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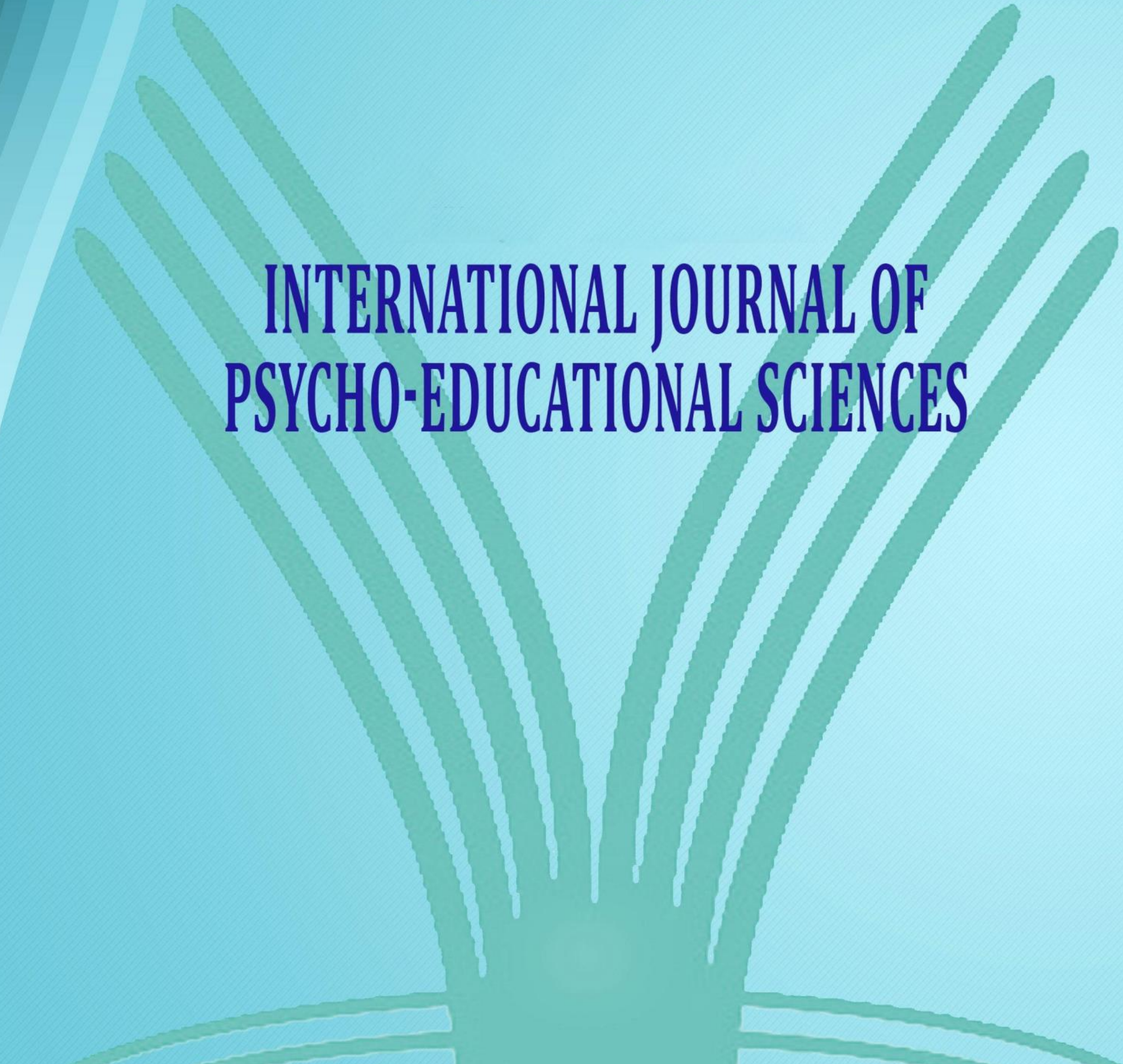

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- To initiate, conduct, and support research in all psycho-educational fields of knowledge;
- To assemble all who are interested in these fields for an exchange of ideas and experiences;
- To disseminate research findings;
- To provide a database for members and researchers.

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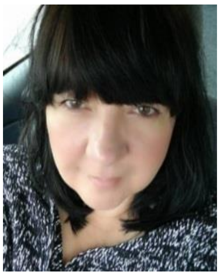

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Quo vadis Polish Education ?

Bogusław Śliwerski*[1]

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Abstract

Democracy is one of heterogeneous and, at the same time, ambiguous beings which make up a set of phenomena that can be observed in many modern societies. Since the dawn of time pedagogy has been dealing with public matters and interests connected with people or institutions which wielded power or authority over students or those who are involved in socialization and education processes. Thus, particularly now – after so many years of social and political transformation of the Third Republic of Poland, it must define its contribution to those transformations and express its opinion on democracy and its relationships with teaching sciences and art of education. Studies on relationships among pedagogy, social and political processes should have a crucial meaning not only for scientists but also for those exercising power so that they can answer the question: Where is Polish education going to? Is there in Polish education any place for democracy as a value, so for: participation, justice, equality, making joint decisions, working in teams, cooperation, division of authority, enhancement of social roles, mutual respect, diversity and variety?

Keywords: Theory of education, system of education, educational politics, educational macro policy, democracy.

Introduction

I am trying to find an answer to the question: Is Polish educational policy involved in the process of democratization of the society and its own institutions? Since Poland regained its political sovereignty, educational goals described in the Act on Education (1991) have been treated as something obvious. Yet, paradoxically, they are not consistently realized. “Educational subjects (legislative, control and executive) are not obliged to realize any goals under the Act on Education “(Król, Kuzior, Łyszczarz 2009, p. 13). The above act only suggests that they should realize the following goals: make the school provide each student with possibility to develop, prepare each student to fulfil family and social duties bearing in mind principles of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and liberty. However, the educational system is centrally controlled although it is said to be autonomous. Contrary to basic upbringing principles applied in democratic societies, school has become an institution which is conformed to the state and its authority and not to its students, teachers and other local groups (Śliwerski, 2009, 2015).

A Review of Democratization Process of Polish Educational System

Golden Age and Transformation

“The Golden Age” of the Polish school, educational system, including teachers of the Third Republic of Poland, was very short as it lasted only until the year 1991, that is the time when the first post-socialist act on the educational system was passed. Then, the social and political transition was accompanied by a genuine revival of the Polish school, all its segments required for its proper functioning in the last decade of the 20th century. It was a period of romantic hope, granted by Prof. H. Samsonowicz, the Minister of Education, for the first time - detotalitarized education. It was a time of hope for regaining education not for the next ruling party, political parties and disputes over possible indoctrination of the society, but hope for young generations, their teachers and parents. The school of the transformation period was supposed to stop being an institution of a non-democratic state, striving to liberate itself from new forms of political and ideological domination, and turn towards humanism, dialogue and democracy. The idea of a school institution was to maximize development potential in all students, help them to achieve the greatest possible success and enhance culture capital. All these elements were supposed to help students become successful in their future life (Śliwerski 2015, Szymański 2008).

Change proposals often encountered resistance of politicians. Also teachers and trade union officials were unwilling towards the changes and even sabotaged them. Continually, destabilization accompanied a revolutionary approach; attempts to introduce reforms meshed with the evolutionary nature of changes. The choice of these phenomena depended on preferences of particular governments so they were different for a different ruling party. What had been decreased, enriched or highlighted by predecessors was later increased, depleted or ignored by their political successors. A reform of the central subject, i.e. the Ministry of Education, was not taken into consideration. Politicians who exercised power in that period followed a principle that said that bureaucracy does not reform itself, but maintains the status quo and even extends the sphere of particular benefits of the ruling fraction. Institutions of public education should be "a flywheel" of social, constitutional, cultural and economic transformations of the country but in this case they were change inhibitors, i.e. they delayed the transformations. Despite legal premises which were introduced into the educational legislation, tremendous efforts and underground struggle of prominent representatives of culture, science and education in Poland when the country was still a socialist one, were never appreciated or properly used over the long transformation period.

Research on Educational Macro Policy

Scientific studies on educational macro policy in Poland which I have been conducting for above thirty years allow me to draw conclusions that education is orientated mainly towards teaching about democracy and for democracy but not in a democratic way. Such an approach is also an element of "a mysterious programme" of the Polish educational system, according to which theocratic methods should be applied in the process of teaching about democracy and for democracy. The above approach ignores a genuine involvement and experiencing democratic processes and results of these processes by students, teachers and parents. The document called *Education for democratic citizenship 2001 – 2004*, issued by the Council of Europe, provides guidelines concerning teaching and learning conducted by schools and outside the school system in democracy, about democracy and for democracy (Huddelston, E., Garabagiu, A., 2005). Not only post-socialist countries but also those which have longer enjoyed democratic traditions, including Poland, were encouraged to build democratic structures with engagement of those involved in education.

The Hungarian Institute of Social Studies TARKI carried out a survey among citizens of post-socialist countries, in which they asked a question: Which is the better system of government: democracy or socialism? Only Czech citizens (52%) supported democracy. The percentage of respondents who appeared to be advocates of democracy was the following: Estonians – 37%, Slovakians and Romanians – 30%, Poles – 29%, Hungarians – 28%, Ukrainians – 26%, Belarusians and Slovenians – 22%, Bulgarians – 21%, and Russians – 13%. The most alarming is the fact that many respondents do not care how power is exercised in their countries. Such an attitude of indifference was observed in citizens of the following countries: Belarus – 52%, Slovenia – 48%, Ukraine – 43%, Poland – 42%, Estonia – 37%, Hungary – 36%, Russia - 35%, Bulgaria – 30% and Romania and Slovakia – 21%.(*Nostalgia za komunizmem* 2009).

Discussion

General Remarks

27 years following the transformation, Poles do not positively evaluate democratic methods of exercising power. Utopian thinking mixed with a necessity to take political

decisions, with lethargy and incompetence of many officials of the educational sector, with voluntarism and mythically interpreted belief in realization of great issues. Ethics was clearly separated from politics, which was becoming only a play of interests. Its subsequent acts were played by different protagonists who were trying to make the society (their audience) support changes which were just proposed or which were already being implemented. Many a time education has appeared to be a human and material structure, an ideal means for enhancement of authority for those who exercised it. Besides, it was also a challenge for politicians who had opportunities to abuse their authority. Politicians did not finish the constitutional reform which was supposed to turn the whole educational system into a democratic and social one. Subjects did not undergo any revolutionary changes, either, which means that students, teachers, parents and supporters of these places, e.g. scouting instructors, priests, guardians – sports coaches, etc. were deprived of social self-realization, both individual and collective. Negligence of the reforms proposed by the Solidarity movement in 1980 – 1991 resulted in:

- politicized system of education,
- inhibiting the process of decentralization of the educational system (statism),
- immunizing education against social control,
- limiting autonomy of teachers, parents and students,
- consolidation of educational and upbringing illusions (Śliwerski 2009, 2010, 2013).

Ideological Context of Education

Educational macro policy is closely connected with ideological wars which have been waged by political parties since 1991. For this purpose parties use the educational system, which serves as a means of indoctrination and realization of ideological programmes. Employees of the Ministry of Education, who are replaced by some other officials after subsequent parliamentarian elections, which results in a change of the ruling party, try not only to attract advocates of the ruling political party but also manipulate subjects of the educational system in the name of political correctness. It is just political correctness that is the reason why education spheres are involved in various conflicts, concerning curriculum (e.g. a required reading list, change in teaching and upbringing issues), outlook on life (secular upbringing and implementing religious elements into the upbringing process, sexual vs. pro-family education), and the structure of the system (state vs. public financing, closing down and opening schools, modifications in types of schools). As a consequence of those never-ending conflicts and top-down implementation or withdrawal of certain reforms or changes, Polish education is either weakened by the ruling party or by parties which are running for office, or politics and ruling parties are defeated by education.

A dual system of supervising education by local administration (management body controlled by the party elected in elections of local administration) and by central administration (pedagogical supervision held by chief education officers who are appointed by the minister of education) is the greatest disaster for regional educational policy if the local government consists of politicians who do not belong to the ruling party but the opposing one (coalition). Frequently this opposition might result from personal conflicts whose reasons are unknown to the public. The conflicts however, do not allow to realize certain goals or at least, make this realization difficult. There is no clear division of tasks and competencies in the two different administrations. They cannot initiate cooperation and even inhibit realization of assigned tasks.

Since 1989 there have been 19 different ministers of education. In their policy they postponed political processes, rejected them at all or pretended to be implementing some changes. On the 20th anniversary of the Polish transformation a sociologist, P. Śpiewak

(2013), related to this observation and said: “we slightly resemble savages living in ruins of socialism. Although the era of the People’s Republic of Poland symbolically finished 20 years ago, we still live in a post-statist society where conditions which are close to natural, are masked by great and ambitious statist structures and these inhibit rather than accelerate some phenomena in education, health care and public administration”(Śpiewak 2013).

