview. The refusal may be caused by a bad mood and temporary problems or a certain distrust showing the slow building of bonds, which as a process requires time, as indicated by Spradley (2016; 2016).

An important element is also crucial to take into account (while organizing focus groups with the participation of older people living in stationary facilities) their personal preferences to be a member of a given group with specific participants, they accept. In addition, the correct time of focus groups should be also considered, which will not be in conflict with the rhythm of the day in the facility, meal times, activating classes, meetings with visiting family members.

Experiences of field researchers, qualitative methodologists, as Flick (2010), Jemielniak (2012), Spradley (2016; 2016) indicate that the researcher should remember that the decisions he/she makes during the research can meet certain difficulties and raise the ethical dilemmas. Denzin and Lincoln (2009) even that write "every methodological decision is an ethical decision" (Denzin and Lincoln 2009, 244). That is why it is extremely important to have an in-depth look at all elements of research activities and field demands and to refer them in own research assumptions. Ethical problems can arise during each stage of the interview - the preparation phase, conducting the research, as well as collecting data and analyzing the collected research material. Ricken (2001) emphasizes that in relation to the ethical aspects of research, it is also important to look in detail at the wider context of the analyzed reality (Ricken, 2001). Worth notice is the remark made by Minocha et.al (2015) about the data collection with the elderly people. The Authors emphasize also

that "not all elderly people are vulnerable or socially isolated or lonely and in need of help: many older people, in fact, are active and engaged in volunteering or looking after younger relatives or even studying for degrees or short courses" (Minocha et al., 2015, 2). Furthermore, the support for the ideas of interviewing persons with dementia (with considerations of possible failures of poorly planned research) express Hellström et al. (2007). The authors share an interesting conclusion about participation as interviewers' elderly persons with dementia – "a well-executed and sensitively handled interview provides not only valuable insights into the 'real' experience of dementia, but also has a raft of potential benefits for all concerned"(Hellström et al. 2007, 617).

RESEARCHERS' COMPETENCES

In the process of collecting data from the interview and the interpretation, the social competences of the researcher are important. First of all, expressing authenticity, empathy and respect, but also intuition, the ability to make contact, criticism and self-reflection. Tanner and Harris (2008) write that a researcher with own personal qualities is a research tool. The personal characteristics of the researcher, mainly experience and knowledge, turn out to be very important also at the stage of results analysis, which mainly consists in the description, explanation, design and evaluation as well as understanding and interpretation (Tanner, Harris, 2008). In the context of the methodology of qualitative research with the participation of older people, it is important to pay attention to a few basic issues of conducting research and data collection. Hughes (1995) writes about paying attention to the individual characteristics of the subjects (Hughes, 1995). The object of research should be a concrete person and its unique fate, not a statistical, average unit in the group. During qualitative research, researchers examine one selected, narrow, well-defined slice of reality. Lloyd (2006) recognizes the necessity of having a flexible research plan, identifying the research area and subjects, and adapting the procedure to realities (Lloyd, 2006). Especially in disability field research, one cannot rely on initial assumptions because it often turns out that the planned research activities are completely

inadequate due to the large diversity of the group and the varied level of psychophysical abilities of the subjects.

A very important collection of qualitative data with the participation of elderly people is the perception of the level, the degree of self-awareness of informants. Write about this, among others Tanner and Harris (2008), Lloyd (2006) and Hughes (1995). Knowledge about self, the ability to get deep into your own life experience has a huge impact on the process of data collection during qualitative research (Tanner Harris 2008). While conducting research in the form of, for example, interviews with an elderly person, the researcher should approach the entire research process in a reflective way, he/she should be able to see, notice whether statements of informants are in-depth or whether they are only cursory, chaotic statements in which a broader context is still not recognized. The self-awareness of the informants has a large impact on the process of data collection and analysis while conducting qualitative research (Tanner and Harris 2008; Lloyd 2006).

DIFFICULTIES DURING DATA COLLECTION

Emerging barriers and difficulties when collecting data with elderly information providers can occur both on the part of the researcher and informants. The conditions of such interviews show a need for a researcher's specific skills, which means his/her sensitivity to the situation during data collection, empathic understanding, increased attention to subtle verbal or non-verbal messages. It is important to thoroughly analyze theoretical and methodological literature, which constitute the basis for conducting qualitative research. Beresford (2003), as well as Dubas (2016) emphasize that due to numerous communication, situational or social difficulties, it is important to apply a flexible action plan and adjust the conditions to the current personal situations of the informants (Beresford 2003). The interview should therefore be divided, take a break to not overload the participants. The researcher should propose a break by him/herself, especially when interviewing the chronically ill informant. The basis for building relationships during the interview is a subjective approach to the elderly and, as emphasized by Spradley (2016; 2016) a respect. Moreover, recognizing their individuality and diversity of

biographies and life experiences. The flexibility of activities is also connected with the need to pay attention to the general environmental conditions, the impact of the interactions of relatives on the actions and behaviors of the informers. Kilian (2015) writes about tasks that a researcher working with elderly people is facing. The author indicates a few of the most important activities, including: "creating opportunities to share their own thoughts, accumulated knowledge and experience, asking questions that arouse curiosity and reflection, encourage thinking and encouraging them to stand up for themselves, drawing up problems to be solved (Kilian 2015, 178).

TWO CASES: INTERVIEWING ROBERT 77 YEARS OLD AND RHONDA 76 YEARS OLD

How practically to collect data during FTF meetings with the elderly people with special mental health needs? Borowska-Beszta (2014) collected over 12 months the data based on the participants observation of the daily life of a female (who will be coded for purposes of this article as Rhonda76) who in late adulthood, being 76 years old, was diagnosed with a very late-onset of schizophrenia. Additionally, in May and June 2017, first author of this article - Borowska-Beszta held informal conversations when she visited for several times in the geriatric ward of a psychiatric hospital her former university professor Robert of age 77, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (whose name will be encoded as Robert77 in this paper). Both conversations during the collection of data from Rhonda76, and while speaking Robert77 indicated some optimal regularity of conversations, the important accent of which was, to the first author of the paper to ensure well-being during conversations and alertness to sometimes subtle signals and threads from informants:

- First of all, the researcher should be characterized by inner serenity and lack of rush, as well as some friendly restraint in expression and gestures. In both cases, it was important to adapt of the researcher to the pace of thinking and of speaking by interlocutor, applying pauses and giving encouragement by word, gesture or smile.
- In the case of speaking with Robert77 pace of the dialogue was clearly released, with a focus

on searching for simple words that will not cause confusion to the informant and will not disturb him/her. It was Robert who actually became a calm conversation director who took in the dialogue such direction that satisfied him, in the space and content in which he felt safe. Robert⁷⁷ showed to the researcher the living room, and moreover his own room, with his personal objects, he wanted to tell about. In the case of speaking with Rhonda⁷⁶, the pace was efficient and not too fast, with a focus on listening carefully to the dynamically and emotionally expressed delusional or extra-delusional content, as well as calm attempts to answers and respond to the content heard.

- Secondly, the researcher should follow the informant, areas of his/her interests, activities he/she undertakes, words and gestures, and not impose the subject of conversations. Doing joint laundry with Rhonda⁷⁶ was satisfying for her wellbeing, feeling of independence and gave her also opportunity to speak with the researcher about her needs or difficulties.
- Thirdly, the conversation, in addition to data collection, can also be carried out in the direction of emotional encouragement and improvement of well-being, especially if the informant had chronic diseases and have a sense of humor and react to reality with a weaker or stronger type of smile.
- Fourthly, the conversation can be carried out during a quiet walk and easy travel – walking.
- Fifthly, conversations on a given topic, longer than 30 minutes, can cause fatigue and visible fatigue among informants. This was especially noticed in Robert ⁷⁷ with Alzheimer's disease. Hence, the recommendations that came after meetings precise, that formal or informal interviews with elderly having health conditions mentioned above should be conducted rather shorter about 15-20 minutes.
- Sixthly, it is not advisable to exert any pressure to obtain the given information. Just as it is not advisable to persuade an elderly person during an interview (for example with Rhonda⁷⁶ having paranoid schizophrenia) that she is wrong in seeing reality inappropriately or inaccurately. The researcher should accept the content and fully respect own comments of the interviewed authors.
- Seventhly, the researcher should be attentive to various information channels, gestures and peculiar forms of messages, sometimes symbolic, simplified, visual (when the informant wants to show us something, for example, a board with announcements on the hospital corridor, personal photos). First author of this article became more convinced about the real condition and functioning level of Robert⁷⁷ after a little talk before the board in the common room. On the board was written sign in 10 cm letters - Psychiatric Department of Psychogeriatry, then number and full name of the hospital. Robert⁷⁷ with a certain and subtle embarrassment showed on the board with his hand and said - "I'm in this stay for the second time but - hesitated - I cannot figure out what's going on here?"
- Eighth, one should give all explanations about the various issues that the informant asks and when the informer needs an explanation to feel safe.

CONCLUSION

The above article is an analysis of theoretical assumptions concerning the education and educational needs of people in late adulthood and at the same time carrying out educational field studies with the participation of informants in late adulthood. The general discussion was focused on the assumptions of methodological issues of data collection with the elderly participants and on practical data collection characteristics and suggestions. The above-mentioned practical remarks on the implementation of FTF data collection during interviews could also be extended in future work to include data collection with seniors conducted online and methodological indications regarding the consultation. An important issue pointed out in the article is the knowledge that not every person in late adulthood can be perceived as the one in the group of vulnerable informants, but there are those who due to own way of aging will require researchers to be aware of the subtle situational reality while the face-to-face meetings and interviewing.

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TEACHER AS LEADER AND TEACHER AS MANAGER: COMPETENCES OF MODERN EDUCATOR

Abstract: This article presents viewpoint on new competencies that are needed in world of image and technologization of world and education. It analyzes how changes in the world, changed the teacher profession from teacher whose main competency is knowledge, to teacher who should be more manager than educational leader. Knowledge itself is no longer such value because of new media and easy access to it. This is significant change because teacher used to be a person who is well educated and has bigger knowledge than his pupils. Now teacher should organize teaching process and teach how to learn, how to choose right information, how to organize learning to be effective.

Keywords: teacher, technology, competencies, manager, leader

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INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is characterized by the overproduction of all imagery. There are images, pictograms, and audio-visual messages around us - both in the press and television, as well as in public space. Too many of these images are repeated, duplicated and aesthetized. These images are tangled, fragile, ephemeral, mixed up and chaotic. However, they are still dominant (Karczmarzyk, 2017). Why? Because thanks to modern technology, they reach us everywhere and often affect us outside of our consciousness. Teachers used to study while these technologies were not so advanced and they lack of competences in using it. Therefore, contemporary human beings including teachers cannot exist without technology which is based mainly on the image.

Unfortunately, according to research by Bougsiaa, Cackowska, Kopciewicz and Nowicki (2016) who performed the analysis of meanings related to the relationship between people and mobile technologies, it turned out that these technologies were for a long time constantly marginalized in school education because of lack of funds and teachers competencies. What is more, there were significant disproportions in the cultural disposition of children due to technological differences (Bougsiaa et al. 2016, 536).

This phenomenon can also be referred to the qualifications of a contemporary teacher. Not only social but also technological qualifications, enabling him/her to use the latest technology for his/her own development. There is a big need in adult education of teachers. Workshops that will give a teacher possibility to adjust to new working conditions.

At school, the teacher must effectively carry out the assigned educational tasks in order to prepare them adequately to the needs of his/her students. And in the era of the dominance of images and rapid development of mobile technologies, the technologization of society has become a kind of code, which is sometimes restricted for people who do not have access to the latest tools of modern technology, for example: a smartphone, computer, tablet, etc. It is a kind of digital exclusion based on the economic

differences of society. The rapid development of information technology leads to a split between the classes: high and middle, which can afford the purchase of the latest technological "gadgets", and a lower class, which cannot afford even a free internet access (Bougsiaa et al. 2016).

There are many competencies required in the teaching profession. However, the division of areas of competency according to Strykowski et al. (2007). They distinguished the following competences:

- substantive (material) - the teacher acquires them during the study of a given subject, as well as through continuous self-study in this field,
- psychological and pedagogical - the teacher should have knowledge of developmental and educational psychology and the ability to use this knowledge to get to know students, organize the process of education and upbringing as well as the process of control and assessment,
- diagnostic, related to getting to know students and their environment,
- in the field of planning and designing school activities,
- didactic and methodological - concerning knowledge about the essence, principles and methods of the education and upbringing process,
- communication - it is knowledge about the communication process, the ability to effectively send and receive messages; communication in educational processes is primarily the communication between the teacher and students, but also with their parents, other teachers and people at school,
- media and technical - are associated with the organization of a teacher's and student's workroom,
- related to the control and assessment of students' achievements and qualitative measurement of school work,
- regarding the design and evaluation of school programs and textbooks,
- self-education, related to professional development,

- continuous education and self-improvement is the leading idea of modern education, hence the concept of a creative teacher shaping his/her professional personality through self-education, improving qualifications, perfecting his/her own skills, participating in research, undertaking innovative activities, seeking new areas and challenges in didactic and educational work.