A very balanced battle is still being fought and its opponents demonstrate completely conflicting interests or preferences and try to get rid of each other. Each decision and change were in the opinion of the subsequent ruling fraction unprepared, or due to little time only partly prepared, or finally, implemented too late or too slowly. Factual arguments were not important. What really mattered were political and party preferences or commitments of subsequent officers managing the educational system. Skarga (2008) called the characteristic method of exercising authority (…)“a revolution of the jealous”. No matter you wielded power or belonged to the opposing party. Whoever dealt with implementing changes in the educational system, tried to “delete” projects of changes or real achievements made by predecessors (considered enemies or hostile opponents) from their memory. By despising the achievements, ignoring or destroying prior positive changes, the new administrators felt satisfied”(Skarga 2008, p.24).

In macro policy of the educational system, many of those responsible for this sector demonstrate vindictiveness and jealousy. These qualities of character drive them to destroy their enemies. No matter you wielded power or belonged to the opposing party. Whoever dealt with implementing changes in the educational system, tried to “delete” projects of changes or real achievements made by predecessors (considered enemies or hostile opponents) from their memory. By despising the achievements, ignoring or destroying prior positive changes, the new administrators felt satisfied. Germans call such attitude Schadenfreude (E. von Braunmühl 1978). A consequence of inventing new project and ideas and rejecting some others which were considered unneeded was a waste of public money and efforts. However, nobody was made responsible for the waste. The school as an institution is neither supposed to involve in a dialogue with its students nor follow the principle of subjectivity, solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice or liberty. However, it is a common belief that relationships between officials exercising power in the educational system and school principals, relationships between school principals and teachers and, finally relationships between teachers and students and the students’ parents must be based on formal authority (powers, institution) that occupies a higher position in hierarchy and the authority is identified with certain obedience or conformity, which is however against the idea of democracy. It is more probable that an authoritarian society will create more favourable conditions for producing authoritarian personalities which will be submissive to the state authority.

School

Lack of genuine autonomy in the school and the educational system, as Radziewicz (1988) wrote at the end of the 1980s in his dissident work, makes them remain farther from human life and turn them into institutional environments rather than educational. “That is why, students emigrate internally; they resort to alcohol, drugs but first of all, they play truant, escape from school as if it were a prison (…). Why do they behave like that? Because they do not feel like home. They think everything around is hostile or at least unwilling or indifferent towards them. It is an institution. They escape to people, no matter what kind of people they are” (Radziewicz 1988, p. 5). At those times the educational system and teachers were immunized against social control. Consequently, the ruling authorities possessed almost unrestricted powers, which allowed them to act against teachers, students and their parents, who were deprived of any possibilities to appeal to the public and expect any help from it. Despite constitutional changes which occurred in our country this problem was not solved. School self-governments only apparently influence the process of socialization and have the right to co-manage schools. Students are sometimes assigned tasks, but those are usually connected with organizing self-service in school canteens, participating in decorating the school building for various school galas or national holidays or organizing free time at schools (e.g. discotheques, balls, festivities, sports competitions etc.).

Contemporary Polish school is characterized with apparent solidarity. Actually, factors which unite it are fear and constraint rather than common consciousness, authenticity, good will, professionalism or unity of human hearts. Teachers and school principals cannot agree for democratic ideas to permeate school environment because in their opinion, schools are not supposed to propagate such ideas. As a consequence, those who are ruled are not those who rule. Students are still not invited to any discussions regarding their matters. Also, students' parents who are their best advocates and defenders of their interests, are ignored in such discussions. They are not allowed to do much, except for providing financial help in order to save schools from complete economic decline and infrastructural misery. Teachers are not interested in making their own profession autonomous but they are naive by believing that trade unions will solve the problem for them (Nowakowska-Siuta, Śliwerski, 2015).

Teachers

Provisions of an act on education, under which tasks assigned for the school board are carried out by the teachers board in schools or other educational centres in which such a school board was not established, appeared to be another factor inhibiting the process of transforming public education into social education. No head teacher needs another body which will co-decide and give opinions, if by law, he or she is granted the right to autocratically exercise power. Hardly any teachers, students or students' parents know the educational law well enough to try to demand rights or execute claims against those exercising authority in schools. School principals did not inform parents or students on their rights. Teachers, on the other hand, did not want to be initiators of bottom-up changes, which would make them devote more time to non-teaching activities in schools (when their extremely low salaries are an affront to their dignity).

A teachers board is not a democratic body because since totalitarian times its head has been the school principal, so the employer. A student self-government, like a parent board, have no factual (legal) possibilities of executing resolutions, provisions or other claims against a school principal and teachers, which is obvious if parents want to contribute to changes or modifications regarding management methods. Any forms of autonomy are created centrally. Even if they allowed to be created in a bottom-up way, (e.g. a parent board, self-government, school board), their tasks and range of activities are determined by central authorities. Consequently, due to controversies and limited powers, any resistance against centrally implemented projects or educational policy of the state, demonstrated by particular education subjects is considered an attack on the state.

Since 1991 two opposing approaches towards education have been observed. In practice, the education segment is either administered by advocates of authoritarianism, who want the segment to be state-managed and instrumentally administered. According to the opposing approach the education segment should be open to democratic ideas, social and characterized with subjectivity. Unfortunately, as a consequence of consolidation of the first approach, the process of building autonomy and converting the education segment into a social one was somehow "cemented" and blocked. Kwieciński (1990) warned against such a phenomenon as early as in 1990 by saying that "democracy does not create itself. A destruction of the totalitarian system in Poland does not automatically open doors to democracy. The school might become an unconscious or consciously created and manipulated tool used to inhibit development of the society and prevent its walk towards democracy" (Kwieciński 1990, p. 2).

Unfortunately a lot of chances were wasted: time, high motivation, involvement of many people who cared about education – teachers and scientists, material and financial resources. But first and foremost, any creativity was thwarted and the authority severely undermined. And this destructive process is still going on. Teachers got used to the fact that any time a different party takes office, they have to leave behind what they have been recently involved in. It will be more reasonable to dissociate themselves from their prior activities and apologize for hasty support of the last government. Such a policy results in finding new, loyal advocates of the authority, replacing employees in educational supervision with new personnel and maintaining a close relationship between the membership of the ruling party and apolitical service in the Polish educational system. Due to it, local communities had an opportunity to confront real authority and achievements of chief education officers, made in the field of education, with their political connections, which did not affect results of the contest in any way.

Education Currently

The Polish education in 2016 is thus only partly public and educational policy of the state is anti-democratic. Schools are financed from local taxes but the central government deals with education and teaching processes as well as manages the education sector. Over the 27 years of transformation the Polish education has not experienced a reform strategy, which Kwieciński (2014) called (…)"a planned and positive change in cooperation", a cooperation of everyone with everyone (science with practice, administration with science, practice with authorities and administration and authorities with all of them) which would be far from political divisions and aimed at building democratic and humanistic education"(Kwieciński 2014, p. 22). Components of the educational system, teachers, pedagogical supervision, parents and their children (students), the Church, trade union members and politicians are still unrelated to each other. The educational system lacked political unity which might be perceived as a social approval of solving educational problems in an amicable way, or as Michael Fullan says, an approval of carrying out positive policy which focuses not on rejecting reforms or their top-down implementation but on a few important priorities which should be properly implemented and having other additional priorities at hand so that they can be immediately implemented if there was such a need (Potulicka, 2000, p. 155).

The school of the transformation period converts from a school, being an institution of a non-democratic state into a school which is striving clumsily and ineffectively to liberate itself from new forms of political and ideological domination, and turn towards humanism, dialogue and democracy. The school committed itself to shaping social and moral life of young people, a duty which had been previously carried out by a family. However, it did not manage to work out an ideological compromise with all subjects responsible for education because advocates of one ideology were always dissatisfied with it. Even an introduction of a school voucher did not provide education in schools offering a consistent system in terms of religion and morality or in schools which would be solely secular and free from any transcendence since a state school cannot be, particularly in small towns and villages, so much axiologically and ideologically different.

Macro policy of educational authorities maintains statist and fundamentalism-oriented way of teaching and upbringing. Of at least five strategies of education reformation which make up the theory of social change, only one dominates. It is a top-down model, which has been dominant since the 19th century. It is identified with an authoritarian method of managing educational institutions and due to this model educational institutions are perceived as very formal and with a fixed organizational character. It is characterized with a vertical hierarchy of the whole system and its subsystems and its territorial range can be different. Maintaining the vertical system of education management might make the whole education dysfunctional in critical situations, leads to bureaucracy, organizational confusion, conflicts over competencies, cooperation problems with a self-government, and what is highly important, social control of the mismanagement is to great extent limited. Such is the idea of statism which is identified with depriving a human being of not only possessions but also his ego. The process of making schools state schools, which is against provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and the Act on Education, is used by subsequent ruling authorities to change the nature of man and convert teachers, students and their parents into “a state-owned property”.

Conclusion

What reforms should be implemented in the Polish educational system? Education must become a common and national priority, not affected by any political divisions. Thus, the following changes should be introduced into educational macro policy.

- self-limiting state authority by basing education management on three principles which are related to each other: decentralization, autonomy and subsidiarity;
- delegating competences and granting financial resources to local governments;
- creating school administrative personnel who will be stable and resistant to political changes, well-qualified and competent so efficient, contributing to a long-term development strategy of education and an improvement of education quality, so effective and finally, providing students with high quality educational offers, so friendly to citizens – parents and children.
- eliminating the class-lesson system of teaching.

It is necessary to finish the democratic revolution in Poland in the field of education as well as revolution of subjects. Such a step will completely eliminate the principle of centralism and will enable to create grounds for further decentralization and development of autonomous structures. It is also highly important to introduce mechanisms of non-antagonistic competition in educational services so that potential innovations or pedagogical experiments can be commonly applied and are not treated as reasons for exclusion of other competing parties from the fight for approval and extra privileges. We live in a post-political society, in which differences and conflicts will always exist. However, it does not mean that its rulers have the right to inhibit expression of these conflicts and differences. Any authority will always do its best to exclude its opponents or at least lessen their strength if it is not prevented by structural and legal instruments.

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Autonomy-Supportive Interventions: Promoting Self-Determined Learning

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Abstract

Promoting self-determination enables the implementation of strategies based upon research in positive psychology and strengths-based, positive approaches to disability. This article provides an overview of the self-determination construct and discuss Self-Determination Theory and Causal Agency Theory, theoretical frameworks that inform the development of self-determination and the creation of environments that support self-determination and autonomous motivation. We then provide information about and evidence supporting the implementation of an autonomy-supportive intervention, the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI).

Keywords: Self determined learning, supportive intervention, Causal Agency Theory

Introduction

Autonomy-Supportive Interventions: Promoting Self-Determined Learning

For the past quarter century, we have conducted research on the self-determination construct in the disability context, and engaged in efforts to design and evaluate the impact of interventions to promote self-determination on outcomes for youth with disabilities. Recently, Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Forber-Pratt, Little and Lopez (2015) introduced Causal Agency Theory as a means to better align work on self-determination in the disability context with research in motivation theory (Self-Determination Theory) and to describe the development of self-determination. This article provides an overview of the self-determination construct in the context of human agentic theories, self-determination in motivation, Causal Agency Theory, and a model of the development of self-determination. We then provide information about and evidence supporting the implementation of an autonomy-supportive intervention, the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI).

Self-Determination

Shogren and colleagues (2015) conceptualized self-determination as a general psychological construct within the organizing structure of theories of human agentic behavior. Human agentic theories "share the meta-theoretical view that organismic aspirations drive human behaviors" (Little, Snyder, & Wehmeyer, 2006, p. 61). An organismic perspective views people as active contributors to, or agents of, their behavior. An agentic person is the "origin of his or her actions, has high aspirations, perseveres in the face of obstacles, sees more and varied options for action, learns from failures, and overall, has a greater sense of well-being" (Little, Hawley, Henrich, & Marsland, 2002, p. 390). An agentic person engages in self-regulated and goal-directed action, they "plot and navigate a chosen course through the uncertainties and challenges of the social and ecological environments… continuously interpreting and evaluating actions and their consequences" (Little et al., 2002, p. 390). This continually evolving and actively monitored self-system gives rise to a sense of personal agency, or of the agentic self. The agentic self has a "sense of personal empowerment, which involves both knowing and having what it takes to achieve one's goals" (Little et al., 2002, p. 390).