Looking at the above classification, one can notice a great amount of educational and psychological and social requirements for teachers. However, the current educational reality indicates that one should point out competences appearing in the foreground and those that are secondary. In modern world knowledge it is no longer such value as it used to be. Teachers have to change their role from "knowledge holders" to managers organizing teaching process to be most effective, using available technologies and sources. Many of new competencies needed in modern world are already offered in studies courses (teaching leadership), some of them teachers learn during teaching practice (social competencies) and a great help is adult education programs for teachers (manager). Teachers in modern world are forced to continuous change and development, constant learning, not only teaching. Dróžka (2008) distinguished three phases of transformation of the teacher's position - transition from a "dependent" teacher who was subordinate to the system through the teacher "Independent" from the political system, up to the teacher "interdependent" of the actors in local community (Dróžka 2008). Verhoeven (2006) points that *the teaching profession suffers from status inconsistency* (Verhoeven, Aelterman and Rots 2006, 479). There is a need of redefining *the teacher* which can be made only by defining new competencies in this profession and detailed description of what we expect from teacher today.

TEACHER AS MANAGER

A teacher used to be someone who has expertise and knowledge, and a teacher is someone who knows how to instruct others. A manager must be good at his job, act professional, and possess technical competence (Ginebra 2013).

In the era of the dominance of images and the technologization of school education, there is a need of new competency associated with the organization of a work place, continuous self-education and self-improvement, which is the leading idea of a modern education. The so-called concept of a creative teacher who shapes his/her professional personality through self-education, improving qualifications, improving his/her skills participating in research, undertaking innovative activities, searching for new areas and challenges in didactic and educational work is a new challenge for many teachers they have to face. The point of reference is here the distance to one's own lack of knowledge on different kinds of topics. Teachers are no longer all-knowing mentors, as it has been recently. The amount of available information is huge and an access to it is unlimited, so it may happen that a student in a certain area of knowledge has more knowledge, but it can also happen that the teacher does not know the answers to questions and therefore he/she should be able to behave in such a situation. Adult teacher programs don't live them alone with the problem and help to deal with getting to know new technologies.

Teachers have to deal with the organization of work in so many aspects that only those who are able to manage information and available resources effectively will be effective at work and achieve success. By resources, we mean broadly understood potential inherent in parents of students, students themselves but also in cooperation with other teachers, in European Union programs and other workshops, meetings and competencies at the national and local level. There are so many possibilities that only a person who effectively manages these resources can take advantage of the potential of the environment. Therefore, management or managerial skills are another important competence in the work of today's teacher. Alone the teacher is able to do very little, due to both personal and time limitations, as well as financial limitations. An important aspect of the manager's work is the sphere related to human resources management, named as the leadership and based on the relationship between the manager and his/her subordinates in the area of "affecting their behavior in the form of influencing, motivating, inspiring, and the effects of these actions" (Ornarowicz 2008, 53). When you look at the teacher from the perspective of a

manager having in his/her team pupils, parents, other teachers and opportunities inherent in the local environment, EU programs, then opens new perspectives of development not only for the teacher, but also for the possibilities of broadening the various competences of students. From a slightly different perspective, the role of a teacher as a manager is shown by Jurgiel (2007) and Męczkowska-Christiansen (2015), who indicate that the position of a teacher as an alleged "manager" is in fact the role of a producer or a service provider whose activity includes: "preparing staff for the needs of a knowledge-based economy" (Jurgiel 2007; Męczkowska-Christiansen 2015), "teaching understood in terms of" investing "in" human capital "; "supporting" the quality of the school's work, defined among others on the basis of quantifiable factors, including didactic measurement; supporting measurable, and preferably "spectacular" student achievements such as their "competitiveness in the field of measurement and teaching", or in the area of extracurricular competitions and contests; quasi-marketing activity which consists in shaping a positive image of the school as an institution, oriented to the client's needs (in the sphere of the declaration: oriented to realize the child's developmental needs, in the sphere of real intentions: the parent's); it also includes organizing attractive forms of lesson and extracurricular time, creating a positive image of the school in the environment; obtaining additional funds for school activities (e.g. funders of prizes in competitions, securing additional funds for extra-curricular activities, etc.); "self-development" management, based on the implementation of a top-down strategy for career advancement with dubious efficiency."(Męczkowska-Christiansen 2015).

Due to the necessity to educate new teaching competences, appear new courses and publications regarding effective class management (Marzano and Pickering 2003, Kizlik 2014). In foreign literature, the subject of managerial competences of teachers is widely known and repeatedly described. Dix (2013) shows how to model student behavior and manage a class, he also takes into consideration such important aspects of teacher's work as shaping desired student behavior, and coping with extreme situations. He also gives tips on how the teacher should behave to create an atmosphere of cooperation and trust in the class.

TEACHER AS LEADER VS. MANAGER

Szkudlarek (1999) points to the transformation of the role of the teacher, which indicates the current need for a co-dependent teacher - network teacher, relationship, communication and dialogue, including social solidarity, a mediator of change, able to balance between the individual and social sphere, the individual and the structure, able to interpret the executing changes in multi and difference conditions (Szkudlarek 1999).

But there are still not too many publications and courses that provide teachers with such important competences as managerial competences. It is often said that a teacher should be an educational leader, a lot has been written and said on this subject and a lot of courses we can find in that area. The leader, in every field, should have both high social and managerial competences, but on the other hand, it is a very uncertain term hiding various expectations. The concept of a leader is associated with one unique person who shows higher competences than other people in his/her profession or a social group. However, all teachers today are expected to have high social and managerial competences that means that all of them should be a leader, which is not real. Therefore, it would be necessary to depart from the notion of a leader and actually point to the need to provide teachers with specific skills that can be taught, trained and strengthened. In this perspective a manager is nothing but a person who effectively manages the possessed resources. As the literature and previous studies indicate - leadership in educational institutions is treated as a key element of their proper functioning and high educational effects achieved by students (Rutherford 2006; Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd 2009). In a contemporary school, leadership is a factor that translates into the educational success of students, right after the way of teaching at the class level. Thomas, Holdaway and Ward (Thomas et al. 2000) indicate that a high-quality school leadership understood in the context of the head-leader is the condition of an effective school. It is worth expanding this concept to a class leadership, every teacher who wants to achieve success, to be able to focus on students' needs, to create a good atmosphere in the context of teaching-learning, to foster cooperation of all participants in the educational process who invests in his/her

professional development, while involving parents of pupils and other entities and people from the local community must be an effective manager-leader.

While for example social competencies have been included in teaching programs and degree courses for future teachers, managerial competences are not mentioned at all. The manager in the common sense is associated with business or show business, and the teacher is certainly not a businessman. However, changes taking place in the contemporary world, and thus in Poland, make it the managerial competences, previously associated with trade become a necessity in a teaching profession and more adequate that leadership.

SUMMARY

Today, in educational reality, the most useful skills for teachers seem to be the ability to fast response to changes, to improve qualifications and to use constantly developing technology. Management competences are also important, because they allow to manage resources in the local environment and school. All those competences must be provided not only during studies but by continuing adult education. In today's world we need teacher as manager more than teacher as leader. Every teacher should have managerial competences which allow him or her to adjust to new world educational standards.

In recent years, school has been subjected to constant changes, reforms that have been quickly implemented, often underdeveloped and containing many gaps and errors. Therefore, a contemporary teacher should be a flexible dynamic and critical person using modern technologies for self-development as well as for work with his/her students. Continuous improvement is creative and it is worth taking a great delight from it, not treating it as a forced imposed top-down. New technologies allow to adapt the model of improvement to the needs of the person, it is possible to participate in trainings and workshops, videoconferences or analyze the material and watch tutorials and instructional videos. At the same time, new technologies allow for designing and modeling, preparing materials of different content and various ways (mind maps, presentations, quizzes, games, etc.). However, in

order to take advantage of all the possibilities offered by modern technologies, one must become familiar with them and know what the possibilities are. Teachers - practitioners are often left to their own devices, after graduation they have look for ways of professional development and they do not always reach the right ones. Often these are courses that do not provide any practical knowledge. In order to measure up to the Western Europe schools, teachers need to use more effectively and to a greater extent new technology during lessons, so that this concept would not be associated only with the use of an electronic register. Adult education courses have to be really well prepared and adjusted to adult learning possibilities.

Since the contemporary rule is the dynamism and change, and they have to be followed, it is more important to have managerial competences. And perhaps, following Kopciwicz's (2016) considerations, than teachers will have better understanding that mobile technology is also a cultural resource, thanks to which, of course if it is fairly distributed, it is possible to realize the educational dream of a creative digital society (Bougsiaa, Cackowska, Kopciwicz, Nowicki, 2016). As Kopciwicz (2016) writes, maybe there is hope for creating a society of "equal and free people sharing with other products of this creation and freedom" (Bougsiaa, et. al 2016, 535). Let us hope that this will be the case in the future, and that European society and European teachers-managers will rather express sensitivity to each other, that we will become a creative society, or as Florida wants - a "creative class" (Florida, 2002) because teachers educating and teaching our children, will be intelligent, flexible and communicative people who will be able to creatively and wisely use the potential of technology. That can be reached only by adult education.

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THE ATTITUDES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS THE TEACHING PRINCIPLES AND METHODS: A KOSOVO CASE

Abstract: One of the factors those constitute the basis of education is the used methods and technics in teaching. Therefore, in the use of teaching methods and technics the attitudes of teachers is a very important fact. In our age pursuing the technologies and providing the proper learning environment becomes possible through the used method and technic. In this study it is aimed to examine attitudes of teachers who work in Kosovo in Turkish teaching; it is aimed to examine their attitudes regarding to teaching principles and methods according to several variables. For this there held interviews with 107 teachers who work in cities and villages of Kosovo and to specify the teachers' attitudes regarding teaching principles and methods, the measuring tool which is developed by Ocak et al. (2012), and which consists of 29 articles and 4 sub dimensions have been used. As the result of analysis, it has been seen that there were significant differences in the attitudes of teachers regarding some variables. As to gender there appear differences only in the sub dimension of traditional methods. There doesn't emerge differentiations according to teachers' branches. The seniority of teachers impresses their seniority in all sub dimensions. There appear differences in the sub dimensions of factors impressing the method and alternative methods and technics according to the graduations of teachers. There appear differences only in the sub dimension of alternative methods and technics according to age groups of teachers. There appear differences in the sub dimension of the factors impressing the method and alternative methods and technics according to the graduation years of teachers.

Keywords: method and technics, teacher, attitude

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INTRODUCTION

To develop and progress for young countries education of high quality is necessary. Kosovo is a young country of Europe and education is the building block for it to be developed. Besides, education maintains the function of developing the country culture and transmitting this to young generations. Inasmuch as the education is the process of making requested changes in the behaviors of individuals, the principal elements of this process are teachers. Teachers impress the behaviors of students either negatively or positively by their behaviors, by their attitudes towards their occupation and by their personalities. Teachers are also the most important factors in the way of constituting the future of a society. Therefore, their attitude towards their occupation is important as well as their place in the society. Though in sciences every discipline expresses itself due to its field of studying, in general either negative or positive feelings towards a psychological object and attitudes which could be defined as manner can be seen as a factor which steers individual's behaviours and prepares her/him for motivation (Erden 1995, 99). Whereas, there are several factors influencing the attitudes of teachers towards their occupations, the most important of these are issues such as income, social security and health. A teacher is responsible for bringing students in knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours concerning her/his level or field and in transmitting this whole knowledge she/he benefits from the most suitable methods, technical equipment and principals.

In the last years the results obtained from the researches on the learning and teaching issues have brought the issue of how we learn into the front as well as the learnt content. Therefore, the aims, methods and equipment of the learnt topics have also been changed. To increase the efficiency of the process between the teacher and the learner it is necessary to understand the how learning actualizes in the learner and to set forth the activities towards improving this (Babadoğan 1994).

The developments and changes in the field of education makes students the persons who can use the knowledge in essential situations and solve the problems instead of rendering them "empty buckets to be filled", a store of knowledge. The

researches made in the area of education have made finding the most suitable ways of learning for an individual to actualize the learning and the regulation of learning environment according to this a very important issue. Due to this fact and with the rapid development and progress of technology teachers pursued their investigations to find the answer of the question: "How can I teach better?" Thus, there have appeared reforms in the methods and technics used in education and the researchers discovered that these reforms brought about significant learnings in the students (Denizoğlu 2008; Tunçer ve Güven 2007).

In significant learning, the positivity of teachers' attitudes towards these behaviors is important as well the connection between teaching and the question of how I can teach better (Turgut ve Baykul 1992). Because whereas the negative attitudes lead to repudiative behaviours, positive attitudes increase the students' success and makes learning easier.

The methods and technics used by teachers and their attitudes towards them are very important for bringing the students to the targets. There are many methods used in the process of teaching and learning. But teachers have to pay attention to some principles while determining their methods to use in the classes: 1- Goals of the lecture, 2- Content of the lecture, 3- Learning environment, 4- Readiness level of the student, 5- Student progress qualities, 6- Intelligence fields of students, 7- Learning styles of students, 8- Means of the class, 9- Time, 10- Costs - economic conditions, 11- Amount of the student group (Ergin & Özdaş 1997).

Preparing the students to daily life and making the teaching permanent by making it meaningful of course could be done by methods and technics used in lectures rather than the lecture contents. Teachers who choose their methods in accordance with the teaching principles and who use more than one and different methods have come up with success and permanent learning (Ocak & Gündüz 2006; Seferoğlu 2004). There is no doubt that to go towards the target and to walk on the same way with students who have individual differences and as a result to achieve the goal the variety of methods are necessary and determination of teachers on methods by paying attention to all these principles is related to their attitudes towards this process.

The attitudes of teachers impress their practices in the class and thus also impress the success of students (Duatepe & Akuş-Çıkla 2004). The determination of the factors those impress the attitudes of teachers, even not directly, has importance in regard of increasing the education quality. Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to the teaching-learning process by determining the attitudes of teachers working in Kosovo in Turkish teaching towards teaching principles and methods.