An organismic perspective views people as active contributors to, or authors of their behavior, where behavior is described as self-regulated and goal-directed action. Such actions are defined as purposive and self-initiated activities (Brandtstädter, 1998; Chapman, 1984; Harter, 1999). As outlined by Little et al. (2006), human agentic actions are (1) motivated by biological and psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Hawley, 1999; Hawley & Little, 2002; Little et al., 2002); (2) directed toward self-regulated goals that service short- and long-term biological and psychological needs; (3) propelled by understandings of links among agents, means, and ends (Chapman, 1984; Little, 1998; Skinner, 1995, 1996), and guided by general action-control behaviors that entail self-chosen forms and functions (Little, Lopez, & Wanner, 2001; Skinner & Edge, 2002; Vanlede, Little, & Card, 2006); (4) those that precipitate self-determined governance of behavior and development, which can be characterized as hope-related individual differences; and (5) are triggered, executed, and evaluated in contexts that provide supports and opportunities, as well as hindrances and impediments to goal pursuit.

An organismic approach to self-determination requires an explicit focus on the interface between the self and context (Little et al., 2002). Organisms influence and are influenced by the contexts in which they live and develop. Through this person–context interaction people become agents of their own action.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a highly visible and comprehensive macro-theory developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan to explain the origins and outcomes of human agentic action (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2012). Standing in contrast to theories that stress the dependence of behavior on environmental contingencies; SDT is based on the *organismic paradigm*; one that assumes an inherent order to both biological and psychological systems (Ryan, 1995). Self-Determination Theory is a macro-theory of motivation, personality, and functioning that perceives human behavior as growth-oriented and pro-active (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2012).

According to SDT, three basic psychological needs; competence, autonomy, and relatedness, must be met in order to support healthy psychological development (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Deci and Vansteenkiste (2004) explained the need for competence as reflecting individuals' desire to effectively master their environment and the need for autonomy as a desire to feel an integrated sense of self through choice, agency, and volition. The need for relatedness refers to a sense of belonging and connectedness with others, to care and be cared for (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Deci and Ryan (2012) developed five mini-theories to explain the operations of Self-Determination Theory. The five mini-theories; cognitive evaluative theory, causality orientations theory, organismic integration theory, basic psychological needs theory, and goal content theory, each explain a set of observed motivational phenomena (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Deci and Ryan (2012) introduced *cognitive evaluation theory* (CET) to explain the types of external events that would enhance or diminish intrinsic motivation, to identify autonomy-supportive social contexts versus controlling social contexts, and to explain the interactions of external events and social contexts and their effects on intrinsic motivation. To further explain individual differences in motivation-related behavior, Deci and Ryan (2012) proposed *causality orientations theory* (COT), positing three different personality orientations based on the source of initiation and regulation of behavior: autonomous, controlled, and impersonal (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The autonomous orientation is associated with orienting towards internal and external cues in a way that supports one's autonomy and the informational significance of cues. The controlled orientation is associated with perceiving internal and external cues as controlling and demanding. Finally, the impersonal orientation is associated with perceiving cues as indicators of incompetence and is linked with amotivation.

A third, related mini-theory under SDT is known as *organismic integration theory* (OIT). Deci and Ryan (1985) formulated this theory to explain behavior that is externally motivated but also either controlled or autonomous. Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed five types of motivation on a continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic, that explain why people engage in behaviors. These are external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic motivation. Researchers have used this theory to demonstrate desirable behaviors that are more highly internally regulated tend to be maintained. Also, it was found that more autonomous regulation was associated with positive outcomes such as wellness, engagement, and perceived competence (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

As research evidence accumulated for the above mini-theories, Deci and Ryan (2012) noted continued evidence for the importance of the three basic psychological needs; autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The researchers formalized a theory, *basic psychological needs theory* (BPNT) based upon findings that environments and contexts that support psychological needs satisfaction were associated with greater feelings of well-being, psychological health, and greater positive affect in both work and non-work related environments (Ryan, Bernstein, & Brown, 2010).

As a further development to the psychological needs fulfillment work, Deci, Ryan, and colleagues gathered evidence for the importance of the contents and targets of goals that people pursue. *Goal content theory* (GCT) posits that extrinsic goals such as financial wealth, image, and fame are less likely to satisfy the three basic psychological needs compared to intrinsic goals such as personal growth and emotional closeness (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). Empirical evidence for GCT indicates that pursuing extrinsic goals leads to less well-being and poorer performance whereas pursuing intrinsic goals leads to greater well-being; presumably due to increased satisfaction of the basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

With motivation, choice, and attribution as SDT's fundamental theoretical bases, a substantial empirical tradition has arisen from research in this area. Self-Determination Theory has been applied to study diverse social issues such as health behavior and maintenance, education and school adjustment, psychotherapy, and sport and physical activity (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Causal Agency Theory

Drawing on the foundational understanding of self-determination as (1) self-caused action from philosophy; (2) a central process of an organism in the movement toward autonomous determination, from personality psychology; and (3) motivated by the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness from SDT, Shogren et al., (2015) proposed Causal Agency Theory to explain how people become self-determined; that is how they define the actions and beliefs necessary to engage in self-caused, autonomous action that addresses basic psychological needs.

Within the context of Causal Agency Theory, Shogren and colleagues define self-determination as a

> *…dispositional characteristic manifested as acting as the causal agent in one's life. Self-determined people (i.e., causal agents) act in service to freely chosen goals. Self-determined actions function to enable a person to be the causal agent is his or her life (p. 258).*

A dispositional characteristic is an enduring tendency used to characterize and describe differences between people; it refers to a tendency to act or think in a particular way, but presumes contextual variance (i.e., socio-contextual supports and opportunities and threats and impediments). As a dispositional characteristic, self-determination can be measured, and variance will be observed across individuals and within individuals over time, particularly as the context changes (e.g., supports and opportunities are provided for self-determined action).

Broadly defined, causal agency implies that it is the person who makes or causes things to happen in their life. Causal agency implies more, however, than just causing action; it implies that the individual acts with an eye toward causing an effect to accomplish a specific end or to cause or create change. Self-determined actions enable a person to act as a causal agent.

Within Causal Agency Theory, self-determined action is characterized by three essential characteristics – volitional action, causal action, and action-control beliefs. These essential characteristics refer not to specific actions performed or the beliefs that drive action, but to the function the action serves for the individual; that is, whether the action enabled the person to act as a causal agent:

Volitional action: Self-determined people act volitionally. Volition refers to making a conscious choice based upon one's preferences. Conscious choice implies intentionality; self-determined actions are intentionally conceived, deliberate acts that occur without direct external influence. As such, volitional actions are self-initiated and function to enable a person to act autonomously (i.e., engage in self-governed action). Volitional actions involve the initiation and activation of causal capabilities—the capacity to cause something to happen—and something to happen in one's life.

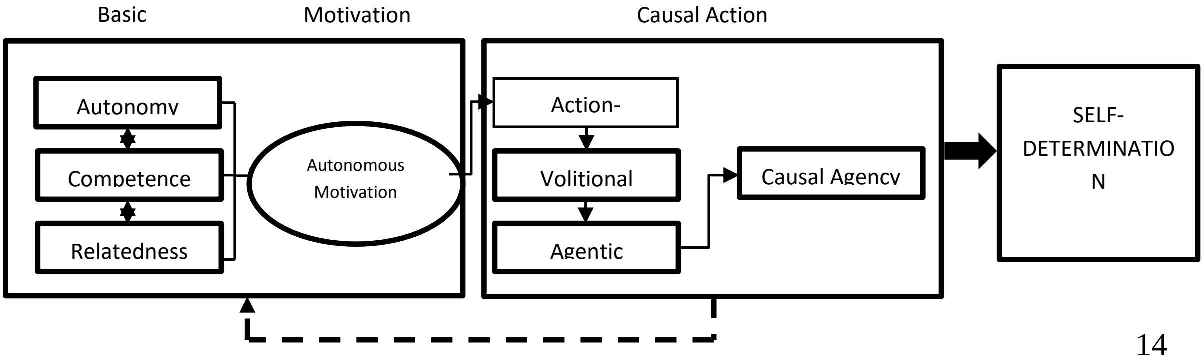
Agentic action: An agent is someone who acts; a means by which something is done or achieved. Agency refers to action in the service of a goal. Self-determined people act to identify pathways that lead to a specific ends or cause or create change. The identification of pathways is a proactive, purposive process. As such, agentic actions are self-regulated and self-directed. Such actions function to enable a person to make progress toward freely chosen goals and respond to opportunities and challenges in their environments. Such actions involve agentic capabilities; the capacity to direct it to achieve an outcome.

Action-control beliefs: Self-determined people have a sense of personal empowerment; they believe they have what it takes to achieve freely chosen goals. There are three types of action-control beliefs: beliefs about the link between the self and the goal (control expectancy; "When I want to do ____, I can"); beliefs about the link between the self and the means for achieving the goal (capacity beliefs; "I have the capabilities to do _____"); and beliefs about the utility or usefulness of a given means for attaining a goal (causality beliefs; "I believe my effort will lead to goal achievement" vs. "I believe other factors – luck, access to teachers or social capital – will lead to goal achievement"). Positive action-control beliefs function to enable a person to act with self-awareness and self-knowledge in an empowered, goal-directed manner.

Development of Self-Determination

The assumptions inherent in theories of human agentic action and research and theory in motivation (SDT) and causal action (Causal Agency Theory) create an organizational framework for a theoretical model of the development of self-determination (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Flow chart of development of self-determination (Wehmeyer & Shogren, 2014).



At the beginning of this system are basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness proposed by SDT. Satisfaction of these basic needs facilitates autonomous motivation, defined as intrinsic motivation and well-internalized extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012, p. 88). Consistent with assumptions of organismic theories, the interplay between the context and the individual's psychological needs satisfaction is complex and reciprocal. When a motive or motives are salient, people are in a position to select goals on the basis of their expectations about the satisfaction of these motives (Deci & Ryan, 1985). As per Figure 1, these psychological needs initiate a causal action sequence that, through interaction with environmental supports and opportunities, enables the development of a "synergistic set of action-control beliefs and behaviors that provide the self-regulatory foundation that is called upon to negotiate the various tasks and challenges of the life course (Little, et al, 2002, p. 396). Action-control beliefs about the link between the self and the goal (control expectancy beliefs), the links between the self and the means that are available for use to address a challenge (agency beliefs), and about which specific means are most effective for reaching one's goals (causality beliefs) (Little et al., 2002, p. 396) interact with and mediate volitional and agentic actions resulting in causal agency. Repeated experiences with the causal action sequence leads to multiple experiences with causal agency and, as a result, enhanced self-determination.

Autonomy Supportive Classrooms and Instruction

The prior sections have described the theoretical frames we have used to understand issues pertaining to self-determination and to describe its development. This section will describe research examining what can be done in schools promote autonomous motivation and self-determined learning to promote the development of self-determination, as described previously. We begin with a brief summary of research pertaining to creating autonomy-supportive classrooms, then provide information about an intervention, the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction, that we have developed and evaluated and has been shown to have a causal relationship with enhanced self-determination and more positive school and adult outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Autonomy-Supportive Classrooms

Creating autonomy-supportive classrooms involves establishing learning environments that maximize student involvement and self-direction and minimize teacher-controlled actions. Reeve (2002) summarized several studies of autonomy supportive teaching and concluded that, among instructional behaviors:

> *…autonomy-supportive teachers distinguished themselves by listening more, spending less time holding instructional materials such as notes or books, giving students time for independent work, and giving fewer answers to the problems students face (p. 186).*

In examining conversational statements of autonomy-supportive teachers, Reeve found that they avoided directives, praised mastery, avoided criticism, gave answers less often, responded to student-generated questions and communicating statement with empathy and perspective taking. Reeve concluded that autonomy-supportive teachers are responsive, flexible, and motivate through interest. Controlling teachers take charge, shape students toward a right answer, evaluate, and motivate through pressure. Autonomy-supportive classrooms are learning communities in which students have meaningful roles in setting classroom rules, feel safe to explore and take risks, are supported to solve problems and set personal goals, and are responsible for monitoring and evaluating their progress.

Strategies to promote autonomous motivation

Creating a learning community and engaging in autonomy-supportive instructional and conversational actions begin the process of promoting student autonomous motivation. De Naeghel and colleagues (2014) identified strategies linked to each of the basic psychological needs identified by SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy support strategies, linked to the basic need for autonomy, include giving students options from which to choose, identifying and basing instruction upon students' preferences and interests, and promoting student self-initiation of actions. Structure strategies, linked to the students' need for competence, involve practices that provide optimal challenges for students, clearly communicating expectations, and consistent and positive feedback. Involvement strategies are linked to students' need for relatedness, and include strategies that emphasize relationship-building and positive social interactions.

Autonomy-Supportive Instructional Strategies

Goal setting, problem-solving, and self-regulation strategies are critical to the development of causal agency, and form the basis of efforts to implement autonomy-supportive instructional strategies. The most effective interventions that incorporate goal-setting and self-regulation strategies do not implement them individually, but as part of a multicomponent package containing multiple self-regulation strategies and goal setting instruction and supports (Cobb, Lehmann, Newman-Gonchar, & Alwell, 2009). Components in such interventions focus on teaching goal setting and attainment and self-regulation strategies, like self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-evaluation. An evidence-based, multicomponent instructional strategy that we have developed and implemented in the context of educating students with disabilities is the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) (Wehmeyer et al., 2009), which is described in the following section.