In this regard, the main research question of this study is to determine whether the attitudes of teachers working in Kosovo in Turkish teaching processes differs according to

- a) their genders,
- b) their branches,
- c) their graduations,
- d) their seniority,
- e) their ages and
- f) the years of their graduations.

METHOD

The research model is survey model. It has been tried to determine the existing situation. The main point in survey model is to observe and determine the proper subject matter of the research (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Erkan Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel 2013). In this study it has been tried to determine the attitudes of teachers working in Kosovo in Turkish teaching processes and the existing situation has been tried to be grasped without any interventions.

The research population consists of the teachers working in Kosovo in Turkish teaching processes. All of the teachers have been getting through to in the scope of the research. The demographical variables of the participants are in the Table 1.

Table 1. Demographical Variables of the Participants

Variable	Value	N	Mean
Gender	Female	76	71,0
	Male	31	29,0
Branch	Preschool-Class Teachers	50	46,7

	Branch Teachers	57	53,3
Seniority	1-5 years	14	13,1
	6-10 years	46	43,0
	11-15 years	23	21,5
	16- and over	24	22,4
Graduation	Associate degree	16	15,0
	Bachelor's degree	85	79,4
	Post-graduate degree	6	5,6
Age Groups	20-30	3	2,8
	31-40	51	47,7
	41-50	34	31,8
	51-60	13	12,1
	61-65	6	5,6
Graduation Year	1990-1999	21	19,6
	2000-2009	59	55,1
	2010-2018	18	16,8
	1970-1990	9	8,4

The majority (%71) of the teachers are consisting of female teachers. If looked at the distribution of teachers according to their branches, it seems that the rate of the branch teachers (% 53,3) and the rate of preschool-class teachers are close to each other. Whereas the majority of the teachers (% 43) have 6-10 years of seniority, the rate of the teachers who have 1-5 years of seniority is % 13,1. % 79,4 of the teachers have bachelor's degrees and % 5,6 of them have postgraduate degrees. While only % 2,8 of the teachers are in 20-30 age group, %47,7 of them are in 31-40 age group. The majority of them (% 55,1) have been graduated between 2000-2009.

MEASUREMENT TOOLS

To determine the attitudes of teachers towards the principles and methods of teaching the measuring apparatus developed by Ocak et al. (2012) have been used. The scale consists of 29 articles and 4 lower dimensions. The reliability co-efficient of the scale is 0,806 (Ocak, Ocak, Yılmaz, & Mergen, 2012).

DATA ANALYSIS

Before the data analysis the kurtosis and the skewness values were examined. Since the kurtosis

and the skewness values were between -3 and +3 (Table 2) it was decided that they had a normal distribution (DeCarlo 1997; Hopkins & Weeks 1990) and it was decided to use parametric tests. Whereas the test was applied to bivalent variables,

one-way analysis of variance was applied to the variables those have more than two values (Field 2009; Sahu 2013).

Table2. The Kurtosis and the Skewness Values Related to Sub Dimension and the Whole of the Scale

Lower Dimension	Skewness	Kurtosis
The factors impressing the choice of method	-1,369	2,645
Alternative methods and technics	-1,193	1,675
Actual technics	-,922	,114
Traditional methods	,027	-,267

RESULTS

The findings obtained as the results of the analysis are presented in connection with the research problems.

Table3. The Average, t and Significance Values Regarding the Attitudes of Teachers According to Their Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
The factors impressing the choice of method	Female	76	31,35	3,54	-,675	,501
	Male	31	31,87	3,71		
Alternative methods and technics	Female	76	49,50	5,05	,403	,688
	Male	31	49,06	5,14		
Actual technics	Female	76	25,72	3,72	-,023	,982
	Male	31	25,74	3,70		
Traditional methods	Female	76	16,84	2,69	-3,571	,001*
	Male	31	19,41	3,63		

According to the results of t-test made to reveal whether there are effects of teachers' genders on their attitudes, the difference appears in the lower dimension of "traditional methods" has a significant statistical level. When the averages are compared, it is seen that the averages of male

teachers are higher. That is to say that male teachers have a more positive attitude towards the traditional methods. Male and female teachers have similar attitudes in other lower dimensions.

Table 4. The Average, t and Significance Values Regarding the Attitudes of Teachers According to Their Branches.

	Branches	N	Mean	Std. S.	t	P
The factors impressing the choice of method	School-class	50	32,20	3,07	1,906	,059
	Branches	57	30,89	3,89		
Alternative methods and technics	School-class	50	50,00	4,37	1,203	,232
	Branches	57	48,82	5,57		
Actual technics	School-class	50	25,92	3,46	,499	,619
	Branches	57	25,56	3,91		
Traditional methods	School-class	50	16,96	3,47	-1,927	,057
	Branches	57	18,14	2,86		

According to the results of t-test made to determine whether the attitudes of teachers change according to their branches, since in all sub dimensions $p > 0.05$, the differences due to the branches are not

on a significant statistical level. This is to say in regard to teachers' branches they all have similar attitudes in all sub dimensions.

Table 5. The Average, F and Significance Values Regarding the Attitudes of Teachers According to Their Seniority.

		N	Mean	S. S	F	Significance	Difference
The factors impressing the choice of method	1-5 years	14	31,71	3,05	3,978	,010*	2-3/2-4
	6-10 years	46	32,65	2,74			
	11-15 years	23	30,87	3,28			
	16-over	24	29,79	4,75			
	Total	107	31,50	3,58			
Alternative methods and technics	1-5 years	14	48,43	5,02	13,351	,000*	2-1/2-3 /2-4
	6-10 years	46	52,37	2,63			
	11-15 years	23	46,96	4,91			
	16-over	24	46,50	5,82			
	Total	107	49,37	5,05			
Actual technics	1-5 years	14	25,21	4,59	3,507	,018*	2-3/2-4
	6-10 years	46	27,00	2,49			
	11-15 years	23	24,65	3,65			
	16-over	24	24,63	4,49			
	Total	107	25,73	3,69			
Traditional methods	1-5 years	14	16,93	3,81	3,936	,011*	3-2/3-4
	6-10 years	46	18,02	2,78			
	11-15 years	23	15,91	2,78			
	16-over	24	18,75	3,42			
	Total	107	17,59	3,20			

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance made to determine whether the attitudes of teachers change according to their seniority, since $p < 0.05$ in all sub dimensions, the difference has a significant statistical level. The difference on the sub dimension of the factors affecting the method choices has appeared between the teachers who have 6-10 years of seniority and 11-15 and 16-over. In regard to averages, the averages of the teachers who have 6-10 years of seniority is higher than the other groups. On the sub dimension of the factors impressing the choice of method the attitude of teachers who have 6-10 years of seniority is more positive than the other groups.

In the sub dimension of alternative methods and technics the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority are differing from the others. In regard to the averages, the average of the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority is higher than the averages of the others. That is to say that the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority are in a more positive attitude in

the sub dimension of alternative methods and technics.

On the sub level of the actual technics, the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority are differing from the teachers with 11-15 and 16-over seniorities. In regard to the averages, the average of the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority is higher than the averages of the others. That is to say that in the lower dimension of actual technics the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority are in a more positive attitude than the other teachers.

On the sub level of the traditional methods, the teachers with 11-15 years of seniority are differing from the teachers with 6-10 and 16-over seniorities. In regard to the averages, the average of the teachers with 11-15 years of seniority is lower than the averages of the others. That is to say that in the sub dimension of actual technics the teachers with 11-15 years of seniority are in a more negative attitude than the teachers with 6-10 years of seniority and the teachers with 16-over years of seniority.

Table 6. The Average, F and Significance Values Regarding the Attitudes of Teachers According to Their Graduation

		N	Mean	Sd.	F	Sig	Difference
The factors impressing the choice of method	Associate	16	28,63	5,22	7,065	,001*	1-2/1-3
	Bachelor's	85	31,94	2,99			
	Post-graduate	6	33,00	2,68			
	Total	107	31,50	3,58			
Alternative methods and technics	Associate	16	45,81	6,79	5,031	,008*	1-2
	Bachelor's	85	50,01	4,40			
	Post-graduate	6	49,83	5,49			
	Total	107	49,37	5,05			
Actual technics	Associate	16	25,06	4,27	,470	,626	
	Bachelor's	85	25,91	3,46			
	Post-graduate	6	25,00	5,55			
	Total	107	25,73	3,69			
Traditional methods	Associate	16	18,25	3,13	2,666	,074	
	Bachelor's	85	17,66	3,12			
	Post-graduate	6	14,83	3,66			
	Total	107	17,59	3,20			

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance made to determine whether the attitudes of teachers change according to their graduation, since $p < 0.05$ in sub dimensions of the factors impressing the choice of method and the alternative methods and technics, the difference has a significant statistical level. In the other sub dimensions, the teachers have similar attitudes in regard to their graduations.

On the sub dimension of the factors affecting the method choices there appears a difference between the teachers who have associate degree and the others. In regard to averages, the average of the teachers who have associate degree is lower than the other groups. That is to say that the

attitudes of the teachers who have associate degree are lower than the others.

On the sub dimension of alternative methods and technics, there appears a difference between the teachers with associate degree and the teachers with bachelors' degree. In regard to the averages, the average of the teachers with associate degree is lower than the average of the teachers with bachelors' degrees. That is to say that in the sub dimension of alternative methods and technics the teachers with associate degree have a more negative attitude than the teachers with bachelors' degrees.

Table7. The Average, F and Significance Values Regarding the Attitudes of Teachers According to Their Age Groups

		N	Mean	SS	F	Significance	Differentiation
The factors impressing the choice of method	20-30	3	32,33	2,31	1,419	,233	
	31-40	51	31,88	3,28			
	41-50	34	31,68	2,63			
	51-60	13	30,77	5,31			
	61-65	6	28,50	5,82			
	Total	107	31,50	3,58			
Alternative methods and technics	20-30	3	49,67	6,81	5,410	,001*	4-2/4-3
	31-40	51	50,43	4,42			
	41-50	34	50,21	4,29			
	51-60	13	44,15	5,46			
	61-65	6	46,83	6,31			
	Total	107	49,37	5,05			

Actual technics	20-30	3	26,33	6,35	1,226	,305
	31-40	51	25,88	3,51		
	41-50	34	26,35	3,66		
	51-60	13	24,23	3,72		
	61-65	6	23,83	3,87		
	Total	107	25,72	3,69		
Traditional methods	20-30	3	22,00	1,00	1,579	,186
	31-40	51	17,43	2,76		
	41-50	34	17,53	3,38		
	51-60	13	17,69	4,57		
	61-65	6	16,83	1,60		
	Total	107	17,59	3,20		

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance made to determine whether the attitudes of teachers change according to their age groups, since $p < 0.05$ in sub dimensions of the alternative methods and technics, the difference has a significant statistical level. In the other sub dimensions it can be said that the teachers have similar attitudes in regard to their ages. On the lower dimension of alternative methods and technics, the teachers in 51-60 age group are

differing from the teachers in 31-40 age group and the teachers in 41-50 age group. In regard to the averages, the average of the teachers in 51-60 age group is lower than the average of the teachers in other age groups. That is to say that the teachers in 51-60 age group have a more negative attitude than the teachers in 31-40 and 41-50 age groups.

Table 8. The Average, F and Significance Values Regarding the Attitudes of Teachers According to Their Graduation Years

		N	Mean	SS	F	Sig	Difference
The factors impressing the choice of method	1970-1990	9	28,56	6,75	3,776	,013*	1970-2000
	1990-1999	21	30,52	2,86			1970-2010
	2000-2009	59	31,95	3,06			
	2010-2018	18	32,67	2,99			
	Total	107	31,50	3,58			
Alternative methods and technics	1970-1990	9	44,22	7,58	4,710	,004*	1970-1990
	1990-1999	21	48,29	3,81			1970-2000
	2000-2009	59	50,32	4,62			1970-2010
	2010-2018	18	50,11	4,81			
	Total	107	49,37	5,05			
Actual technics	1970-1990	9	23,56	4,88	1,381	,253	
	1990-1999	21	25,33	3,51			
	2000-2009	59	26,08	3,36			
	2010-2018	18	26,11	4,17			
	Total	107	25,73	3,69			
Traditional methods	1970-1990	9	18,00	2,45	,315	,815	
	1990-1999	21	17,90	3,83			
	2000-2009	59	17,59	2,94			
	2010-2018	18	17,00	3,71			
	Total	107	17,59	3,20			

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance made to determine whether the attitudes of teachers change according to their graduation years, since $p < 0.05$ in sub dimensions of the

factors impressing the choice of method and the alternative methods and technics, the difference has a significant statistical level. In the other sub dimensions, it can be said that the teachers have

similar attitudes in regard to their graduation years.

On the lower dimension of the factors affecting the method choices there appears a difference between the teachers who graduated between 1970-1990 and the teachers who graduated between 2000-2009 and between 2010-2018. In regard to averages the averages of the teachers who graduated between 1970-1990 is lower than the other groups. That is to say that on the sub dimension of alternative methods and technics, the teachers graduated between 1970-1990 are in more negative attitude than the others.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The gender of teachers does not have an effect on the lower dimensions except the sub dimension of traditional methods. Male teachers have more positive attitudes against the traditional methods. As a result of the research, it has been revealed that the technic of direct instruction and within this framework the traditional teaching methods are being used by male teachers and by the teachers who are well up in years ((Stipek, Givvin, Salmon & MacGyvers, 2001; Temizöz & Koca, 2010). There didn't appear any differences according to the branches. Some researchers have argued that the teachers of Turkish lectures could teach the topics by using more traditional teaching methods whereas this method could not solve the problems of the teachers of mathematics while teaching mathematics (Burns 1985; Akt. Montgomery, 1987). According to Burns, in traditional teaching the primary aim is to develop the skill of operation. To get a good point or a degree in a standard test to choose the correct answer and especially to choose the correct answers quickly is more important than thinking to find the correct answer. It has been emphasized that some behaviours that would contribute to the development of students' mathematical thinking such as grasping the logic and the process of the solution of a problem and critiquing could be achieved by teachers' use of alternative and actual methods and technics. The attitudes of teachers are differing according to their seniorities. The teachers who have 6-10 years of seniority are differing from the others. The teachers with 6-10 years of seniority are in positive attitudes towards the new approaches. They could be in positive manners because of their knowledge

on the methods which are functioning better in the classes, a knowledge which they acquire from their own experiences. The teachers who have longer seniorities could be unable to develop an attitude because of the lack of their knowledge on the alternative and actual technics.