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction

The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI; Wehmeyer, et al., 2009) is an evidence-based practice to enable teachers to teach students to self-regulate themselves. Appropriate for use with students with and without disabilities across a wide range of content areas, the SDLMI enables teachers to engage students in the totality of their educational program by increasing opportunities to self-direct learning and, in the process, to enhance student self-determination. Implementation of the model consists of a three-phase instructional process, depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. *Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction*

Phase 1: Set a Goal		
Student Problem to Solve: What is my goal?		
Student Questions	**Teacher Objective**	**Educational Supports**
What do I want to learn?	• Enable Students to identify specific strengths and instructional need. • Enable students to communicate preferences, interest, beliefs, and values. • Teach students to prioritize needs	• Student self-assessment of interests, abilities, and instructional needs. • Choice-making instruction. • Problem-solving instruction. • Decision-making instruction. • Goal-setting and attainment instruction.
What do I know about it now?	• Enable students to identify their current status in relation to the instructional need. • Assist students to gather information about opportunities and barriers in their environment.	
What must change for me to learn what I don't know?	• Enable students to decide if action will be focused toward capacity building, modifying the environment, or both. • Support students to choose a need to address from the prioritized list.	
What can I do to make this happen?	• Teach students to state a goal and identify criteria for achieving goal.	

Phase 2: Take Action		
Student Problem to Solve: What is my Plan?		
Student Questions	**Teacher Objective**	**Educational Supports**
What can I do to learn what I don't know?	- Enable student to self-evaluate current status and self-identified goal status.	- Self-scheduling. - Self-instruction. - Choice-making instruction. - Teach students to state a goal and identify criteria for achieving goal. - Antecedent cue regulation. - Goal-setting instruction. - Goal-attainment strategies. - Problem-solving instruction. - Decision-making instruction. - Self-advocacy instruction. - Assertiveness training. - Communication skills training.
What could keep me from taking action?	- Enable student to determine plan of action to bridge gap between self-evaluated current status and self-identified goal status.	
What can I do to remove these barriers?	- Collaborate with student to identify most appropriate instructional strategies. - Teach student needed student-directed learning strategies. - Support student to implement student-directed learning strategies. - Provide mutually agreed upon teacher-directed instruction.	
When will I take action?	- Enable student to determine schedule for action plan. - Enable student to implement action plan. - Enable student to self-monitor progress.	- Self-monitoring.
Phase 3: Adjust Goal or Plan		
Student Problem to Solve: What have I learned?		
Student Questions	**Teacher Objective**	**Educational Supports**
What actions have I taken?	- Enable student to self-evaluate progress toward goal achievement.	- Self-evaluation strategies. - Choice-making instruction. - Goal-setting instruction - Goal-attainment strategies. - Problem-solving instruction. - Self-reinforcement strategies. - Self-recording strategies. - Self-monitoring.
What barriers have been removed?	- Collaborate with student to compare progress with desired outcomes.	
What has changed about what I don't know?	- Support student to re-evaluate goal if progress is insufficient. - Assist student to decide if goal remains the same or changes. - Collaborate with student to identify if action plan is adequate or inadequate given revised or retained goal. - Assist student to change action plan if necessary.	
Do I know what I want to know?	- Enable student to decide if progress is adequate, inadequate, or if goal has been achieved.	

Each instructional phase presents a problem to be solved by the student. The student solves each problem by posing and answering a series of four Student Questions per phase that students learn, modify to make their own, and apply to reach self-selected goals. Each question is linked to a set of Teacher Objectives. Each instructional phase also includes a list of Educational Supports teachers can use to enable students to self-direct learning. In each instructional phase, the student is the primary agent for choices, decisions, and actions, even when eventual actions are teacher-directed.

The Student Questions are constructed to direct the student through a problem-solving sequence in each instructional phase. The solutions to the problems in each phase lead to the problem-solving sequence in the next phase. Teachers implementing the model teach students to solve the sequence of problems to construct a means-ends chain—a causal sequence—that moves them from where they are (an actual state of not having their needs and interests satisfied) to where they want to be (a goal state of having those needs and interests satisfied). To answer the questions in this sequence, students must regulate their own problem solving by setting goals to meet needs, constructing plans to meet goals, and adjusting actions to complete plans. Thus, each instructional phase poses a problem the student must solve (What is my goal? What is my plan? What have I learned?). The four questions differ from phase to phase but represent identical steps in the problem-solving sequence. That is, students answering the questions must: 1) identify the problem, 2) identify potential solutions to the problem, 3) identify barriers to solving the problem, and 4) identify consequences of each solution. These steps are the fundamental steps in any problem-solving process and they form the means-end problem-solving sequence represented by the Student Questions in each phase and enable the student to solve the problem posed in each instructional phase.

Because the model itself is designed for teachers to implement, the language of the Student Questions is not written to be understood by every student, nor does the model assume that students have life experiences that enable them to fully answer each question. The Student Questions are written in first-person voice in a relatively simple format with the intention that they are the starting point for discussion between the teacher and the student. Some students will learn and use all 12 questions as they are written. Other students will need to have the questions rephrased to be more understandable. Still other students, due to the intensity of their instructional needs, may have the teacher paraphrase the questions.

The first time a teacher uses the model with a student, she or he will read the question with or to the student; discuss what the question means; and then, if necessary, change the wording to enable that student to better understand the intent of the question. Such wording changes must, however, be made so that the problem-solving intent of the question remains intact. The Teacher Objectives within the model are objectives a teacher will be trying to accomplish by implementing the model. In each instructional phase, the objectives are linked directly to the Student Questions. These objectives can be met by utilizing strategies provided in the Educational Supports section of the model. The Teacher Objectives provide, in essence, a road map to assist the teacher to enable the student to solve the problem stated in the Student Question. The model’s emphasis on using instructional strategies and educational supports that are student-directed provides another means of teaching students to teach themselves. As important as this is, however, not every instructional strategy implemented will be student-directed. The purpose of any model of teaching is to promote student learning and growth. There are circumstances in which the most effective instructional method or strategy to achieve a particular educational outcome will be a teacher-directed strategy. Students who are considering what plan of action to implement to achieve a self-selected goal can recognize that teachers have expertise in instructional strategies and take full advantage of that expertise.

Several studies provide causal evidence of the impact of the SDLMI on enhanced student self-determination (Wehmeyer, Shogren, Palmer, Williams-Diehm, Little, & Boulton, 2012), student engagement with the curriculum (Lee, Wehmeyer, Soukup, & Palmer, 2010; Shogren, Palmer, Wehmeyer, Williams-Diehm, & Little, 2012), student academic and functional skills goal attainment (Lee, Wehmeyer, & Shogren, 2015; Shogren et al., 2012), and on raising teacher expectations for student progress (Shogren, Plotner, Palmer, Wehmeyer, & Paek, 2014). -

Conclusion

There is now clear evidence that autonomously motivated students achieve more positive school-related outcomes (Liu, Wang, & Ryan, 2016) and that students who are provided autonomously-supportive classrooms and instruction achieve more positive school and adult outcomes. As the field of psychology moves toward the implementation of strategies based upon research in positive psychology, so too is it important that educational strategies be drawn from strengths-based, positive approaches to disability (Wehmeyer, 2013; Wehmeyer & Shogren, in press). Promoting self-determination is clearly one such approach. We believe that the foundation to achieve such outcomes lies in understanding the development of self-determination (Wehmeyer, Shogren, Little, & Lopez, in press) and in implementing interventions, such as those described in this article, that promote such development.

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Polish Disability Studies: Inspiring Scientific Area and General Academic Profile of Study

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Abstract

This article presents general assumptions of an innovative, first in Poland master's degree – Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability (in the world called Disability Studies). Authors built the theoretical and empirical context of this general profile of studies, using knowledge about international experiences and Polish researches on the phenomenon of disability. Master's degree Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability were established in 2016 year in The Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw. The establishment of studies was the result of a response to the changing social situation (an increase in social movement for people with disabilities), the increasing need for initiating, designing and implementation of integrated support systems and the need to prepare comprehensive professionals prepared to work with people with disabilities and their families – leaders, researchers, specialists. Authors present also scientific sources as the foundation of initiation and development of a new higher education field of study and opportunity.

Keywords :disability studies, interdisciplinary studies on disability, personalization normalization, culture of disability

Introduction

About forty years ago originated the world trend, called *Disability Studies*. Although already emerged stirrings of interests to researchers a specific, no medical, approach to disability. *Disability Studies* is an academic interdisciplinary endeavor that analyzes disability and the lived experiences of people with disabilities from the perspective of the humanities, social sciences, and arts, not the medical fields that sees it in more negative and individualizing terms, as a deficit or defect that must cured, or eliminated in order for an individual to function "normally" in society (Rembis, Pamula, 2016). Undercurrent this is built on a social model of disability, which accentuates the interactions in the world of people with disabilities and in the world around them. *Disability Studies* has its political and intellectual roots in the disability rights movement.

The aim of the article is to present an innovative, first in Poland field of education at major degree – *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* (in the world called *Disability Studies*) in the context of the Polish researches on the phenomenon of disability and international teaching experience in the implementation of studies in this field. *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* were established in 2016 year. This is the faculty which arose as a response to the changing social situation – an increase in social movement for people with disabilities, the increasing need for initiating, designing and implementation of integrated support systems and the need to prepare comprehensive professionals prepared to work with people with disabilities and their families – leaders, researchers, specialists. These objectives can be achieved through the use of knowledge, resources and research solutions used in a variety of research disciplines. Hence, designed in The Maria Grzegorzewska University study, is interdisciplinary and clearly focused around disability as a social phenomenon.

According to data published in the report *European Disability Strategy 2010–2020*, one in six Europeans is a person with disabilities. Altogether in Europe, there are approximately 80 million people with various kind of disability. Figures suggest that the number in Poland is slightly lower than the European average. In the report edited by Kryńska (2013) according to the results of the National Census of Population and Housing from 2011 the number of people with disabilities in Poland amounted to approximately 4,7 million, which means about 12,2% of the total population. Among them there were approx. 3131.9 thousand legally disabled people (with disability certificate), and there were 1656.6 thousand biologically disabled people (who do not have legal documents certifying disability, but sentient its physical effects). These data indicate a decrease in the number of people with disabilities in Poland – in the previous census in 2002 people with various forms of disability accounted for approx. 14.3%. The most common causes of disability are – according to the report by the *Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities* – cardiovascular, locomotor and neurological disorders. It is worth noting that despite the relatively lower percentage of people with other kind of disability (disability of sight, hearing, intellectual, etc.), it is a significant part of society, requiring adaptation of the conditions of local environment, education, labour market, etc., to their needs.

Review of Literature

Disability Studies in the World

Disability Studies are a new field of study in Poland, but in the world it is well-known and has had a long tradition. Its origin dates from the 80s of the twentieth century – in 1982 *The Society for Disability Studies (SDS)* was founded, the oldest academic organization for interdisciplinary research on disability (initially the organization was called *Section for the Study of Chronic Illness, Impairment and Disability (SSCIID).* A few years later, the SDS began issuing *Disability Studies Quarterly (SDQ)* – it was the first scientific publication devoted to *Disability Studies*. History of *Disability Studies* as a field of academic training began in 1992, when on Syracuse University first training program in this regard appeared. Although it was not very popular, the number of universities opening courses of I, II or III degree in this area began to grow fairly quickly. Initially, this faculty was introduced to training in higher education institutions in the US and the UK, and later in Canada and Australia and other countries in Europe, the Americas and even Asia (Rembis, 2010). Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) note, however, that the theoretical origins of *Disability Studies* are much earlier and are associated with individual research projects, as well as individual approach of specific scientists to the phenomenon of disability.

Origins

Searching for the origins of *Disability Studies* as a field of academic education, Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) go back to the beginnings of movements for the rights of people with disabilities, and therefore to the 70s of the twentieth century (and even – in socio-anthropological terms – to the early 60s of the twentieth century). Similarly – to the mid-twentieth century, as to the time of the beginning of *Disability Studies* – point Barnes (1997), Rembis (2010), Albrecht, Seelman and Bury (2001), Brueggemann (2013). The creation of *Disability Studies* as a field of academic education was associated therefore with a new approach to people with disabilities as well as disability as a phenomenon. This meant changing the perception of disability model – the transition from medicalization towards a social, humanistic, positive model.

Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) indicate the characteristics defining and specifying *Disability Studies* in this approach. These are: (1) a social model – the perception of disability in social, cultural, historical context; (2) treating disability as one of the fundamental differences (such as gender or race); (3) interdisciplinarity – analyzing the phenomenon of disability from the perspective of different disciplines; (4) participation in studies of people with disabilities; (5) basing the study and research on the system of values. According to the authors, application of these criteria to *Disability Studies* is necessary so that these studies as well as the research within them gave the effect of the form: to create and disseminate alternative perception of people with disabilities and disability (*imagine disability otherwise*), to create a cultural and social space for the support system and inclusive education of people with disabilities, to implement programs to prepare for teaching of the disabled and about disability, but also to create a critical yet at the same time reflective scientific community.