The ages of the teachers also have a partly effect on their attitudes. On the sub dimension of the alternative methods the attitude of teachers older than middle age is lower. Similarly, the graduation years of the teachers have also a partly effect on their attitudes. On the lower level of the choice of the method and alternative methods there are differences between the teachers graduated in 1970 and the teachers graduated in 2000 and 2010. The attitudes of teacher who graduated in 1970 and before are lower. The degrees of the teachers also have an effect on the sub dimension of method choice and alternative methods; the teachers with graduate and post-graduate degrees have a higher attitude. The past educations and experiences of teachers also affect their attitudes.

SUGGESTIONS

- Organizing in-service trainings for teachers on the alternative methods and technics
- To make the schools adequately equipped with proper equipment the investments carried out by ministries of education
- The revision of plans and programs in the light of the teaching principles and alternative-actual methods.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRENT EFL PRACTICUM: INSIGHTS FROM UNIVERSITY MENTORS, SCHOOL MENTORS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAJORED STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JEDDAH

Abstract: The overall purpose of this research was to assess the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English language majored students in the Saudi EFL context, mainly the University of Jeddah, Faculty of Education. To recruit the study participants, the researcher adopted a non-random sampling technique where the focus is to select information-rich cases for in depth study, which are likely to illuminate the questions under study and for the most effective use of limited resources. The data for this research study were collected using qualitative data method including, mainly, interviews which provided insights into the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English language pre-service teachers in the Saudi EFL context, mainly, the University of Jeddah, Faculty of Education. It was clear that essential contextual and pedagogical knowledge for English language teaching was improved during the practicum. They placed a higher importance on pedagogical knowledge and contextual knowledge as well as subject matter knowledge. It was indicated that English language teaching methodologies taught at university can be reinforced through the teaching practice during the practicum. The school mentors made their decisions based on the submitted lesson plans, and through discussion as well as observing pre-service teachers while teaching in the classroom. The school mentors provided support for the English language majored students to develop knowledge essential for becoming English language teachers. The university mentors, on the other hand, were more interested in seeing how the pre-service teachers adapted the knowledge they had acquired at university to school teaching, particularly the knowledge gained in the English Language Teaching methodology courses.

Keywords: current EFL practicum, university mentor, school mentor, English language majored students, the University of Jeddah.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching practicum has been considered as one of the most crucial and influential stages in teacher education and it is also “the longest and most intensive exposure to the teaching profession” for teacher candidates (Cohen, Hoz and Kaplan, 2013, 345) is an integral part of any pre-service teacher training program. It is the time that trainee teachers move from university studies to actual school teaching practice under field supervision to acquire the professional knowledge and competences for teaching (Nguyen, 2015). It allows pre-service teachers to become exposed to the real world of teaching and to gain knowledge about the complexity of current classroom practices, which contribute to enhancing pre-service teachers’ motivations, attitudes, and engagement towards the teaching profession (Castañeda-Trujillo and Aguirre-Hernández 2017). Intrator (2006), described practicum and stated that it gives English language majored students the opportunity to become aware of the realistic nature of the teaching profession. Teacher education programs may do an effort here in order to create a supportive atmosphere involving supervisors, mentors, and teacher educators as a strategy that might contribute towards preparing beginning teachers for professional development and growth (Fajardo & Miranda, 2015). English language teaching takes added consideration due to the fact that most novice teachers face difficulties on their beginnings especially when practicum doesn’t meet its objectives (Viáfara 2011).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although the development of effective teaching practice should occur at all stages of a teacher’s career, the first experience of real-life teaching always marks a milestone in every teaching career. As such, ensuring effective teaching of English language majored students so that they are well equipped with suitable knowledge, skills and dispositions is one of the aims of initial teacher education. To the researchers’ best knowledge, there has been limited systematic research into the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English language majored students in the Saudi context. This study, therefore, will contribute to assisting educational stakeholders in making informed

decisions about the establishment of a new policy regarding the English language teaching practicum, teacher preparation Programs and the English language teaching curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE PRACTICUM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

The practicum has emerged as an increasingly common feature of ESL/EFL teacher preparation program (Zhengdong 2013). It is an opportunity to help teacher candidates grow into their professional role as teachers and to become active participants in the profession. The teaching practicum provides novice teachers with actual teaching experience and intensive developmental feedback because during this time, they feel involved, challenged and even empowered. The outcomes of socialization during the practicum are influenced by the interactions that trainee teachers develop with their students, school mentors, university mentoring lecturers, peer trainees and school authorities. It is during these stages that trainee teachers may form personal teaching styles and philosophies that will guide them through the multiple, varied and complex pathways of teaching (Nguyen 2015). In the field of English language teacher education, the teaching practicum allows pre-service teachers the chance to “acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to function as effective language teachers (Nguyen 2015).

Nguyen and Hudson (2010) conducted a research on 97 Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers, completing a four-year undergraduate course and having a six-week field experience in upper secondary schools in Hanoi to investigate their perceptions of potential difficulties related to learning about teaching EFL writing in their practicum by means of an open-ended questionnaire delivered at the beginning of their final practicum. An open-ended questionnaire collected data from 97 pre-service EFL teachers at the beginning of their final practicum. The data suggested that these pre-service EFL teachers were motivated to learn to teach English in general and teaching writing in particular but required mentors to model effective teaching practices and share their teaching experiences. They also needed their

mentors to be enthusiastic and supportive, and provide constructive feedback. These findings may assist teacher educators and school mentors for motivating and developing pre-service EFL teachers' practices.

Yuan and Lee (2014) conducted a study in China to investigate the process of belief change among three pre-service language teachers during the teaching practicum. Multiple methods of data collection were employed, including interviews, classroom observation (followed by stimulated recall interviews), as well as weekly journals the participants kept for the practicum (as a required assignment of the program). The findings reveal that student teachers' beliefs are not pre-determined or stable, but open to change and development.

Nguyen (2015) research aimed to (i) explore the perceptions of the university's academic staff, university mentors, school mentors and trainee teachers about the effectiveness of the current EFL practicum in selected Vietnamese universities, (ii) identify issues of concern about the practicum from the viewpoints of these stakeholders, and (iii) make recommendations for enhancing the practicum's effectiveness. The findings revealed that the trainee teachers did not begin the practicum with an unrealistic vision of the teaching profession. In the lead-up, most of them had envisioned many difficulties regarding classroom management, methodology selection, relationships with the practicum mentors and the assessment of their teaching performance. Data showed that the practicum was beneficial in preparing the trainee teachers for classroom practices in terms of improving their pedagogical content knowledge, contextual knowledge, instructional skills, communication skills and desirable teacher dispositions. However, a small majority of the trainee teachers had difficulties in controlling the classes, managing their teaching time and catering for students' varied learning needs. Most conducted teaching based on the classroom practice, the school mentor's expectations and the school English curriculum rather than implementing what was taught in the ELT courses at university.

The lack of empirical research in this area makes the present study timely and central to the increasing demands placed on English language teacher education, particularly when the growth in

the number of providers and the variety of English teacher training programs has raised questions about the quality of English language teachers' practical training. Also, this research into the effectiveness of the EFL teaching practicum can advance both theoretical and practical insights into enhancing English teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia and other similar EFL contexts at the Arab World.

THE ROLE OF PRACTICUM MENTORS

Being an effective mentor is a learned skill as it takes time, practice and effort from the individual mentor. According to Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010), there are six qualities to effective mentoring: (i) organizational skills, (ii) interpersonal relationship, (iii) integration of theory and practice, (iv) rich content and pedagogical knowledge, (v) providing the right challenge and support, and (vi) being transformative leaders. A study by Maynard (2000) described the five desirable characteristics of a mentor: (i) giving clear expectations, (ii) giving advice before student teaching, (iii) providing constructive feedback, (iv) acknowledging the teaching styles of their own mentee, and (v) welcoming and accepting mentees.

A growing number of studies have documented the crucial role that mentor teachers play in the learning of pre-service teachers about becoming teachers and the development of their professional learning. For example, Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen and Bergen (2011) claim that the supervisory roles from mentor teachers have helped pre-service teachers improve the connection between personal and professional competencies of teaching, which is fundamental for pre-service teachers to develop their professional identity (Ambrosetti 2014).

Hudson and Nguyen's study (2008) involved a written survey administered to 91 Vietnamese pre-service teachers involved in an EFL degree. Results indicated that these pre-service EFL teachers had specific needs when considering mentors' personal attributes. These included a mentor who is enthusiastic (57%), helpful (27%), friendly (25%), and knowledgeable (20%) with communicative competence (18%). It was also claimed that desirable mentoring practices should involve constructive guidance, especially sharing

experiences (32%), checking lesson plans before teaching an EFL lesson (21%) and providing more opportunities for EFL teaching (12%). In addition, these pre-service teachers ($n=91$) required a mentor who could provide an understanding of the system requirements (e.g., curriculum 38%, school policies 32%, and assessment 18%), model EFL teaching (e.g., method and manner of delivery 52%, pronunciation 25%, and writing lesson plans 15%), articulate pedagogical knowledge (such as teaching strategies 37%, classroom management 34%, motivating students 17%, and dealing with unexpected situations 13%), and provide direct and detailed feedback about EFL teaching performance (56%) and English content knowledge (23%). Pre-service teachers have particular mentoring requirements that may assist their development as EFL teachers. These attributes and practices include developing personal inter-relationships and directing mentors to provide system requirements, specific pedagogical knowledge, modelling EFL teaching practices, and articulating feedback on such practices.

Paulus's study (2017) aimed to investigate the mentor teachers' voices and beliefs to help the professional learning of pre-service English teachers (PSETs) in their school-based practicums. This is a qualitative study which involves seven mentor teachers who teach English in senior high schools in Indonesia. Data was gathered through questionnaires and unstructured interviews carried out in the participants' school setting and analysed using NVIVO 9 (qualitative data analysis software). The findings reveal the mentor teachers' beliefs in guiding PSETs during the school-based practicum. The mentor teachers viewed that PSETs need to learn and experience more fundamental aspects of teaching, namely interpersonal skills and emotional engagement in teaching, including their leadership.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of this research was to assess the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English language majored students in the Saudi EFL context, mainly, The University of Jeddah, Faculty of Education. Through the identification of these factors, this research intended to help teacher preparation programs policymakers and administrators gain a better understanding of the

teaching practicum, of the impact of this experience on the development of EFL English language majored students, and of the challenges it has posed for them, with a view to improving English language teacher education in Saudi Arabia.

The main question guiding the research is: How well does the teaching practicum prepare the EFL pre-service teachers for the actual classroom by building up their knowledge, skills and dispositions as they are working towards the teaching profession?

This question is further divided into three sub-questions:

- What perceptions do the university mentors, school mentors and EFL pre-service teachers have of the teaching practicum in relation to its role in pre-service teachers' learning to teach?
- What are the issues of concern about the teaching practicum effectiveness as perceived by the university mentors, school mentors and EFL pre-service teachers?
- What could be done to enhance the effectiveness of the current teaching practicum of EFL?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study may be of importance and interest to numerous groups: English pre-service teachers, English language educators, administrators who work with English language teachers and those responsible for the ongoing development and assessment of English language teachers. English language pre-service teachers and English language educators will have a better base for reflection to prepare for their tasks during the school placements while policy-makers and educational administrators will be informed of the issues concerning the design and evaluation of the teaching practicum. This study is also significant to teacher educators who design and develop guidelines for English language teacher education programs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

To recruit the study participants, the researcher adopted a non-random sampling technique where

the focus is to select information-rich cases for in depth study, which are likely to illuminate the questions under study and for the most effective use of limited resources. This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2011). The researcher was helped with the participant selection process by providing the contact details of the practicum coordinators and a list of English language majored students who were enrolled in the Higher Diploma of Education Program for teacher preparation, at the Faculty of Education, University of Jeddah in the year 2018, as well as the names of host schools. The researcher was then able to contact four school mentors, two university mentors and 16 English language majored students enrolled in the Higher Diploma of Education Program for teacher preparation via email, telephone and face-to-face for possible interest and participation in this study. They all responded by email, expressing their willingness to join in the research.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data for this research study were collected using qualitative data method including, mainly, interviews which provided insights into the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English language pre-service teachers in the Saudi EFL context, mainly, the University of Jeddah, Faculty of Education.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

The interview themes were formulated based on a review of literature in English language teacher education. After establishing initial contact with participants, the researcher began to interview them. The length of interviews varied between 55 and 75 minutes. The 16 English language majored students enrolled in the Higher Diploma of Education Program for teacher preparation at the University of Jeddah chosen were each interviewed twice, one before the practicum and one near the end of the practicum, while the school mentors and the university mentors were interviewed once. Participants were given a copy of the interview schedule so that they could feel more at ease. The contents of the notes were

verbally reviewed with the interviewee for clarity and accuracy.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INTERVIEWS

Two methods were employed to ensure the validity of the interviews, namely, interview questions and researcher bias. The researcher designed the interview questions, and structured them after conducting the literature review on the topic and consulting with experts in the field. The interview questions included all important dimensions identified in the literature and in experts' advice so as to avoid a lack of representative questions or underrepresentation of certain aspects. The researchers did her best to minimize personal bias as much as possible. That was through what was called member checking. In this process, the researcher sought the views of members on the accuracy of data gathered, descriptions and even interpretations. After each interview, respondents were requested to authenticate the accuracy of the information obtained through the interview process. As for reliability, the interview schedules were piloted with 6 English language majored students enrolled in the Higher Diploma of Education Program for teacher preparation at the University of Jeddah, one university mentor, and one school mentor who were comparable to the population of this research study. The aim was to make sure that each respondent understood the questions in the same way and the answers could be coded without uncertainty. Together with the pilot study and face-to-face interviews the researcher could improve interview reliability.

DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) described the process of data analysis and interpretation in four steps. The first step is to become fully immersed in the data such as interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials collected. The second step is to systematically organize the material into salient themes and patterns. The third step is to attach meaning to the themes in order to tell a coherent story. The fourth step is the composition of the material in order for others to read what was learned (p. 270). These steps were followed.

RESEARCH ETHICS

This study was approved by the University of Jeddah, Faculty of Education. Therefore, required

measures of protecting human participants were in place. Participants received letters informing them of the study and requesting consent. The letter stated that data and information collected will be kept confidential and anonymous. The district, schools, and teacher names operate under pseudonyms.

FINDINGS

English language majored students, school mentors, and University mentors' views on teacher knowledge during the Practicum

On responding to the question: How does the practicum support effectiveness? Although a few English language majored students' respondents (3 out of 16) see little benefits for practicum, the majority of the respondents (n = 13) indicated great benefit from practicum. Examples from the English language majored students' responses as follow:

The practicum supported my teacher knowledge. It helped improving English accent and pronunciation and English functions in spoken and written texts.

To me, Yah, the practicum enriched my teacher knowledge. I use spoken English during the lesson. It enriched my vocabulary and developed my English grammar.

Ah, I think the practicum helped me a lot. It helped my knowledge about different activities to develop students' English skills. I can manage my class well.

To me, after the teaching practicum, I have gained more knowledge of Classroom Management strategies for a language class. As well as the relationship between content selection and students' needs.

From their answers, it was clear that essential contextual and pedagogical knowledge for English language teaching was improved during the practicum. English language majored students placed a higher importance on pedagogical knowledge and contextual knowledge as well as subject matter knowledge. It was indicated that English language teaching methodologies taught at

university can be reinforced through the teaching practice during the practicum. As one respondent said *teachers who know more teach better.*

The school mentors, on the other hand, emphasized the development of pedagogical and contextual knowledge as a primary condition for effective teaching. As the school mentors claimed *Many English language pre-service teachers came to school with a sound knowledge of the English language but, they have very limited pedagogical understanding of how to apply it in their teaching.*

Concerning assessment of English language majored students' knowledge, the school mentors made their decisions based on the submitted lesson plans, and through discussion as well as observing English language majored students while teaching in the classroom. The school mentors provided support for the English language majored students to develop knowledge essential for becoming English language teachers.

The university mentors, on the other hand, were more interested in seeing how the English language majored students adapted the knowledge they had acquired at university to school teaching, particularly the knowledge gained in the English Language Teaching methodology courses. As one claimed: *I feel successful when I see my students adapt the knowledge, they acquired at university to school teaching, particularly the knowledge gained in the English Language Teaching methodology courses.*

Sometimes, people accuse the university staff of not doing their work well. So, the university mentors want everything to go well.

I do not want anybody to say that I do not do my job well. I do not wish to hear any complaint about knowledge deficiency among our pre-service teachers.

In analysing the mentor's sayings, it is clear that practical teaching knowledge comes through teaching experience and interactions of the English language majored students in the school contexts. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) put it "during the teaching practicum they have the opportunities to observe, discuss and reflect on the "ongoing actions of expert teachers as they choose among alternative strategies, organize classroom routines,

and make immediate decisions as well as set problems, frame situations and consider/reconsider their reasoning” (p. 262).

English language majored students indicated that the teaching practicum was effective in helping them acquire the instructional skills essential for language teaching. As respondents put it.

No doubt, the teaching practicum was effective in helping them acquire the instructional skills essential for language teaching.

Yes, it helped me integrate technology into English Language teaching.

Sure, I could use teaching aids and other resources to facilitate teaching.

As for me, I could select appropriate teaching techniques, and model the English language.

Concerning classroom management, there was consent between respondent (school mentors, university mentors, and English language majored students that novice teachers (English language majored students) lack classroom management skills. One student emphasized it:

I found it particularly hard to deal with mixed level classes.

As university mentors put it:

The solution lies in the teacher's use of different teaching strategies during the lesson period, otherwise, she will be at a mess and the classroom will be problematic.

The school mentors, in agreement with the university mentors, suggested that *they might have become familiar with these situations and had learnt to develop effective instructional techniques to deal with the problems.*

As for the cooperation between university and host school, the University mentors confirmed high level cooperation.

The university allocated two hard working university teachers for this purpose.

Well, the cooperation is highly appreciated.

Concerning support have you received from the Faculty of Education (Practicum office) and the host school before you start your practicum, English language majored students placed a higher importance on the support they receive from both

the Faculty of Education (Practicum office) and the host school.

Well, the school mentor is an experienced teacher and guides me to the right method of teaching. I benefited a lot.

I am not suffering from lack of support.

Things are going well.

When asked about teaching competency improvement when students were at the Practicum, the school mentor confirmed improvement.

Well, their attitudes towards the teaching profession improved. They liked it.

Sure, I do my best with them. There are positive responses and positive attitudes.

As for lesson preparation, classroom teaching, classroom management and school engagement, students stated that they prepared their lesson well: *we prepare it in accordance to what we have learnt, no doubt.*

We can manage our classroom well. We are well prepared, engaged and participate to our school.

Though their school mentor emphasized something else.

THE PRACTICUM'S EFFECTIVENESS

The majority of the participants (English language majored students) (n=15) agreed that the practicum was *an essential part of the English language teacher training program* and that they had adequate opportunities to *become engaged in the teaching activities as well as being successful in establishing good relationships in the school, and to be familiar to the system there.*

As one respondent put it *Well, I think the practicum is an essential part of the English language teacher preparation program.*

Another one indicated that *Through the practicum I feel satisfied with my teaching performance. I have had adequate opportunities to engage in teaching activities.*

These positive feelings toward the teaching practicum emphasized the educational values of this experience in the development of beginning

teachers as indicated by Farrell (2001) in EFL teacher training.

When EFL pre-service teachers were asked to evaluate the teaching practicum's effectiveness in terms of its arrangements, the majority indicated that arrangements need much care. As one respondent indicated:

Well, the duration and timing of the practicum are not appropriate. I think we can do this on one additional semester to be added to the teacher preparation program at the university.

Before the practicum, I was worried about teaching as a whole. But when I got engaged, I found that everything was well prepared.

As for ways of improving Practicum, the majority of participants confirmed their satisfaction with arrangements.

I am proud of the whole practicum arrangements.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this research study underline the notion that teacher preparation programs need to provide a balanced set of programs which will guarantee the professionalism of their students who will become EFL teachers. It can be emphasized that English language teaching methodologies taught at university can be reinforced through the teaching practice during the practicum.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

However, this research study still had some limitations. For instance, the number of the research population is limited. Future research needs to widen the scope to include more participants. Second, this research study relied on qualitative method in collecting data. Future research needs to use different methods, specially mixed methods. Third, this research study included only female students. Future research needs to be applied to both sexes.

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APPENDIX 1: THE UNIVERSITY MENTORS – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Does your department coordinate the planning, organizing and implementing of the teaching practicum? How?
2. To what extent is there cooperation between university and host school during the period of practicum?
3. How do you evaluate the role of the department in the planning, organizing and implementing of the teaching practicum?
4. How often does the university mentor visit schools during the teaching practicum?
5. How do you feel about the university's support of the department in terms of organizing the teaching practicum?
6. How does your department assess the teaching effectiveness of the pre-service teachers?
7. What are your suggestions for improving the assessment practice?
8. How satisfied are you with the whole practicum arrangements?
9. What are the common complaints about the teaching practicum that you hear from: EFL pre-service teachers, university mentors, school mentors and others?
10. Do you have any suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English Language pre-service teachers?

8. What are the main concerns regarding the assessment and evaluation of English language pre-service teachers?
9. What problems are inherent in the teaching practicum?
10. Do you have any suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching practicum for English language pre-service teachers?

APPENDIX 3: EFL PRE SERVICE TEACHER'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you describe your preparation for the teaching practicum?
2. How do you describe your feelings before the practicum starts?
3. How are you prepared in lesson preparation, classroom teaching, classroom management and school engagement?
4. Are you ready for the role of an English language teacher before entering this teaching practicum?
5. How much support have you received from the Faculty of Education (Practicum office) at the University and the host school before you start your practicum?
6. Are you confident for the teaching practicum?
7. What is the effect of teaching practicum on your English language proficiency?

APPENDIX 2: SCHOOL MENTORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your evaluation of EFL pre-service teachers' overall preparation for the practicum?
2. How do you assess EFL pre-service teachers' teaching skills?
3. How do you assess EFL pre-service teachers' communication skills?
4. How do you evaluate pre service teachers' teaching competency?
5. How do you support EFL pre-service teacher's acquisition and development of their knowledge essential for becoming an English language teacher?
6. Do you think their teaching competency improves as the teaching practicum goes on?
7. What are the assessment tools you use to evaluate the EFL pre-service teachers?

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A LIFE SKILLS TRAINING BASED ON THE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL ON IMPROVING FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Abstract: The purpose of this study was the effectiveness of a life skills training based on the response to intervention model on improving functional communication skills in children with autism. Participants were ten children between the ages of seven and nine who attended a school for children with developmental disabilities (Tarbya Fekrya). Each child also had the following characteristics: (a) meet the full criteria for autism according to The Scale for Screening Autism Disorder (Eissa Saad 2008) (b) functional verbal communication, (c) able to read and comprehend words, and (d) ability to follow directions. A pre-post design was used to examine the effectiveness of a life skills training based on the response to intervention model on improving functional communication skills in children with autism. Z Value result for the differences in post- test mean rank scores between experimental and control groups in functional communication. The table shows that (Z) value was (-2.121). This value is significant at the level (0.01) in the favour of experimental group. The (Z) value in table 2 was (-2.003) which is significant at the level (0.01). This indicates that use of life skills training based on the response to intervention model had a positive effect on verbal communication in children with autism.

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Keywords: Life skills training, response to intervention model, functional communication skills, children with autism.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013), Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, including deficits in social reciprocity, nonverbal communicative behaviours used for social interaction, and skills in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships. In addition to the social communication deficits, the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder requires the presence of restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities. Because symptoms change with development and may be masked by compensatory mechanisms, the diagnostic criteria may be met based on historical information, although the current presentation must cause significant impairment.

Within the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, individual clinical characteristics are noted through the use of specifiers (with or without accompanying intellectual impairment; with or without accompanying structural language impairment; associated with a known medical/genetic or environmental/acquired condition; associated with another neurodevelopmental, mental, or behavioural disorder), as well as specifiers that describe the autistic symptoms (age at first concern; with or without loss of established skills; severity). These specifiers provide clinicians with an opportunity to individualize the diagnosis and communicate a richer clinical description of the affected individuals. For example, many individuals previously diagnosed with Asperger's disorder would now receive a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder without language or intellectual impairment (Eissa Saad 2017).

The impairments in communication and social interaction specified in Criterion A are pervasive and sustained. Diagnoses are most valid and reliable when based on multiple sources of information, including clinician's observations, caregiver history, and, when possible, self-report. Verbal and nonverbal deficits in social communication have varying manifestations, depending on the individual's age, intellectual level, and language ability, as well as other factors

such as treatment history and current support. Many individuals have language deficits, ranging from complete lack of speech through language delays, poor comprehension of speech, echoed speech, or stilted and overly literal language. Even when formal language skills (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) are intact, the use of language for reciprocal social communication is impaired in autism spectrum disorder (Eissa Saad 2017).

Early intervention services are the key to help children have a successful future, both in and out of school. When children receive educational interventions at an early age, they gain the skills necessary to successfully enter school (Abdulla and Eissa 2014). Early educational opportunities are important for all children, but especially important for children with special needs, such as autism (Eissa Saad 2015).

Current research indicates that the skills that teachers and early education experts identify as positive indicators for school readiness have shifted from academically oriented skills to skills that are social in nature (Lin, Lawrence and Gorell, 2003).

Hanley, Heal, Tiger and Ingvarsson (2007) defined Preschool Life Skills as "desirable responses to commonly occurring and evocative classroom situations". Much of the current research has attempted to evaluate procedures for teaching preschool life skills (PLS) in preschool classes with typically developing children. For instance, Hanley, Heal, Tiger, and Ingvarsson (2007) implemented a class-wide teaching program with 16 typically developing preschoolers to teach instruction following, functional communicative responses, delay tolerance, and friendship skills in response to data suggesting that non familial centre-based childcare in the first 4.5 years of life was a risk factor for developing problem behaviour (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Early Child Care Research Network 2003). Children were exposed to contrived situations that targeted a specific skill (e.g., following instructions, tolerating delays imposed by teachers). A multiple-probe design across units showed acquisition of the skills and reduction of problem behaviour for most children.