Legal Grounds

Also, we cannot suppress in development of *Disability Studies* the legal basis for the implementation of the social model of disability. The legal situation of people with disabilities is regulated by many documents of national, as well as European and global character. One of the most important international documents defining the rights and status of people with disabilities is the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This document was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006. The Polish government signed it on March 20, 2007, while its full ratification took place on September 6, 2012. "The aim of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity". It applies to all aspects of social life and devotes particular attention to equality of people with disabilities and able-bodied and pays attention to the responsibilities of the state to ensure people with disabilities a full implementation of citizens' rights. The convention is based on eight basic principles. These are: (1) respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make choices, and respect for the dignity of the person, (2) non-discrimination, (3) full and effective participation and inclusion in society, (4) respect for otherness and acceptance of people with disabilities being of human diversity and humanity, (5) equality of possibilities, (6) accessibility, (7) equality of men and women, (8) respect for the developing capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the rights of children with disabilities to preserve their identities. In particular, the convention clearly emphasizes the multidimensionality and multidimensional phenomenon of disability and the necessity to adapt the existing legal and physical solutions to needs of people with disabilities.

Disability Studies in Poland

The beginning of the new century clearly show the changes in the perception of man in the social sciences, including changes in the perception of people with disabilities (Głodkowska 2014a, p. 75). The source of these changes Głodkowska (2014a) sees inter alia to premises of humanistic psychology and messages of vital philosophy of Jose Ortega a Gasset. There is clearly apparent, that a new space for scientific diagnoses of the phenomenon of disability is also built by a departure from the perception of it only through the prism of medical model to a socio-cultural perspective. Interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical analysis tend to learn the personal, social, cultural, legal and economic dimension of disability. In the Polish scientific literature, you can identify the different areas and the perspectives explanation of the phenomenon of disability. In the context of the subject matter of this article we set three constructs down: (1) the personalist construct, (2) the construct of normalization and (3) the cultural construct.

Personalist Construct

With the personalist construct of the approach of disability involve directly issues subjectivity, sense of identity, self-determination, autonomy. In special education problem of subjectivity for many years has been a significant domain of Polish studies (including Kosakowski, 1997; Wojciechowski, 2002; Dykcik, 2007; Szczupał, 2008; Mikrut, 2009; Podgórska-Jachnik, 2009; Rzeźnicka-Krupa, 2011; Głodkowska, 2014b). "Subjectivity is manifested in the fact that man is someone, that has a specific identity, that has more or less distinct individuality distinguishing him from the others, that his activity depends largely on himself" (Tomaszewski, 1985, p. 72). According to Kosakowski (1997) realization of the postulate of subjectivity in special education is expressed in making people with disabilities aware of their agency, ability to influence their own lives and taking responsibility for themselves. Dykcik (2007) analyzes the cardinal principles of *cooperation and coexistence* in the changing social reality as the superior one shows the principle of personalization, which refers to the protection of personal relationships of people with disabilities, their dignity and personal identity as inalienable rights of every human being irrespective of the scope of the dysfunction or disability (p. 75). As an important dimension of subjectivity he perceives the right of people with disabilities to freely make choices and autonomous actions. In this context, he defines autonomy as a value, right and privilege of individuals to build a unique shape of their own self and their own personal version of life (p. 365). Szczupał (2008) subjectivity of people with disabilities considers in relation to the dignity by which a person has autonomy in the selection and the manner of realizing value. Głodkowska (2014b) examines subjectivity, as a dimension integrating human functioning, giving them identity and individuality in relations with the environment (p. 109). Sources of such understood subjectivity are found in the currents of humanistic psychology, whose representatives see man as an autonomous being, able to control their own behaviour and accepting responsibility for them (p. 94). The author sees a person with a disability, as a being creating themselves and the world around them, but also acting in specific relationships designated by circumstances of life (p. 91). The author refers to such characteristics of a person-entity as: causativeness, decision-making, initiating, a sense of identity, individuality, independence, control, autonomy, self-determination, welfare, quality of life (p. 106). She considers speaking about the person with a disability as an entity to be an imperative to special education. In the analysed issues Głodkowska (2014a, 2014b, 2014c) undertakes numerous analyzes endearing disability as a source of strength in shaping identity, experiencing subjectivity and the possibility of being the author of one’s own life.

The humanistic methodology enables understanding of what is most important to study the humanities, and so knowledge of man and the meaning and value of what a man gives to events and activities (Lindyberg, 2001, p. 203). Personalist, humanistic vision of man is also apparent in the methodology of empirical research that is used by Polish researchers for recognition of the phenomenon of disability (including Obuchowska, 1987; Żuraw, 1999; Rzeźnicka-Krupa, 2009; Mikrut, 2009; Podgórska-Jachnik, 2009; Borowska-Beszta, 2012). In the 80s of the twentieth century Obuchowska (1987, p. 31) among the current paradigms of special education points to “paradigm of subjectivity in methods” giving suitable importance to qualitative research, that let you penetrate the essence of experiencing life by persons with disabilities. Rzeźnicka-Krupa (2009) in the interpretative paradigm of qualitative research puts the possibility of the realization of the subjective treatment of subjects postulate, emphasizing their uniqueness and the treatment of persons with disabilities as unique in their diversity (p. 181). According to Mikrut (2009) return to the methods of the quality serves knowing what lies deep in the psyche of a subject, what is personal, intimate, hidden and unique – in short, what constitutes such, not other experiencing their situation (p. 156).

Normalization Construct

The personalist construct is directly related to the construct for normalization, because normalization is a process, that get authorship features the life of people with disabilities, awake of their sense of identity, self-determination, the needs to improve the quality of their life. All of these qualities and activity therefore be considered in connection with identity of person with disability, that is, in terms of the personalist construct (Głodkowska, 2014c). Today, the issue is already relatively rich in Polish literature.

Stochmiałek (2002) sees normalization as a process of approximation of the living conditions of people with disabilities, including their living conditions, social status, or role-life experiences to those of the general public (p. 53). Kosakowski and Krause (2005) focused their attention on the normalization of the living environment of people with disabilities. In the cited monograph they entered into multidimensional problems of the normalization process. They have taken into account the context of education, rehabilitation, family and society. Doroba (2010) refers to the normalization of key experiences in life cycle of humans, such as experience of self-creation, leaving the family home, empowerment, acquiring professional qualifications, creating their own way of life (p. 8). Krause, Żyta and Nosarzewska (2010) undertook the issues of normalization of the social environment of people with intellectual disabilities. In the theoretical dimension they drew attention to the context in which people with disabilities function in institutional and family environment. They gave empirical verification of the basic areas of normalization of life of adults with disabilities, including the housing situation, work situation and social situation (family life, interpersonal relationships and the development of leisure time).

According to Głodkowska (2012) manifestations of normalization can be perceived in many different areas of people with disabilities: their lives in an open environment, support with their participation, recognition and activation of their development potential, taking up with them the relationship of dialog and subjective treatment, or improvement of quality of their lives and recognition of their right to happiness and prosperity in life (p. 91). The author analyzes the ideas of normalization from the perspective of "authorship of their own lives of people with disabilities" (Głodkowska, 2014a). In this sense, the author sees normalization "as the goal and the process of fulfilling the rights of people with disabilities to build their own path of life – to create the best of their capabilities, their author life"(p. 86). In the theoretical foundations of the construct by their own life the author shows: (1) positive psychology, (2) educational personalism (3) the theory of optimal functioning, (4) the theory of developmental tasks, (5) the theory of social support (Głodkowska, 2015). She takes into account eudaemonist, personalist, functional, temporal aspect of authorship of their own lives (p. 117). According to the author, the opportunity to be an author of one's own life is a value and an inalienable right of every person with a disability (p. 128).

The central category around which conditions of the normalization of life of people with disabilities are examined is the *quality of life.* In scientific terms, this category was the subject of many theoretical analyzes and empirical investigations (including Parchomiuk, Byra, 2006; Palak, Lewicka, Bujnowska, 2006; Sadowska, 2006; Otrębski, 2007; Chodynicka, Rycielski, 2008; Smoczyńska, 2010; Wiszejko-Wierzbicka, 2010; Zawiślak, 2011). The multiplicity undertaken analysis takes into account both objective and subjective dimension of quality of life of people with disabilities. Objective measures come down to health, education level, income, ownership of goods or rights, sustainability and proximity of relationships with other people. Especially important in assessing the quality of life of people with disabilities, however, are the dimensions that relate to the subjective assessment of various aspects of their life situations, including the level of satisfaction with family life, career, and social participation.

Cultural Construct

Increasingly, and commonly accented phenomenon not only in rehabilitation practice dimension but also in dimension of theoretical and empirical diagnoses of various scientific disciplines is the participation of people with disabilities in culture as a manifestation of their inclusion and social integration. Seeing a man in cultural terms of interdisciplinary diagnoses of disability studies can be referred after Borowska-Beszta (2012, p. 67) to six pillars: (1) perception of disability as a distinct culture, (2) perception of disability as a construct of cultural heritage (3) perception of culture-creating dimension of people with disabilities (4) knowledge of the culture of people with disabilities and its scientific research, (5) learning the dominant culture by culture of origin of people with disabilities.

Culture of disability was the subject of empirical analysis of many authors (including Chodkowska, 1993; Żuraw, 1999; Borowska-Beszta, 2008, 2012, 2013). Chodkowska (1993) by locating her research in qualitative research orientation presented socio-pedagogical empirical study of the situation of women with disabilities. Żuraw (2008) as the subject of her empirical diagnoses made styles of social participation of people with reduced abilities and factors determining them. Borowska-Beszta (2012), reaching to ethnographic research identified an empirical phenomenon, which is a unique design of style of life of adults with disabilities and their families.

Undertaken theoretical analysis also applies to the recognition of disability as a cultural construct (including Chodkowska, 1994; Kossewska, 2003; Wałecka-Matyja, 2013). Chodkowska (1994) points to two trends being a source of attitudes towards disability in European culture: (1) religious-cultural, and (2) the cultural-moral. Making their characteristics she emphasizes that the basis of any modifications to the negative attitudes and prejudices should be constituted by integrative model of social functioning of people with disabilities (p. 126). Kossewska (2003) analyzes the attitude of Polish society towards people with disabilities referring to socialization-acculturation process of transmission of values and rooted in a culture stereotypes and prejudices. She points to the intergenerational transmission of culture as a reason for moving stereotypes and labelling people with reduced abilities. She also takes into account cultural diversity, nationality, as well as the type of dysfunction as factors determining the direction of expressed attitudes. Wałecka-Matyja (2013) indicates specific to a given culture claims about reality, beliefs and myths, ideologies, social norms, styles of behaviour personal patterns as determinants of attitudes and behaviours towards disability. The author analyzes religious-cultural and cultural-moral factors determining the attitude of non-disabled persons to persons with disabilities.

Many Polish authors in their publications have taken the issues of culture-creating dimension of culture of people with disabilities (including Dykcik, 2001; Żuraw, 2001; Wojciechowski, 2001, 2004; Jutrzyna, 2002, 2003; Borowska-Beszta, 2008, 2013). Dykcik (2001) sees the cultural activities of disabled people “as the creation of a different lifestyle, organizing environment and cultural experiences of individuals within their cognitive and emotional relationships with their immediate surroundings and the whole world” (p. 33). Żuraw (2001) emphasizing the integration and inclusive nature of participation of people with reduced abilities in culture points to the functions: (1) cultural-synchronization, (2) existentially-subjective (3) of community, (4) compensating-cathartic, (5) creative (6) cognitive, and (7) hedonistic and relaxation (pp. 166–170). Borowska-Beszta (2008) indicates that the participation of people with disabilities in culture has *habilitation functions*, thus it creates the possibility of creative expression, creates the feeling of coherence and gives the everyday life of people with disabilities a creative dimension (p. 111).

Interdisciplinary Disability Studies in Poland

Historical Ground

The major study in special education, called *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* was constituted in The Maria Grzegorzewska University in 2016 year. The Maria Grzegorzewska University was established in 1922 as the National Institute of Special Education (PIPS). It was the first Polish university, whose task was not only the training of teachers working with children with disabilities, but also conducting research in the area of special education. The founder and first director of the Institute was the precursor of Polish special education – Maria Grzegorzewska. Among the lecturers and associates of PIPS were the most outstanding educators of that time – Janusz Korczak, Józefa Jotyeko, Tytus Benni, Janina Doroszewska, Natalia Han-Iglewicz and others. Initially PIPS trained teachers working with four groups of pupils: intellectually disabled, morally neglected, deafblind and blind. Until the outbreak of World War II 660 teachers completed PIPS (Kulbaka, 2012, p. 24), the vast majority were teachers of children with intellectual disabilities (Gasik, 1990, p. 170). During the post-war period gradually another specialty teachers were introduced. They were created in response to public demand (the need to train teachers working with students with a particular type of disability) and as a consequence of the implementation of new research ideas in the field of special education. In 1950, PIPS was transformed into the National College of Special Education (PSPS), then (1976) into the College of Special Education (WSPS) and in 2000 The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education (APS) was founded. Since 2011, the English version of the name of the Academy is The Maria Grzegorzewska University.

The activity of University, from its beginning, was a double track: it educated teachers of schools and special institutions but it also conducted research in the field of special education. Thus, University was the first teaching – research institution having actual impact on the shape and scope of the Polish special education. Starting in the academic year of 2016/2017 *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* is a continuation of the activities of the school in this area.

General Academic Profile of Study

Starting *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* at The Maria Grzegorzewska University is one of the ways to implement the mission of the university – combining educational, scientific activity and ideas of supporting communities in need. This mission is concluded in, representing the motto of the university, words of Maria Grzegorzewska "*There is no crippled – there is the human*". *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* is an independent study of the master degree. It is addressed to graduates of humanities and social sciences of the first degree interested in taking broadly defined practical action aimed on the environment of people with disabilities, as well as considering a career in research in the field of *Disability Studies* and planning to undertake doctoral studies in this area. Graduates of this course can therefore be both a scientist who will create new research constructs in the area of broadly understood research on disability, as well as a practitioner implementing ideas of interdisciplinary understanding of this phenomenon. They will be prepared to undertake discussions on disability in a variety of contexts – educational, legal, social, and will have the power to create and implement solutions aimed at the improvement and normalization of the situation of people with disabilities, and as a consequence – to work towards equality and social inclusion. Graduates will be able to be advocates defending the rights of disabled people, the leaders of introducing and promoting new solutions for people with disabilities, employees of the media, whose actions will affect the social image of people with disabilities and disability specialists working in local communities. The study program uses the long tradition of the university – combining the practical and research issues, taking into account current research constructs.

Modules

Profile of education in *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* is created on the basis of six modules: theoretical, medical, research, language, teaching and optional. The issues that form the basis for developing a detailed profile of the faculty, as well as the program of activities, refer to the current state of knowledge in social and health sciences and humanities, they also take into account the relationships between them. A very important objective of this field of study is far-reaching individualization of education. This objective is to be achieved by creating favourable conditions for making research activities in line with the interests of students, in individual contact with teaching staff. It seems particularly important in the implementation of this assumption to use in classroom tutoring methods (planned for the end of the theoretical module). An innovative solution, which also aims to the process of individualization of studies, is the requirement of submitting by students finishing college – next to thesis – an individual, created through the whole period of study portfolio. Portfolio is to include the effects of the student's work, projects carried out during classes, as well as reflections, thoughts and conclusions resulting from the study. At the same time, in addition to efforts to individualize the learning process, emphasis in the curriculum is located on the shaping of social skills: ability to work in a team, developing communication skills, using skills in working directly with people with disabilities. These activities are aimed at preparing graduates in the most comprehensive way to work for people with disabilities and their communities after graduation.

Conclusion

The article presents an innovative, first in Poland field of education, masters degree – *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability* in the context of international origins and development of *Disability Studies* and selected constructs of Polish scientific recognition of disability. In the presented and selected constructs of scientific recognition of disability − personalist, normalization and cultural constructs − a new academic approach to disability can be noticed. The authors hope, that expanding the area of scientific knowledge by social, cultural, economic and legal reality of people with disabilities builds a promising perspective for the development of interdisciplinary studies on disability in Poland. This perspective is also built by the establishment of a new general profile of study at The Maria Grzegorzewska University – *Interdisciplinary Studies on Disability*.

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Masculinity and Intellectual Disability: A Review of Theoretical Concepts and Research

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Abstract

According to Morgan (1981)there are various theoretical paradigms of masculinity. Author believes that most of the social sciences concepts is about men, however, research on masculinity itself is relatively new. A similar situation exists in the areas of conceptualizing masculinity and intellectual disability. The intersection of masculinity and disability is an underexplored focus of research and it is essential to redress the gap (Wilson et al., 2013). The following paper is an overview of the theoretical concepts on masculinity and research on rare topic as masculinity of males with intellectual disabilities undertaken in various social research paradigms.

Keyword: Masculinity, adulthood, intellectual disability, theoretical concepts, research review

Introduction

Issues of gender have only recently begun to be considered in disability studies (Traustadóttir, 2006). While disability or intellectual disability is connected with being helpless, weak and dependent (Ostrowska, 2015), having academic problems (Saad Eissa, Al Huseini 2013), masculinity is associated with being autonomous, powerful, active. In most countries men are more privileged than women, occupy better positions in the social world and have more power to shape their lives (Adams, 2012). Thus, it is a much-cited point that masculinity and disability are in conflict (Shuttleworth, et al., 2012). In this article we introduce theoretical and research review of masculinity with intellectual disabilities concepts on the background of masculinity paradigms in general. We pay particular attention to the analysis of the research conducted worldwide in the following areas as: sexuality and intimate relationships of males with intellectual disabilities, issues of their fatherhood and self-determination.

Review of Literature

Traditional and Progressive Paradigms of Masculinity

Deliberations about masculinity were conducted by scholars in different directions and research paradigms. Paradigms are according to Rubin & Rubin (2005) philosophical concepts of the nature of the world considered as the base for assumptions for the research and producing the knowledge. An interesting and dichotomous way of conceptualizing masculinity is given by Arcimowicz (2008), who distinguishes two antagonistic paradigms: traditional/patriarchal masculinity and partnership/nontraditional. The traditional one dominates and is characterized by present specializations in certain areas, the dualism of gender roles, asymmetric characteristics of males and females (Arcimowicz 2008, Rana 2015). It also implies subordination of females and children. For O'Brien (2012) masculinity conceptualized traditionally is also related to the category *paid employment* indicated in the research of Irish fathers that stay at home. In turn, the paradigm of partnership masculinity emphasizes the equality and partnership between males and females, recognizing this value as fundamental in the creation of a new social order. It includes concepts of self-fulfillment, understood as the pursuit of full humanity. Partnership paradigm allows the display of both masculine and feminine essences and enables a man to achieve full individual human potential. The purpose of males become the cooperation and partnership with females and children, not the domination (Arcimowicz, 2008). Similar classification of masculinity types is presented in Calton, Heesacker & Perrin (2014) work. The authors introduce the model of traditional nontraditional/progressive types of masculinity Calton, Heesacker, Perrin (2014) write that “most masculinity research examines the effects of traditional masculine gender roles on men’s mental health, with minimal examination of other forms of masculinity” (p. 37). *Progressive masculinity* is considered by the authors as the “other” and comprehensive form of masculinity, which contains detailed such categories as: *positive masculinity, possible masculinity, hegemonic masculinity,* and *romantic masculinity*. Within types of masculinities related to ethnic, racial groups or cultures authors depict *caballerismo masculinity,* grounded culturally and etymologically in a concept of Spanish gentleman.

The authors define the subcategories of "other" masculinity. *Positive masculinity* is described by Calton, Heesacker, Perrin (2014) as emphasizing male strengths and the positive aspects of traditional masculinity in an interesting way. Referring to Davies, Shen-Miller & Isaco (2010) the authors describe *possible masculinity* as “an aspirational and future-oriented goal for men’s identities and behaviors based on (a) what men want to be in the future, (b) what men require to meet their developmental needs, and (c) what we, as a community, need from men to foster community safety and health” (Davies, Shen-Miller & Isaco, 2010, p. 348). *Hegemonic masculinity* as a term introduced in Australia in 80s. was, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), a discussion of the making of masculinities and the experience of men’s bodies. Last but not least, *romantic masculinity,* was, according to the authors,) researched by Allen (2007) who found “that romantic masculinity substantiated hegemonic masculinity, as men’s romantic identities were grounded in active male sexuality and passive female sexuality”(p. 41).

Psychodynamic, Social Learning, Social Constructionist, Feminist Paradigms of Masculinity

Another established in social sciences four paradigms point in Addis & Cohan (2005) as ways of conceptualizing masculinity. Another thought-provoking way of conceptualizing masculinity established in social sciences was proposed by Addis & Cohan (2005) who distinguish four paradigms. The authors discuss masculinity in perspective of *psychodynamic, social learning, social constructionist* and *feminist* paradigms. *Psychodynamic* paradigm and approach to masculinity in main themes are devoted to the early years of men’s lives and their interactions with caregivers (p. 636). Research in this paradigm of masculinity refer mainly to embedded parent-child interactions which influence boys' development, both emotional and social. In turn, *social learning* paradigm, according to Addis & Cohan (2005) is a common approach to investigate masculinity in the perspective of gender. The authors suggest that most research are lead in the positivist orientation, connecting the issues of broadly meant psychopathology with masculinity. The second paradigm mentioned by Addis & Cohan (2005) is social learning paradigm. According to the authors, *constructionist* paradigm is sometimes confused with social learning paradigm but there exist clear differences: “whereas social learning approaches focus on the way social environments shape gendered behavior, social constructionist perspectives highlight the different ways gender itself is actively constructed at a variety of social levels from the micro-interactional or dyadic to the cultural. Thus, the emphasis shifts from a view of individuals as respondents to processes of reinforcement and punishment (i.e., social learning) is a view of individuals as active agents who construct particular meanings of masculinity in particular social contexts” (p. 639) The authors believe that "from a social constructionist perspective, masculinities are flexible; they are constantly being constructed and challenged as men "to gender" in ways that mark themselves as masculine"(p. 639). Research on masculinity conducted within *constructionist* paradigm include mainly non positivist epistemology and mostly are conducted as qualitative research. The third paradigm called *feminist* analyzes according to the authors' view of gender “as a social formation that can occur at a variety of levels of social organization from the micro-interactional (e.g., dyadic) to the cultural. Research in this paradigm are carried out in relations to the problems of power because "power plays a role in shaping men's experience and expression of mental health problems. Theoretically, life experiences lessen That individual men's sense of power (e.g., loss of a job, divorce), or reduce their position in a dominance hierarchy (e.g., being demoted, physical injury) should be linked to a greater risk of anger, depression, anxiety, or substance abuse. "(p. 640).

Social Constructionist Paradigm of Masculinity

Connell (2000) makes a brief characteristic of masculinity within constructionist paradigm. The author writes of multiple masculinities (which are culturally relative), hierarchy, hegemony of males and hierarchies within masculinities. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) indicate about 200 scientific papers in databases which use exact term "hegemonic masculinity". Connell (2000) also analyzes problems of active construction of masculinities which means that masculinities are identified as people's acts and parts of patterns of social practice. (p. 4). In conclusion the author mentions masculinity as a phenomenon characterized by internal complexity and dynamic which changed through centuries and differs among cultures. An interesting conclusion about contradictories in men's lives experiences is made by Kaufman (1999). The author declares "there is in the lives of men the strange combination of power and privilege, pain and powerlessness. Men enjoy social power, many forms of privilege and a sense of often-unconscious entitlement by virtue of being male. But the way we have set up that world of power causes immense pain, isolation and alienation not only for women but also for men. This is not to equate men's pain with the systemic or systematic forms of women's oppression. Rather it is to say that men's power...comes with the price...This combination of power and pain is hidden story in the lives of men. It's men's contradictory experiences of power" (p. 45). On the ground of dimensions of masculinity in general, raise concepts and the research on masculinity with intellectual disabilities.

Masculinity of Male Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Historically, people with an intellectual disability have often been perceived, treated and called in a derogative way (Barnes, Mercer, 2008). As male adults with this disability, they are often reliant upon their families and/or support workers and are 'relatively powerless within the disability service system and exist within controls of the dominant ideology of the day' and 'their masculinity can be argued as a *reliant masculinity* – the antonym of hegemonic masculinity (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 739). The differences between the two constructs are associated with cultural perceptions: while hegemonic masculinity is about cultural ideal and institutional power, a reliant masculinity is connected with cultural stigma, stereotypes and individual powerlessness (Rushbrooke, Murray, Townsend, 2014).

It is often emphasized that disability does not have to equal a diminution of males' status as men (Staples, 2011). Rather, it involves renegotiating and redefining the concept of 'masculinity'. People with disabilities must usually embody their identities in wide contexts, and, as a consequence, experience the intersections between disability and masculinity in different ways (Staples, 2011). According to Gerschick & Miller (1995), men with disabilities have three main coping strategies (or three patterns of identification) to choose from: (1) 'reformulation' – the men redefine masculinity using their own terms – they emphasize those situations when they have control or self-reliance , (2) 'reliance' – the second pattern, which refers to the adoption of certain dominant attributes of masculinity, the men from this group demonstrate their abilities of being independent, strong or having sexual potency, (3) 'rejection' – they reject masculinity as important feature of their life.