PLS was initially evaluated as a class-wide program and characterized in Hanley et al. (2007) as a Tier 1 application in a response-to-intervention (RTI) framework (National Center on Response to

Intervention, 2010). The universal interventions (Tier 1) are implemented with all students to help prevent the development of social or behavioural problems and increase pro-social behaviour. Hanley et al. (2007) used Tier 1 interventions, teaching skills at a class-wide level to all students in a natural setting and using teacher praise to differentially reinforce pro-social behaviour. Subsequent studies evaluated PLS in a small-group (Tier 2 application; see Luczynski, Hanley and Rodriguez, 2014). Selected interventions (Tier 2) focus on individuals who are not responsive to universal interventions and require more targeted interventions that are delivered in a small-group setting. Miltenberger et al. (2004) used BST during a Tier 2 intervention by using instructions, modelling, rehearsal, and feedback to teach firearm safety to a small group of young children. Targeted interventions (Tier 3) focus on students who do not respond adequately to Tier 1 or Tier 2 interventions and require individualized instruction for skill deficits or interventions for severe problem behaviour (Campbell and Anderson 2011). Tier 3 interventions often consist of antecedent strategies to prevent problem behaviour, instructional strategies to teach desired behaviour, and individualized consequences to decrease problem behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour (Campbell and Anderson 2011).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was the effectiveness of a life skills training based on the response to intervention model on improving functional communication skills in children with autism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following two research questions were posed and investigated in the study:

- would a life skills training based on the response to intervention model be more effective for improving functional communication skills of the treatment group compared to the control group?
- would a life skills training based on the response to intervention model be more effective for improving functional

communication skills of children with autism in post-test compared to pre-test ?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed the semi experimental design to examine the effectiveness of a life skills training based on the response to intervention model on improving functional communication skills of children with autism.

SAMPLE

Participants were 10 children between the ages of seven and nine who attended a school for children with developmental disabilities (Tarbya Fekrya). All children attended the same classroom within the school. Parental informed consent forms were sent home by the school director and school psychologist to parents of potential participants telling them about the study and requesting them to give permission for their children to participate. Through a previous comprehensive psychological evaluation each targeted child had received a primary diagnosis of Autistic Disorder. All children were also capable of communication using speech assessed through a combination of teacher report and observation.

Each child also had the following characteristics: (a) meet the full criteria for autism according to The Scale for Screening Autism Disorder (Mourad Ali, 2008) (b) functional verbal communication, (c) able to read and comprehend words, and (d) ability to follow directions.

MEASURES

Functional communication questionnaire. a 20-item teacher-report questionnaire. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement using a five-point Likert response scale (3 = Always, 2 = Sometimes, 1 = Never). The Cronbach alpha value was high (0.81) indicating excellent internal consistency.

PROCEDURE

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from both schools' principals and students' parents.

The training program consisted of 10 sessions, each lasted for 20 minutes, three sessions weekly. The PLS program was implemented using the response-to-intervention (RTI) model. Universal interventions (Tier 1) are implemented with all children to help. In Tier 1, behavioural expectations and social skills were taught. It also includes consequences for appropriate (e.g., tokens for appropriate behaviour that are exchanged for a small item) and inappropriate behaviour (e.g., timeout for inappropriate behaviour). Tier 2 focuses on individuals who are not responsive to universal interventions and require more targeted interventions that are delivered in a small-group setting. Tier 2 interventions include explicit instruction of skills, structured prompts for appropriate behaviour, opportunities for the children to practice the skills, and frequent feedback to the student. Tier 3 focuses on children who do not respond adequately to Tier 1 or Tier 2 interventions and require individualized instruction. Tier 3 interventions often consist of antecedent strategies to prevent problem behaviour, instructional strategies to teach desired behaviour, and individualized consequences to decrease problem behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour. Each session consisted of instructions, modelling, and role play and feedback.

The second objective of the study was to determine the effect a life skills training based on the response to intervention model for improving functional communication skills of children with autism in post-test compared to pre-test. The treatment consisted of functional communication training through use of life skills training based on the response to intervention model.

The children's performance on verbal communication was measured pre and post intervention. Table 2 shows Z Value result for the differences in pre and post-test mean rank scores for the experimental group in functional communication questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

The effects of implementing a life skills training based on the response to intervention model on improving functional communication skills of children with autism were assessed using a pre-post- testing.

RESULTS

The first objective of the study was to determine if a life skills training based on the response to intervention model would be more effective for improving functional communication skills of the treatment group compared to the control group. For this purpose, the post intervention scores of both treatment and control groups were analysed. Table 1. shows Z Value result for the differences in post-test mean rank scores between experimental and control groups in functional communication. The table shows that (Z) value was (-2.121). This value is significant at the level (0.01) in the favour of experimental group.

Table 1. Z Values results for the differences in post- test mean rank scores between experimental and control groups in functional communication skills

Variables	Groups	N	Mean Ranks	Sum Ranks	Mann-whitney	Z Value	Sig
Functional communication	Ex	5	8	40	Zero	-2.121	0.01
	Cont.	5	3	15			

The table shows that (Z) value was (-2.003). This value is significant at the level (0.01). This indicates that use of life skills training based on the response to intervention model had a positive effect on functional communication skills in children with autism.

Table 2. Z Values results for the comparison of mean rank scores of experimental groups at pre- and post-intervention in functional communication skills

Variables	Negative Ranks		Positive Ranks		Z Value	Sig.
	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum		
functional communication	3	15	Zero	Zero	-2.003	0.01

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was the effectiveness of a life skills training based on the response to intervention model on improving functional communication skills in children with autism. Z Value result for the differences in post- test mean rank scores between experimental and control groups in functional communication skills. The table shows that (Z) value was (-2.121). This value is significant at the level (0.01) in the favour of experimental group. The (Z) value in table 2 was (-2.003) which is significant at the level (0.01). This indicates that use of life skills training based on the response to intervention model had a positive effect on functional communication skills in children with autism.

The implementation of life skills training based on the response to intervention model seemed to be successful across functional communication skills and with all participants. These findings concerning change in behaviours and generalization support the results of a previous study (Eissa Saad 2018). Luczynski and Hanley (2013) delivered the training using small-group instruction. This modified small-group PLS program was effective in teaching and maintaining social skills, and to prevent problem behaviour in the classroom.

Furthermore, the children in this study did not receive any type of reinforcement or behavior modification strategies while participating in the sessions. Removing strategies such as prompting techniques, token systems, and other reinforcement systems reduced the potential for confounds within the study. Therefore, one can conclude that the life skills training based on the response to intervention model was primarily responsible for the change in the social skills of children participated in the study.

IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS

Findings from the current work also suggest that children with autism may have highly developed functional communication skills. Results from this study have provided support for the notion that some children with autism benefit, often quickly, from life skills training based on the response to intervention model. A number of implications have emerged from the results of the present study. Universal interventions (Tier 1) helps increase pro-social behaviour. Selected interventions (Tier 2) can be valuable as it was delivered in a small-group setting, includes explicit instruction of skills, structured prompts for appropriate behaviour, opportunities for the children to practice the skills, and frequent feedback to the children. Targeted interventions (Tier 3) includes instructional strategies to teach desired behaviour, and individualized consequences to decrease problem behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour.

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ISSUES RELATED TO IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASDs): INSIGHTS FROM DSM-5

Abstract: The article examines issues related to identification of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). The focus is on the Diagnostic Criteria in DSM-5 diagnostic features, associated features supporting diagnosis, and prevalence are discussed.

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Keywords: autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, associated features supporting diagnosis, prevalence.

INTRODUCTION

The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is a classification of mental disorders with associated criteria designed to facilitate more reliable diagnoses of these disorders. Autism spectrum disorder is a new DSM-5 name that reflects a scientific consensus that four previously separate disorders are actually a single condition with different levels of symptom severity in two core domains. It has become a standard reference for clinical practice in the mental health field. DSM has been used by clinicians and researchers from different orientations (biological, psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioural, interpersonal, family /systems), all of whom strive for a common language to communicate the essential characteristics of mental disorders presented by their patients.

The criteria are concise and explicit and intended to facilitate an objective assessment of symptom presentations in a variety of clinical settings—inpatient, outpatient, partial hospital, consultation- liaison, clinical, private practice, and primary care—as well in general community epidemiological studies of mental disorders. DSM-5 is also a tool for collecting and communicating accurate public health statistics on mental disorder morbidity and mortality rates (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

This manual introduces neurodevelopmental disorders, among which is autism spectrum disorder which is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts (deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, non-verbal communication and developing relationships), as well as restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

The manual changed subsuming several PDD subtypes into a single diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in the DSM-5 that reflected a wide-spread consensus that autism is best considered as existing on a spectrum with variable manifestations across lifespan, gender, and intellectual level and/or language.

SUBTYPES SUBSUMED UNDER A SINGLE DIAGNOSIS

In the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013) four PDD subcategories specified in DSM-IV of autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder (syndrome), childhood disintegrative disorder (CDD), and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS) are now subsumed into the one broad category of autism spectrum disorder. The subtype terms will no longer be used diagnostically under the DSM-5.

The PDD subtype Rett's Disorder (syndrome) is excluded from the new ASD category. This is because the DSM focuses on disorders that can be defined behaviourally, without a molecular or biological test (Kurita 2011). Rett's syndrome is a single gene neurological disorder in which those with the condition may go through a phase of social impairment, language regression and repetitive motor mannerisms resembling autism (Rutter and Uher 2012).

Terminology has also changed. The name pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) has now been changed to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The term “mental retardation” has been replaced with the term “intellectual disabilities”.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASDs), PDD-NOS AND ASPERGER SYNDROME

DSM-5 folds Asperger syndrome and PDD-NOS into the category of autism spectrum disorder. The aim is to produce a clearer and simpler diagnostic system with improved recognition and diagnosis for those on the autism spectrum across all ages and ability levels. The main objective of the revision to the DSM relating to ASD was to increase the specificity of diagnosis, that is, make it easier to identify ASD as distinguished from other non-autistic disorders and to increase the stability of diagnosis over time (Skuse 2012). Having a single diagnostic entity avoids the problem of an individual receiving serial or sometimes concurrent, diagnoses of PDD-NOS, autism and Asperger syndrome, depending on the clinician they see or maturation. Numerous studies have reported little qualitative difference between autism disorder and Asperger Disorder subtypes (Broadstock 2014). Happé (2011) suggests that the DSM-5 changes reflect that it is a time to

reintegrate Asperger disorder with the rest of the spectrum and to demand the same level of respect and lack of stigma for individuals across the full range of manifestations of the spectrum.

Removal of Asperger syndrome and PDD-NOS as distinct disorder classifications from the DSM reflects multiple concerns regarding the reliability and application of these diagnoses when applying their DSM-IV diagnostic criteria. These include that: in clinical field trials, ASD experts frequently make different diagnoses based on the same presenting symptoms in the same individual; the boundary between Asperger syndrome and autism is not clear on a population basis; and in up to half of patient diagnoses of autism, Asperger's Disorder and PDD NOS are not stable within the same individual over time (Broadstock 2014).

DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA IN DSM-5

To be diagnosed with ASD, a person needs to fulfil the following criteria (American Psychiatric Association 2013):

1. Persistent deficits in social communication and interaction across multiple contexts, as demonstrated by all of the following:
 1. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, ranging, for example, from abnormal social approach and inability to have normal back-and-forth conversation; to reduced sharing of interests, emotions, or affect; to failure to initiate or respond to social interactions.
 2. Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviours used for social interaction, ranging, for example, from poorly integrated verbal and nonverbal communication; to abnormalities in eye contact and body language or deficits in understanding and use of gestures; to a total lack of facial expressions and nonverbal communication.
 3. Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships, ranging, for example, from difficulties adjusting behaviour to suit various social contexts; to difficulties in sharing imaginative play or in making friends; to absence of interest in peers.
 4. (These criteria can be currently occurring or have occurred in the patient's past. Examples are illustrative, not exhaustive.)
2. Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities, as manifested by at least two of the following:
 1. Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech (e.g., repetitive hand flapping, lining up toys or flipping objects, delayed or immediate parroting of others' speech, idiosyncratic phrases).
 2. Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behaviour (e.g., extreme distress at small changes, difficulties with transitions, rigid thinking patterns, greeting rituals, need to take same route or eat same food every day).
 3. Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus (e.g., a child who is extremely attached to a spoon, an adult who spends hours rewriting specific phrases).
 4. Extremely exaggerated or dulled reactions to sensations or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment (e.g., apparent indifference to pain/temperature, adverse response to specific sounds or textures, excessive smelling or touching of objects, visual fascination with lights or movement).
5. (These criteria can be currently occurring or have occurred in the patient's past. Examples are illustrative, not exhaustive.)
3. Symptoms must be present in the early developmental period. Though, symptoms may not become fully apparent until social demands exceed limited capacities. Symptoms may also be masked by learned strategies in later life.
4. Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning.
5. These disturbances are not better explained by intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) or global developmental delay. Intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder frequently co-occur. Social communication should be below what is expected for general developmental level, in order to make comorbid diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability.

In DSM-5, sensory abnormalities are newly included as a core, diagnostic symptom of the restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour (RRB) domain. This change is based on empirical

research finding that this symptom has sensitivity and specificity as a diagnostic criterion for ASD, and factor analytic evidence that places it in the RRB symptom dimension. This improves the relevance of the criteria to younger children with ASD, because sensory issues are common concerns in this population (Broadstock 2014).

SYMPTOM ONSET

The time of diagnosis may be much later than the time of actual onset of a disorder. The DSM-5 acknowledges that ASD may not manifest itself fully in infancy because of difficulty in identifying early signs, poor parental recall, and minimal social demands made of children in the early years. As requirements for social abilities increase with age, social impairments become more apparent (Lauritsen 2013). For these reasons, the requirement for symptom onset before 3 years has been changed to “the early developmental period” (Broadstock 2014).