According to Traustadóttir (2006), because gender and disability are constructs that exist simultaneously in people's lives, they are conceptualized by many scholars 'as different but interrelated axes of social relations' (p. 82). That is why a useful perspective in approaching the study of disability and gender is that of “matrix of dominance”, which allows to consider the multiple levels of dominations which derive from the societal configuration of gender and other factors (e.g. race, class, relations) instead of the more common “addictive model” which is focused on the independent effects of gender and disability in people’s experiences (Traustadóttir, 2006).

Review of Research

Sexuality and Intimate Relationships of Males with Intellectual Disabilities

Sexuality of men (or more generally – people) with intellectual disability have received in recent years a great deal of attention in literature. In Table 1. 13 research from several countries (in alphabetical order: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Malta, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Turkey, USA) are referring to sexuality and intimate relationships of men with intellectual disabilities are presented.

Table 1. *Research on Sexuality and Intimate Relationships*

Participants/ country	**Method and research subject**	**Results**	**Reference**
30 adults with intellectual disability (15 couples) (Canada, USA, New Zealand)	Qualitative research: Interviews – conversations; sexuality, intimacy, friendship, love, marriage, and parenthood in different phases of intellectually disabled people’s life	All 15 relationships were different (with or without sexual relationship, with or without children) and interviewees were of different age. For everyone, however, such relationship was an important determinant of life satisfaction. Each couple was ‘a celebrated connection, a freedom to be intimate with another person, a defense against loneliness, a chance to take care of and be cared for’ (p. 190). Several barriers were also identified, e.g. isolation, (over)protectionism by family or staff, denial of sexuality, lack of encouragement or support to socialize.	Schwier (1994)
5 adults with intellectual disabilities (including 2 men) living in social welfare home (Poland)	Qualitative research: Case study of 2 couples with intellectual disabilities, and one mother with intellectual disability, interviews with intellectually disabled persons and support worker of the Home.	Showing the importance of love, partnership and marriage in the process of rehabilitation of people with intellectual disabilities	Grütz (2007)
133 persons with intellectual disability (including 91 men), age: 17-25 (Poland)	Qualitative research: Medical and nursing interview; sexuality, gender, changes in adolescence	The low knowledge about the sexuality and gender (especially about the opposite sex)	Kijak (2009)
15 adults with intellectual disability (Ireland)	Qualitative research: Focus group method, individual conversations and discussion groups for men and women; intimate relationships – needs and barriers, knowledge on sexuality	Insufficient formal sexual education; participants use other sources of information on sexuality; they would like to have partners and believe they have the same needs as others but often encounter barriers in the environment (e.g. social workers or parents) and even if they form intimate relationships they keep them in secret	Kelly, Crowley, Hamilton (2009)

60 students with mild and moderate intellectual disability attending a vocational school; age: 15 and 20 (Turkey)	Quantitative research: Diagnostic survey (quantitative research analyzed in SPSS); knowledge, opinions and attitude of people with intellectual disability towards their sexuality	51,7% respondents were not formally educated about their sexuality; the level of knowledge about sex rather low both in case of men and women	Isler, Tas, Beytut, Conk (2009)
Men (5) and women (25) with intellectual disabilities	Qualitative research: Environmental interviews about situation of intellectual disability men and women who stayed in special social care centers and thereafter they functioned by themselves.	Surveyed men lived with women with disabilities. The couples were left alone with their problems (without any support from their families). The men had low awareness of their own sexuality, fulfilling the roles of a partner and a father in a family.	Lizoń-Szłapowska (2011)
5 men (or teenage boys) with intellectual disabilities living in three separate community-base homes, 18 support workers employed in the homes (Australia)	Qualitative research: Grounded theory, study focused on 5 men with moderate to profound intellectual disability; research data collected from several sources: semi-structured interviews with support workers, participant observation, analysis e.g. procedures, environmental, geographical and architectural setting	Four topics: sexual health, masculinity, gender, gendered caring roles. The results show how sexuality can be constructed by staff and environment.	Wilson, Parmenter, Stancliffe, Shuttleworth (2011)
10 students (4 men and 6 women) with mild intellectual disability aged 17-19, attending a vocational special school (Poland)	Qualitative research: Narrative interview; students' knowledge on sexuality, opinions and experiences referring to love, relationships	Participants were aware of anatomical and personality features differentiating people of opposite sexes as well as differences in their roles. All of them also had some knowledge about sex and its consequences, pubescence, fertilization, pregnancy and contraceptives. They identified themselves with their gender (for men, the possibility of practicing sport, strength building and resourcefulness were important). For everyone setting up a family and having children was an important goal in life. They also declared that love is very important to people and would like to make a decision about the choice of their partner on their own.	Antoszewska, Ćwirynkało, 2011, 2012; Ćwirynkało, Antoszewska 2015
29 males with intellectual disabilities: 15 with mild intellectual disabilities, 14 with moderate intellectual disabilities (Poland)	Qualitative research: Ethnographic interviews. General problem: Lifestyle of adults both genders Particular topics: concepts of self-image as adult males, love life, mating, intimate relationships	For 29 males: 1 male was in happy marriage, 1 in meaningful relationship with female. 28 were single (2 were divorced) without love life and sexual partner. 27 were seriously interested in females and starting new love relationships. All males declared and described with details desired females' physical and psychological qualities of attractiveness	Borowska-Beszta (2013)

35 self-advocates (men and women) with intellectual and developmental disabilities (USA)	Qualitative research: Nominal group technique; defining and experiencing sexuality in the context of participants' identities as self-advocates	Themes relating to sexual self-advocacy: knowing and respecting themselves and others, choices, speaking up, getting information, healthy relationships, interdependence. Facilitators of sexual self-advocacy were also identified: expanding access to information and sexual health service, removing systemic barriers, education, counseling, giving opportunities for sexual expression.	Friedman, Arnold, Owen, Sandman, (2014)
9 adults with intellectual disability (Great Britain)	Qualitative research: Phenomenology, interview;experiences of adults in intimate relationships	Four themes: desiring relationships, expressing sexuality, having relationships; and who has control? Intimate relationships were perceived by all participants as desired, important and fulfilling a variety of their needs. Nonetheless, challenges related to intimate relationship were also identified.	Rushbrooke, Murray, Townsend (2014)
19 adults with intellectual disability – participants of a self-advocacy group (Malta)	Qualitative research: Inclusive research methods – self-advocates in the role of co-researchers (recorded focus group meetings - interviews, both for females and males together and separate for the two sexes; during the last two meetings additional materials – pictures, story books, video clips were used); the perceptions of sexuality of the people with intellectual disability in the context of social and cultural norms	Participants were not only aware of their sexuality but also how it was perceived by others. They said they needed more opportunities to socialize with people their age and argued that society had to be educated about the rights of people with ID to have relationships as they often feel overprotected by their family members. Opposing threads of thought were identified among participants "indicating a possible internal battle between what people with intellectual disability have been brought up to believe and what their parents insist on in contrast to the feelings and wishes they have themselves" (p. 37).	Azzopardi-Lane, Callus, (2015)
16 adults with intellectual disability (Spain)	Qualitative research: Narrative interview; sexuality and relationships of people with intellectual disability	Most participants would like to have a partner and form a relationship; adults with intellectual disability are more autonomous today and feel more self-control over their lives although they still encounter barriers.	Rojas, Haya, Lásaro-Visa, (2016)

In total, 13 studies were included in the review presented in Table 1. A lot of them focus on the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. They are, in many cases, exactly the same as those of the able-bodied. Although, some researchers point to the lack of knowledge of males with intellectual disabilities on topics connected with sexuality (Isler, Tas, Beytut, Conk, 2009, Kelly, Crowley, Hamilton, 2009, Kijak, 2009, Antoszewska, Ćwirynkało, 2011, 2012, Ćwirynkało, Antoszewska, 2013, 2015), it is emphasized that their desire to have close, intimate (not necessarily sexual) relationships with others is in many cases essential for them and positive experiences in this sphere can increase their quality of life (e.g. Schwier, 1994, Kelly, Crowley, Hamilton, 2009, Rushbrooke, Murray, Borowska-Beszta 2013, Townsend, 2014, Rojas, Haya, Lásaro-Visa, 2016). Furthermore, personal agency, autonomy, and choice are emphasized within these findings (Kelly, Crowley, Hamilton, 2009, Friedman, Arnold, Owen, Sandman, 2014, Azzopardi-Lane, Callus, 2015, Rojas, Haya, Lásaro-Visa, 2016).

In spite of the fact that people in the environment of adults with intellectual disabilities are aware of their needs as far as their sexuality, friendship and love are concerned, they still encounter various problems on the way to fulfill the needs. Such situation might take place both within the family and in institutions. Adults with intellectual disabilities living with their family of origin 'run the risk of being overprotected and unexposed to sexual experiences and sex education' (Azzopardi-Lane, Callus, 2015: 35). The situation of people in institutions can be even more difficult. Over 20 years ago Karin Melberg Schwier (1994) wrote that "relationships in the human service system, where the emphasis is all too often on the «system» rather than the «human», are frequently, almost routinely ignored, punished and actively discouraged" (p. 5-6). More recent research suggests that it has not changed much.

Interestingly enough, in relation to male sexuality, disability does not have to be associated with a diminution of masculinity but also with a surfeit of masculine qualities. However, this surfeit is visible in *posing* a sexual risk instead of being vulnerable to it (Staples, 2011). As Banks (2014) reports, young people with learning difficulties are over-represented in figures of sexually harmful behavior. The analysis of various research (see: Banks, 2014) allows us to speculate that this may be due to the following factors: 1) the more repetitive aspects of their offending behavior, 2) deficits in social interactions, lack of necessary social skills, 3) being more vulnerable to the influence of delinquent peers, 4) low impulse control, 5) poor nurturing family environment, also with early experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse, or 6) simply being more likely to be caught than typically developing peers. What is also worth noting, the sexual offender statistics refer mostly to men as female sexual abusers feature much less in them.

Research on Fatherhood

Research on parenthood of people with disabilities revolve around three perspectives, none of which seems to have been given enough scholarly attention: the risk perspective (aimed at finding hazards for children related to parents' deficits), the functional perspective (concentrated on the impact of an impairment and experienced difficulties), and the barrier perspective (environmental factors and support that determine the quality of parenting) (Parchomiuk, 2014). In table 2. we present 4 studies where men with intellectual disabilities were (also) participants and/or research subjects.

The analysis of international studies indicates that, although in recent years there has been an increased interest in research referring to parents and parenting by people with intellectual disabilities, the overwhelming majority of studies are about mothers and, despite the titles often refer to parents, the samples usually consist of mothers only (Mayes, Sigurjónsdóttir, 2010). A review of the studies allowed us to identify just a small number where an intellectually disabled parent's gender was important. Usually, by referring to parents when writing about families, authors ignore the distinction between mothers and fathers and the term parents acts a shorthand or proxy for mothers (Llewellyn, Traustadóttir, McConnell, Sigurjónsdóttir, 2010). As a result, there are only four studies referring specifically to men that we decided to choose and include in Table 2. All of the studies presented in the table challenge the assumption that men with intellectual disabilities either bring troubles of their relationships or are exploitative. On the contrary, they can be supportive and even if they do not fulfill the traditional breadwinning role, they do contribute their contributions may come in the form of increments to family's human capital.