PREVALENCE

In recent years, reported frequencies for autism spectrum disorder across U.S. and non- U.S. countries have approached 1% of the population, with similar estimates in child and adult samples. It remains unclear whether higher rates reflect an expansion of the diagnostic criteria of DSM-IV to include subthreshold cases, increased awareness, differences in study methodology, or a true increase in the frequency of autism spectrum disorder (Abdallah and Eissa Saad 2014).

RISK AND PROGNOSTIC FACTORS

The best-established prognostic factors for individual outcome within autism spectrum disorder are presence or absence of associated intellectual disability and language impairment (e.g., functional language by age 5 years is a good prognostic sign) and additional mental health problems. Epilepsy, as a comorbid diagnosis, is associated with greater intellectual disability and lower verbal ability.

Environmental. A variety of nonspecific risk factors, such as advanced parental age, low birth weight, or fetal exposure to valproate, may contribute to risk of autism spectrum disorder.

Genetic and physiological. Heritability estimates for autism spectrum disorder have ranged from 37% to higher than 90%, based on twin concordance rates. Currently, as many as 15% of cases of autism spectrum disorder appear to be associated with a known genetic mutation, with different de novo copy number variants or de novo mutations in specific genes associated with the disorder in different families. However, even when an autism spectrum disorder is associated with a known genetic mutation, it does not appear to be fully penetrant. Risk for the remainder of cases appears to be polygenic, with perhaps hundreds of genetic loci making relatively small contributions (Abdallah and Eissa Saad 2014).

COMORBIDITY

Autism spectrum disorder is frequently associated with intellectual impairment and structural language disorder (i.e., an inability to comprehend and construct sentences with proper grammar), which should be noted under the relevant specifiers when applicable. Many individuals with autism spectrum disorder have psychiatric symptoms that do not form part of the diagnostic criteria for the disorder (about 70% of individuals with autism spectrum disorder may have one comorbid mental disorder, and 40% may have two or more comorbid mental disorders). When criteria for both ADHD and autism spectrum disorder are met, both diagnoses should be given. This same principle applies to concurrent diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and developmental coordination disorder, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and other comorbid diagnoses. Among individuals who are nonverbal or have language deficits, observable signs such as changes in sleep or eating and increases in challenging behaviour should trigger an evaluation for anxiety or depression. Specific learning difficulties (literacy and numeracy) are common, as is developmental coordination disorder.

Medical conditions commonly associated with autism spectrum disorder should be noted under the "associated with a known medical/genetic or environmental/acquired condition" specifier. Such medical conditions include epilepsy, sleep problems, and constipation. Avoidant-restrictive food intake disorder is a fairly frequent presenting feature of autism spectrum disorder, and extreme

and narrow food preferences may persist (Abdallah, Eissa Saad 2014).

CONCLUSION

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is characterized by sustained social impairments in reciprocal social communication and interactions; and repetitive behaviours, interests, or activities. These essential markers of autism spectrum disorder present in early childhood and limit everyday functioning.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) is the 2013 update to the American Psychiatric Association's classification and diagnostic tool. DSM is commonly used to guide the diagnosis of autism (American Psychiatric Association (APA 2000). The fifth edition of the manual, DSM-5, has substantially revised the criteria for the disorder (APA 2013). The new criteria will include individuals previously diagnosed with autistic disorder (AD), Asperger disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS) into a new diagnosis called autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

In DSM-5, sensory abnormalities are newly included as a core, diagnostic symptom of the restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour (RRB) domain. This change is based on empirical research finding that this symptom has sensitivity and specificity as a diagnostic criterion for ASD, and factor analytic evidence that places it in the RRB symptom dimension. This improves the relevance of the criteria to younger children with ASD, because sensory issues are common concerns in this population.

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SUPPORT IN BEREAVEMENT: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR HELPING MOURNERS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Abstract: The process of passing loss and bereavement is a difficult period for any human being. At this particular time, it is important to remember to support the child in dealing with loss and grief. Unfortunately, it can happen that the closest environment, such as family and school is not able to help the mourner properly, especially the children and youth in this silent fight. Support from family and teachers is as needed as help from the various professionals. This article is a review of forms of support in bereaved children and youth, with emphasize on practical methods performed by educators. The paper includes the analysis of forms used in order to help bereaved children in returning to better function in society.

Keywords: bereavement, loss, support in bereavement, forms of support, therapy through science education.

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INTRODUCTION

In the cycle of human life there is a time of great joy connected to its beginnings and sorrow and sadness towards the end of life, dying and death. The grief after death of loved ones and the process of bereavement could be very difficult for all those who were close to the dead person. Losses could be cumulated after several departures of significant ones from family and friends. There are also grief's which are not recognized, postponed in front of difficulties or hidden, as with women who lost their unborn children (Krakowiak 2006). Here and in this article, we will stress the importance and will show how to remember about support of children and teenagers in dealing with loss, grief and bereavement. Young people could suffer grievously, not knowing about reasons of pain and unable to help themselves. Unfortunately, it often happens that the closest environment, such as family and school is not able to help the mourner, especially the young one in this silent fight. This article will try to explore the topic of different types of bereavement, showing main ways of support, touching various approaches, mentioning also the role of religion and spirituality in this process. We will recognize the role of a modern world of cyberspace and more traditional ways of support such as active participation in exercises and science lessons. Some ideas and methods will be also introduced here.

TYPES OF BEREAVEMENT

Each of us experiences loss in different phases of one's life. This feeling is accompanied by the death of a loved one: a parent, grandparent, siblings, or a friend, as well as loss of the beloved pet. The manner, in which a man experiences the process of mourning, undoubtedly depends on the circumstances of the death of that person. In a situation where death occurs suddenly, without any warning and early farewell, anger and regret are felt in relation to the person who could or should protect the deceased from death. However, even if death is a consequence of a long-lasting and serious illness, it is not easy for anybody to accept the loss. Often, despite the chance to prepare for the "inevitable", the possibility of saying goodbye to the patient and telling to him/her important

things, one experience long-lasting stress, anxiety and a sense of loneliness (Kinchin 2001).

According to Doka (1996; 2000) the process of passing on the loss of a close relative is closely related to the age of the young mourner. This does not mean, however, that the older or younger the child, the easier it is for him/her to survive the death of a loved one. A child up to 3 years old usually does not understand what disease and death is. However, he perfectly senses the change in the atmosphere prevailing among other household members. It can then become irritable, withdrawn, it can lose its appetite or soak in the night.

Webb (2010) writes that for children aged 3-5, this awareness of the disease is already greater because child is able to relate it to their own experiences. Then the child starts to ask a lot of questions to understand what caused the disease, or maybe help somehow. Sometimes, he/she assigns the situation to his/her behavior. A child of early school age, despite the fact that he/she is already aware of the principles of functioning of the human body and understands that the disease is not only a kind of cold, but also faulty work of organs, he/she can also blame him/herself for the illness of a loved one, explaining it with his/her behavior. The Author continues that a young people up to 18 years of age are in a difficult, rebellious period of life. Information about the illness and death of a loved one can be received differently. On the one hand, one can get the impression that this young person copes perfectly with the situation. He/she has own duties, which carries out. He/she sets new goals, and works. On the other hand, youngster blames everyone around for everything that happened. This can lead to problems in the school with learning and behavior (Webb 2010).

SUPPORTING MOURNERS IN LOSS

Monroe and Kraus (2007), Oliviere and Monroe (2007) and Krakowiak (2015) write, that in recent years, there has been a particularly noteworthy and recorded increase of publications for people in mourning. Such important changes towards helping these people can be explained by long observations, which recognized mourning as a strong and sometimes even pathogenic situation on both the mental and physical side. The above-mentioned authors and continue that symptoms of

this particular conditions are primarily emotional stress, loss of social functions, increased morbidity and excessive use of health services. In addition, there is growing awareness that the normal process of mourning can last at least a year for most people, and often longer.

Loss and trauma issue in the context of individual support discuss Gear (2014) however earlier, Osterweis et al. (1984) indicated particular support programs which are designed to facilitate the normal process of mourning, and as well as to help people with more serious situations as a high risk of specific related psychological problems or dysfunctional responses to orphanhood. Some of such support programs are directed at people in mourning; others focus on people who share common features of experienced problems. Programs can be designed to help people, families or groups of people in a similar way of mourning. The author continues that mentioned programs are based on institutions such as hospitals, healthcare organizations and mental health centers.

Zhang (2006) suggests that all strategies of help, from consolation through friends to professionally rendered psychotherapy, have the potential for both positive and negative consequences. It seems logical to carry out the research to determine the degree of advancement of the process of mourning and the appropriateness of a particular form of support.

The purpose of such research would be according to Zhang (2006):

- determining the differential impact of interventions on helping those who are mourning during the different phases of the mourning process
- determining the impact of interventions on specific elements of the stress model: the context of the event, personality variables, styles of coping and social support networks
- impact of interventions on people with "high risk", including risk level identification, mitigation actions and concrete results
- the characteristics of different mutual support
- defining the benefits of group support at various stages of the mourning process
- a relationship between self-reported and objectively measured results
- the necessity of using drugs (sedatives, hypnotics and antidepressants) and their

influence on the course of mourning

- the consequences of the various types of interveners in relation to the results
- description of the impact of information about the processes of mourning on the behavior of professionals and behavior, the course of mourning and the results of people in mourning.

Fortunately, apart from not always supportive family and surroundings, and the need to meet a specialist, there are many alternative methods of work. It is possible that this unusual approach to grief will be the key to recovery.

ART SUPPORT

The role of art in broadly meant therapeutic processes discuss Case (1987), Le Count (2000) and Malchiodi (2012). Appleton (2001) and Rogers (2007) analyze supporting the people experiencing trauma. The inseparable elements in the life of every human according to Rogers (2007) is sadness, stories and art. Each of these forms are a way to express own emotions. It often happens that art is the most accurate form of showing what people cannot express in words. Often when one talks about an artistic support model in mourning, one can hear the answers saying that such activities are intended only for children and that the same person has no artistic abilities. This form of support is not just cards and pencils (Rogers 2007). There are also alternative forms that are used in this field.

An inherent task of this type of support is to show the process of changes taking place in the participant's thoughts and actions. Through regular meetings and the creation of a chapter session, one can clearly see the stage of the development of mourning for a given person. These types of support groups are most often opened in hospice dayrooms. They offer the greatest possible involvement on the part of the caregiver, with a very low budget (Scott 2011). Rogers (2007) suggests that the most important thing is to organize the group so that the forms used are safe and adequate to the current needs of the listeners, because despite the common ground of death, not every method of work will be right. Speaking of safety, we mean materials that may be a source of allergic reaction or a risk of injury. Another important element is certainly the number of

volunteers. Certainly, a leader is needed, i.e. a person who proposes a given topic of work. However, in order for every participant to feel appreciated and needed, a listener, a person with a good word or advice is indispensable (Rogers 2007).

MUSIC SUPPORT

The problem of the role of music in the support of people experiencing grief and losses is analyzed by Hilliard (2001), Szulc (2002), Dalton and Krout (2005) and Tung (2014). Szulc (2002) writes that we already know for a long time that music has a positive effect on the pain and anxiety associated with illness and hospitalization (Szulc 2002). The author mentions that there are articles that apart from using music therapy in hospitalization use this method even in dentistry. Losses of friends and loved ones, causes reactions of sadness, regret and mourning. In many people these losses cause depression and cause fear. For some, they cause deeper physical and/or psychological pain. In such cases, a music therapist is a proper person to help. Tung (2014) writes, that music therapists improve the quality of life by focusing on their strengths, abilities and talents, not on deficits and inefficiencies (Tung 2014). By creating the possibility of satisfying creative activity, music therapists make participants feel competent, trustworthy and capable of acting. Music therapy functions according to Szulc (2002) is able to:

- distract attention from pain and anxiety, directing the listener's attention to music that carries comfort,
- provide a musical stimulus for rhythmic breathing,
- offer a rhythmic structure for systematic release from tensions,
- start a positive visual imagination,
- create conditions for deep relaxation,
- change the mood,
- focus on positive thoughts and feelings and on celebrating life.

RELIGIOUS SUPPORT

The experience of sadness and loss is very diverse and certainly depends on the source from which we come from. The issues of a need for spiritual

support while bereavement discuss among other Becvar (1997), Bailey (2002) and Krakowiak (2006; 2015). Kinchin (2001) analyzes relations between death and mourning in the cultural context. Culture according to Kinchin (2001) consists of beliefs, values, traditions and rituals. It is also said that culture is a separate worldview, or a basic set of beliefs that describe how the world works and what is the role of the human being in the world. In societies in which most people adhere to the same religion, beliefs shape the cultural worldview. Beliefs also offer to the people the sense of own existence, give hope for eternal life. The author continues that, religion and culture also affect the mourners' approach to death (Kinchin 2001). For example, some people do not feel the pain of losing someone so badly, if they believe in life after death. Ungureanu (2010) writes, that in some cultures, it is believed that the spirit of the dead directly affects the living, which allows one to enjoy the closeness of the deceased, although he/she is no longer physically present (Ungureanu 2010). The literature says that focusing on getting to know one's own culture, as well as being interested in the diversity of beliefs around the world, may allow mourners to free themselves from the pain of loneliness. Rituals give the opportunity to express their emotions, offer help through the local community or family. Death itself is a kind of chaos for home and loved ones. It causes confusion. Rituals give a sense of certainty, predictability and apparent even normality. They also give tips on what to do, how to function at a given moment of loss (AMTOK 2018).

INTERNET SUPPORT

Mutual support or self-help groups are associations of people who have the same problem, situation or life situation and who unite to help each other (Webb 2010). However, not every person nowadays wants to make such relationships "in the real world". Therefore, the use of the internet is an offer of support for orphans. In addition to the sense of security associated with staying in its own four angles, the user of such a form can also spread his views with other users outside of his country. According to Musambira (2007) online support groups provide their members with:

- personal change based on identification and reciprocity

- access to a set of specialized information
- the ability to share coping techniques based on mourning
- a chance to educate not only other people with similar problems, but also professionals and the public
- the ability to help others by providing specific help and creating a model to follow.

EDUCATION OF SCIENCE SUPPORT

Science can be also involved in educational support, especially for children and youths mourning, is the use of science. Physics, chemistry and other scientific disciplines, through experiments and observations, support the process of passing mourning among young mourners. These classes, through the lack of direct intervention by a specialist - psychologist and a wide range of classes, allow the mourner to open up conversations and to build the confidences with the guardian. The method of psycho-education allows the young mourner to enjoy scientific work on the project, thanks to which he/she ceases to think about temporal problems and becomes willing to cooperate, or even compete with the peers. Scientific riddles also allow to bring the young mourners closer to his/her guardians, which can strengthen the relationships of all participants: between the child-caregiver and caregiver-guardian. In addition, this form allows curiosity for the student to learn and develop the imagination. It also prevents educational problems at school. This report has its application in Poland. The Hospice Foundation in Gdansk conducts experimental science classes with orphaned children, young mourners supported by the Orphaned Children's Fund. The science classes are organized once a month with various representatives of science – the scholars. Together with them young mourners learn about the fascinating world of scientific experiments. These meetings take place both at the Volunteer Center, as well as at the lecture rooms of universities, in laboratories and museums. In this way young mourners learn about the existence of such places and opportunities for fun in the world of science (Łęgowska 2017).

CONCLUSION

There is no single proven way of supporting a child or adolescent in such a difficult period of time as

mourning. Usually, there is no need for specialist intervention in the process of dealing with loss. A natural area of help is support from the closest environment, family and in the case of children of the school environment. Support can be provided in various forms mentioned above, even emotional support. Essential is to create an atmosphere of understanding, security and trust. Sometimes, however, the immediate surroundings are not enough. One should then ask someone outside for help. The most common methodology for working with a mourner is a meeting with a specialist psychologist and in the case of children with trained pedagogues. However, as it turns out, not only regular conversations with a psychologist can free a person from the pain of loneliness. There are many alternative methods of fighting with oneself and own fears. Mourner can take artistic or music classes, get interested in a new culture, travel and deepen own beliefs about the world, and broaden own curiosity about the world through education of science creativity.

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THE STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL FOR THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF MINDFULNESS TO ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AND TEST ANXIETY

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating effect of self-esteem in the relationship of mindfulness to academic resilience, and test anxiety. Eight hundred undergraduate students volunteered to participate to the study. Students were recruited from the Cairo University. Faculty members invited students to participate in the study, and informed consent was also obtained from the willing participants. The sample consisted of 230 males and 570 females with mean age 19.5 years (SD=3.0 years). The Connor Davidson-Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory–State Anxiety Scale were used to collect data. To examine the relationships between mindfulness, self-esteem, academic resilience, and test anxiety, correlational analysis was used. The mediation role of self-esteem was tested using two steps Structural equation modelling (SEM) procedure using AMOS 18.0. Findings indicated that the correlations between mindfulness, self-esteem and academic resilience were positive while with test anxiety it was in the different path. As predicted, mindfulness was positively associated with academic resilience and negatively associated with test anxiety.

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Keywords: structural equation model, self-esteem, mindfulness, academic resilience, test anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is considered to be a state of consciousness that incorporates self-awareness and attention with core characteristics of being open, non-reactive, and non-judgmental (Brown and Ryan 2003). It is a skill, which enhances adaptive coping to stressful events by the self-regulation of attention towards the immediate experience, and an open and accepting orientation towards one's experience of the present (Bishop et al. 2004). Brown and Ryan (2003) further conceptualized mindfulness as an enhanced awareness and attention of the current activity or present reality. Mindfulness can also be considered as a trait, or stable tendency to be mindful in everyday life. Mindfulness involves the ability to pay attention to the moment, on purpose, without judgment (Kabat-Zinn 2003) and can be regarded as a state or disposition; specifically, individuals can experience moments of mindfulness (state mindfulness) and/or maintain a general ability to be mindful (dispositional mindfulness).

Mindfulness, Academic Resilience, and Test Anxiety

A review of the literature revealed an association between mindfulness and resilience. Chavers (2013) found a significant correlation between mindfulness and resilience, with mindfulness being a significant predictor of resilience. Van (2001) states that mindfulness-based training may be an efficacious intervention for increasing resilience. Keye and Pidgeon (2013) suggest that mindfulness and academic self-efficacy have a significant impact on resilience. Mindfulness-based interventions have been incorporated in schools for anxiety reduction, and recently, studies have examined the effectiveness of mindfulness-based approaches to help elementary (age 9- to 12-years-old) and secondary school students (age 13- to 15-years-old) manage anxiety in test situations (e.g. Arjunan and Joseph 2016). Niss (2012) explored the effectiveness of a brief Mindfulness Intervention on Math's Test Anxiety and Exam Scores in a High School Population. Participants took part in a brief guided meditation directly before sitting their math exam. Participants intervention showed significant reductions in anxiety, as well as improvements in exam scores from before to after the intervention. Cunha and Paiva (2012) research explored the

extent to which individuals with high TA were distinguished from those students with low TA in terms of self-criticism, acceptance and mindfulness skills. Their results revealed that students with high TA had significantly higher levels of negative self-criticism as well as significantly lower values of acceptance and mindfulness.

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of his or her own self-worth, and is considered a relatively stable personality trait that varies between individuals (Waterman 1992). Mindfulness is also associated with higher levels of self-esteem (Brown and Ryan 2003). High levels of mindfulness should thus serve as a buffer to low self-esteem, with individuals higher in mindfulness more able to step back from potentially negative thoughts about the self (Pepping, O'Donovan and Davis 2013).

Buckner, Mezzacappa and Beardslee (2003) have observed that resilient adolescents had higher self-esteem. Coleman and Hendry (1990) stated that those possessing high self-esteem have the tendency to be happy, healthy, productive and successful, make persistent effort to overcome the difficulties, sleep better at nights, are less prone to develop ulcer, show less tendency against accepting others and the pressures of their peers; on the other hand, those having low self-respect, are individuals who are worried, pessimistic, having negative thoughts about future and having tendency of being unsuccessful. On the other hand, Zeynep (2011) stated that the individuals having low self-respect exhibit the characteristics, such as expecting failure, being nervous, making less effort, and may ignore the important things in life, also make charges such as worthless and untalented against themselves when they are unsuccessful.

It is hypothesized that self-esteem mediates the relation of mindfulness to academic resilience and test anxiety. Thus, mindfulness would predict increased levels of self-esteem, which would, in turn, predict enhanced academic resilience and reduced test anxiety.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Eight hundred undergraduate students volunteered to participate to the study. Students were recruited from the Cairo University. Faculty members invited students to participate in the study, and informed consent was also obtained from the willing participants. The sample consisted of 230 males and 570 females with mean age 19.5 years ($SD=3.0$ years). In the lecture rooms, participants were administered the paper-and-pencil questionnaires. It took approximately 20 minutes for the students to complete the questionnaires. Confidentiality of the responses was confirmed.

MEASURES

MINDFULNESS

The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) (Walach et al. 2006) is a 14-item scale measuring an individual's experience of mindfulness. A total mindfulness score is given by summing participants' scores across all items, with greater scores indicating greater levels of mindfulness. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.93 in this study.

RESILIENCE

The Connor Davidson-Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). The CD-RISC (Connor & Davidson, 2003) is a 25-item scale which rates how individuals have felt over the last month and their stress coping ability. A total score is given by summing an individual's response across all items with higher scores indicating higher levels of resilience. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.91 in this study.

TEST ANXIETY

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory–State Anxiety Scale. The State Anxiety Scale from the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is a widely used self-report measure assessing adolescents', college students', and adults' current state of anxiety (Spielberger 1989). The state scale contains 20 items for individuals to indicate how they feel in a particular moment in time and takes 5–10 minutes to complete. Items include statements such as 'I am

worried' or 'I feel upset' and participants indicate their response on a four-point scale (0=not at all; 4=very much so). This measure has been shown to have high internal consistency ($\alpha=0.86-0.96$) and test-retest reliability ranging from 0.65 to 0.76. In the present study, Cronbach alphas ranged from 0.88 to 0.90 pre-post-intervention, with a test-retest correlation of 0.78.

DATA ANALYSIS

To examine the relationships between mindfulness, self-esteem, academic resilience, and test anxiety, correlational analysis was used. The mediation role of self-esteem was tested using two step Structural equation modeling (SEM) procedure using AMOS 18.0. The measurement model was calculated. After getting satisfactory results of the measurement model, we tested the structural model in the AMOS Software. Goodness-of-fit criteria were used in the current study that acknowledged the potential for acceptable fit ($\chi^2/df<3$, CFI>0.90, SRMR<0.10, RMSEA<0.08) and excellent fit ($\chi^2/df<2$, SRMR<0.08, RMSEA<0.06, CFI>0.95).

RESULTS

MEASUREMENT MODEL

The results of the data analysis indicating the mean standard deviation and inter-correlation matrix of all variables are shown in Table 1. The correlations between mindfulness, self-esteem and academic resilience were positive while with test anxiety it was in the different path.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Variables

Measure	M	S D	1	2	3	4
1.mindfulness	3.2	1.02		0.32**	0.30**	-0.28**
2. self esteem	3.7	2.00	0.32**		0.36**	0.38**
3.resilience	3.1	1.09	0.30**	0.34**		0.37**

4. Test anxiety	3.00	1.08	-0.28**	-0.25**	-0.27**	
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STRUCTURAL MODEL

AMOS 21.0 was used to test the proposed structural relationships among study variables. A partially mediated model (Model 1) with self-esteem as a mediator of mindfulness to academic resilience and test anxiety was tested. Model 1 with direct paths from mindfulness to academic resilience, and test anxiety showed excellent fit to data: $\chi^2=62.02$, $df=41$, $p=0.054$; RMSEA=0.030; SRMR=0.018; and CFI=0.994. The results of Model 1 showed that the direct path coefficient from mindfulness to academic resilience ($b=0.004$, $p=0.834$) was not significant and therefore I tested Model 2 after trimming the insignificant path from mindfulness to academic resilience. The results of

Model 2 also indicated excellent fit to data: $\chi^2=59.02$, $df=44$, $p=0.068$; RMSEA=0.031; SRMR=0.017; and CFI=0.995. The Model 2 was found better than Model 1, as Model 2 showed excellent fit to data with less estimated parameters ($\Delta\chi^2(1, N=800)=0.03$, $p>0.05$).

Another model, (Model 3) was tested having academic resilience, and test anxiety as mediators of mindfulness to self-esteem. Model 3 fit indices were found inferior to fit indices of Model 1 and Model 2: $\chi^2=61.37$, $df=38$, $p=0.007$; RMSEA=0.039; SRMR=0.022; and CFI=0.963. I tested Model 4 with mindfulness mediating the relationship of self-esteem to academic resilience and test anxiety. In this model (Model 4) mindfulness didn't play mediating role in the relationship of self-esteem to academic resilience as the 95% confidence intervals contained zero [-0.060, 0.061]. The fit indices of the four alternative models are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The fit indices of the four alternative models

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	AIC	ECVI
Model 1	58.02	42	1.40	0.030	0.018	0.994	106.12	0.244
Model 2	59.02	45	1.34	0.031	0.017	0.995	103.22	0.237
Model 3	61.37	42	1.46	0.039	0.022	0.963	118.32	0.254

Note: N = 462, RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation; SRMR= standardized root-mean-square residual; CFI=comparative fit index; AIC=Akaike information criterion; and ECVI=expected cross-validation index.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the mediating effect of self-esteem in the relationship of mindfulness to academic resilience, and test anxiety. As predicted, mindfulness was positively associated with academic resilience and negatively associated with test anxiety. Results reported in the current study are consistent with previously reported relationships between resilience and self-

esteem Buckner, Mezzacappa and Beardslee (2003), Gordon Rouse, Ingersoll, and Orr (1998), mindfulness and resilience (Chavers 2013), Mindfulness and Test Anxiety (Niss 2012). The results reported in the current study are consistent with the findings of Badri Bajaj's study (2017) which indicated that self-esteem acted as a full mediator of the association between mindfulness and resilience. Self-esteem also acted as a partial mediator between mindfulness and stress.

It was found that self-esteem mediated in the relationship of mindfulness to academic resilience, and test anxiety. This means that individuals with high levels of mindfulness have higher levels of self-esteem, academic resilience and low levels of test anxiety.

These results support Flach's (1989) theory of resilience that suggests mindfulness and self-esteem to be part of the repertoire of psychological strengths, which allow individuals to successfully navigate change.

The current findings have implications for future research as they expand upon current knowledge of self-esteem the mediator in the relationship of mindfulness to academic resilience, and test anxiety.

Through my study I was able to support that a resilient individual was high on self-esteem and also perceived his surroundings to be protective. Positive self-esteem could be seen as an essential feature of mental health and also as a protective factor in the field of health and social behaviour. In contrast, negative self-esteem leads to problems, such as depression, anxiety, violence, high risk behaviours and substance use (Sakshi and Upasana 2013).

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