Table 2. *Research on Fatherhood and Intellectual Disabilities*

Participants/ country	**Method and research subject**	**Results**	**Reference**
Secondary analysis of interviews with 55 mothers with intellectual disabilities – material from 3 projects: (1) Project 1: 33 parents (20 mothers and 13 fathers) with intellectual disabilities, (2) Project 2: 30 people from 24 families where at least one parent had intellectual disability, (3) Project 3: 25 families where at least one parent had intellectual disability	Qualitative research: Review of data sources (interview transcripts, case records, observational notes, documentary evidence, research logs) coming from 3 previous projects conducted by the authors; Aim: to critically examine the view that mothers with intellectual disabilities are either used, abused, or abandoned by men in their lives.	The majority of mothers had maintained a long-term, stable relationships with their partners. The incidence of intellectual disability among the partners was high (15). Most of the men were supportive. Only less than a quarter were abusive and the lack of support from some partners was due to such stressors as loss of support, the removal of children or health problems.	Booth, Booth (2002)
One father (a co-author of the article) with a moderate intellectual disability, an active member of a self-advocacy group (Australia)	Qualitative research: A case study, interview; experiences of a father with an intellectual disability	The study shows that a man with an intellectual disability (together with a woman with an intellectual disability) can raise a 'normal', happy family.	Strike, McConnell (2002)
(1) Project 1 – 7 pregnant women with intellectual disabilities (Australia); (2) Project 2 – 75 people: 8 families headed by people parents with intellectual disabilities and all their support personnel (Iceland)	Qualitative research: Two research projects: (1) the Australian study – phenomenological enquiry into the meaning of becoming a mother for women with intellectual disabilities (2)the Icelandic study – ethnographic and narrative inquiry on how the health and social services systems respond to the needs of families headed by parents with intellectual disabilities from the time of pregnancy. In both studies in-depth interviews and participant observation were used.	Fathers-to-be – similarly to mothers' to-be – experienced heightened emotional responses during their partners' pregnancy, but – in order not to be excluded – they had to try harder to make sure they were consulted on any decisions about the pregnancy (e.g. abortion). The men were found to be proud of their new role and tried to do their best to prepare for the arrival of their babies. Female and male participants of the two sties viewed and experienced pregnancy and postpartum differently, which, as a consequence, made their support needs different as well (e.g. they were seeking support from different circles: mothers from their innermost, closest relatives, fathers from advocates and practitioners).	Mayes, Sigurjónsdóttir, 2010
2 Fathers with mild intellectual disability	Qualitative research: Phenomenological study, in-depth interviews, analysis of documents and observations. The mail purpose: gain knowledge about fathers with intellectual disabilities, factors that positive effect on them, and social support.	Success factors of fulfilling the role of fathers: (1) having secure financial situation, (2) the disability is not the most important feature and does not dominate their identity, (3) not living under the pressure of losing custody of the children, (4) being positive that people in their environment are in favor of them being fathers.	Ahlund (2010)

Research on Self-determination

Decision-making is another feature that is also connected with masculinity. Actually, as Wilson et al. (2013) argue, described in literature gendered powerlessness of men 'arises through both cognitive impairment and limited opportunities for independent decision-making. Table 3. includes a short review of 4 studies referring to self-determination of males with intellectual disabilities.

Table 3. *Research on Self-Determination of Males with Intellectual Disabilities*

Participants	**Method and problems**	**Results**	**Reference**
10 men with intellectual disabilities aged 17-21, sentenced and taken into a care of probation officer (Poland)	Qualitative research: Analysis of documents	Low standard of living of the participants, unemployment or low-paid jobs (which makes it difficult to pay the compensation payment or the court costs), negative influence of the environment, alcohol addictions	Wasilewska (1999)
301 adults: 149 with a mild intellectual disability, 93 with a severe intellectual disability, 59 with a developmental disability without concomitant intellectual impairments (USA)	Quantitative research: The Arc's Self-Determination Scale, Autonomous Functioning Checklist, the Adult Version of the Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale, the Life Choices Survey; self-determination and autonomy of adults with intellectual disabilities	Intellectual disability turned out not to be a significant determinant of either self-determination or autonomous functioning. Opportunities to make choices contributed positively to participants' self-determination and autonomy.	Wehmeyer, Garner (2003)
Adults with mild-to-moderate learning disabilities (including 5 men) recruited through day-centers and residential care homes (England)	Qualitative discourse analytic study; expression of dissatisfied with services and staff practices, choice and control	Participants complained about staff as being controlling and directive. The people with learning disabilities are often disempowered by the staff who should support them	Jingree, Finlay (2013)
Adults with intellectual disabilities living in 4 social welfare homes (Poland)	Qualitative research: Grounded theory, interviews, participant observation; the analysis of the situation of intellectually disabled residents of social welfare home	Staff of social welfare homes do not always diagnose the needs of their residents appropriately. Attitudes toward sexual needs of residents: (1) underestimating, (2) diminishing, (3) controlling the sexual sphere, (4) 'tacit consent' to fulfill sexual needs. A gap between declarations and behavior toward residents' intimate needs were observed. Other higher level needs (individuality, confidence, independence) are fulfilled depending on a person's possibilities and abilities.	Niedbalski (2016)
21 adults with intellectual disabilities (including 13 men) from rural or small urban environments who participated in classes of a Mutual Aid Home for the Intellectually Disabled (Poland)	Qualitative research: interviews referring to 5 categories of support (substantial, emotional, informative, valuating, instrumental).	Participants obtain emotional, instrumental, informative and valuating support especially from their closest family members. Apart from that, valuating and informative support is given by the personnel of Mutual Aid Home). The sources of financial support are the government (disability pensions) and sometimes close family members	Ostasz (2009)

Discussion

The analysis of literature and research referring to intellectual disability and masculinity highlights the importance of gendered perspective. We realize that there are many aspects of functioning that could be considered as common to both men and women with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, it is assured that there are certain environmental factors, such as social attitudes, cultural factors, barriers and support services, that are in many ways the same to all adults with intellectual disabilities. However, we believe that a focus of gender is crucial for at least two reasons. First, the experiences of men and women with intellectual disabilities might be very different and this can be due to the second reason, namely different social expectations and requirements we have towards boys/men and girls/women. This is also visible in the practice of involuntary sterilization - it has been historically aimed at women, not men with disabilities (Zaremba, Bielawski, 2011), which may be due to the beliefs about women's and men's rights or genetic inheritance. As Hällgren et al. (2015) write, becoming a boy/ a man is not only something personal, rather the process is also done in relation to collective ideas of boyhood and manhood. Therefore we believe that just like in case of able-bodied men, also the construction of masculinity identity/identities of intellectually disabled men is affected by certain cultural, historical, social, political, economic, ethnic, religious and gender values. There is also another point worth mentioning. Even a brief analysis of two research fields (studies referring to men with intellectual disabilities and studies referring to women's with intellectual disabilities) indicates very clearly that the first one is a new field – a research field 'in the making' which just begins to attract more attention. Perhaps this could be due to the accessibility of the samples (as women could be more easily identified and/or are less reluctant to take part in the research) and/or the lack of funding.

Conclusion

In this paper we set out to examine the relationships between masculinity and intellectual disability. In our opinion the place of gender needs to be considered in theory and research referring to adults with intellectual disabilities. Men with such disabilities develop, negotiate or reject roles that are often different in character from those of women. There is also an additional problem, that emerges from the analysis of the masculinity concepts of adult males with disabilities. We believe, that there are two dominant categories of masculinity of adults with intellectual disabilities on the one hand, a traditional one, because men want to exist in the traditional roles. On the other hand, males with intellectual disabilities realize in their lives the *progressive paradigm* of manhood, especially the *possible masculinity* type and the implementation of the key elements of an adult male living is set by them aside for the future.

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The Effectiveness of Social Stories among Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Meta- Analysis

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Abstract

Social Stories are individualized short stories used to assist children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social situations by describing and explaining appropriate behavior and providing examples of appropriate responses. The purpose of this paper is to explore Social Stories when used with children and adolescence with Autism Spectrum Disorders .This behavioral intervention is frequently used within the ASD population to address their difficulty with Theory of Mind or understanding and interpretation of situations, or others thoughts, feelings, or emotions. Results suggest that Social Stories have been utilized to improve many types of behaviours including prosocial behavior, social communication, conversational skills, on-task behavior, out-of-seat behavior, reciprocal interactions, decreasing "socially inappropriate and undesirable behaviors, acceptable verbal greeting initiations, self-regulation, and overall social skills among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders.social stories seem to be a promising practice that warrants future research. Results will be discussed and future directions for research will be addressed.

Keywords. Social Stories , children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders multimedia social stories, video modeling, musically adapted social stories, written social stories, picture , meta- analysis.

Introduction

Autism is a complex neurological disability that is diagnosed in increasingly large numbers of children. Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are less able to learn social rules, conventions and behaviours by intuition compared with their typically developing peers. This may impact upon social interaction, social integration, learning and mental health and on occasions may lead to high levels of anxiety and or challenging behaviours(Barry Wright et al., 2016).

It is estimated that 1 in 88 children have some form of autism, with the most obvious signs and symptoms emerging between 2 and 3 years of age. Boys are four times as likely to have the disorder than girls. (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2014). Children with ASD often exhibit social deficits including decreased eye contact, poor play skills and an inability to interact with peers and form friendships, poor appreciation of social cues, and socially inappropriate behaviour (Wright and McCathren,2012). Unfortunately, ASD is a disorder people have to live with their entire lives (Johnson, 2015). As of now there is no cure for autism, however there are several behavioral interventions and therapies that are helpful in treating different symptoms of autism (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2014). Therapy is needed for life, but when a good regimen is found people with autism are able to be successful, as well as work and live independently (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2014). A teaching intervention of increasing popularity used to increase prosocial behavior and decrease problem behavior in young children with autism is Social Stories (Wright and McCathren,2012).

Social Stories are individualized short stories used to assist children with ASD in understanding social situations by describing and explaining appropriate behavior and providing examples of appropriate responses. These short stories outline specific steps for implementing the appropriate social skill and include short text and pictorial cues. The Social Story assists the child’s accurate understanding of specific social information in a given setting or circumstance(Wright and McCathren,2012).The social stories used under Gray’s (1998, 2000, 2004) approach contain the following types of sentences:

1. *Descriptive sentences*: These sentences appear at the beginning of the social stories. They describe situations and the people involved in them, what is going to happen, and the causes of events. They also address the following questions: Where? Who? What is going to happen?
2. *Perspective sentences*: These sentences describe internal feelings—the sensations, wishes, emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs of people in the situations depicted. These sentences are very important because they contain information that is not available to children with ASD.
3. *Directive sentences*: These sentences present social cues within situations and indicate the expected responses of individuals. Such responses may begin with "I will try" or "I will attempt."
4. *Control sentences*: These sentences are added to the story by the storyteller and describe more general observations and thoughts to reinforce the information presented in the story.
5. *Affirmative sentences*: These sentences emphasize the importance of directive sentences; they begin with "It is good that . . ."
6. *Cooperative sentences*: These sentences describe others' actions, and show who these actions can help and how.

The ratio of the sentences is one directive sentence for every two to five descriptive, perspective, affirmative, and cooperative sentences. Based on Gray's rules, when care providers utilize control and cooperative sentences in a story, a control sentence must be used with a directive sentence, and cooperative sentences must be used with descriptive and affirmative sentences (Gray, 2004).

Purpose.

The purpose of this literature review was to look at the effectiveness of Social Stories on children and dolescents with autism spectrum disorders.

Method

This paper seeks to better understand the effectiveness of Social Stories when used with children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders. Article search procedures will be conducted using (a) electronic academic databases including EBSCOHOST, ProQuest Research Library, PsychInfo, and Psychology & Behavioral Science Collections. Search terms included will be: Gray's social stories, social stories, adolescent, children, and autism. articles were included if they were peer reviewed, scholarly articles. Only children or adolescents diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders will be targeted within this review. In addition, the search will include papers published from 1999 to 2015.

Results.

Social Stories have been utilized to improve many types of behaviours including prosocial behavior, social communication, conversational skills, on-task behavior, out-of-seat behavior, reciprocal interactions, decreasing "socially inappropriate and undesirable behaviors, acceptable verbal greeting initiations, self-regulation, and overall social skills among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders.

Multimedia Social Stories. Ozdemir (2008) examined the effectiveness of the multimedia social stories on the duration of appropriate social engagement of 3 young children with autism. Using a multiple-baseline-across-participants design, the multimedia social stories were implemented, and observations of 10-min play sessions were conducted three times per week. Study results showed an increase in the duration of appropriate social engagement for all participants and two participants also showed generalization to a classroom setting. The results from the study provided support for the use of the multimedia social stories without additional behavioral management techniques in increasing the social engagement of children with autism.

Daniella (2014) evaluated Social StoriesTM (SS) with three at-risk preschool children in a high-need public elementary school. Specifically, this study examined the use of a multimedia SS designed to decrease problem behavior and increase prosocial behavior. A multiple baseline design across participants with an ABC sequence was used to assess the impact of the standard SS and multimedia SS on the children's target behaviors. The results of the study indicated that the standard SS was successful in reducing problem behavior and increasing prosocial behavior for all three participating children. The results also indicated that the multimedia SS had positive effects on the children, further increasing prosocial behavior during intervention. Although the problem behavior did not further decrease when the multimedia SS was introduced, the low levels of problem behavior were maintained at a 3-week follow-up for all three children. All three children demonstrated maintenance of improved prosocial behavior during follow-up.

Video Modeling. Several researchers have explored the use of video modelling in combination with Social Stories. Hagiwara and Myles (1999) combined electronically presented Social Stories with peer modelling vignettes presented in a computer-based format to teach hand washing and on-task behaviors to three children with autism. Thiemann and Goldstein (2001) investigated the combined effects of written text and pictorial cuing with supplemental video feedback on the social communication of five children with autism.

Sansosti and Powell-Smith (2008) employed a computer-based format to present video modelled Social Stories to increase the social communicative skills of three high-functioning children with autism. Presented as a self-advancing slide show using a computer program, content of the personalised Social Stories was read out by a voice over and then modelled by a similar aged peer. Children viewed their video modelled Social Story once a day in their school setting, immediately before the targeted event occurred (e.g., recess). Overall video modelled Social Stories were effective in improving rates of social communication of participants, though additional social reinforcement and teacher prompting were needed in two cases, and generalization of skills was only observed for one participant. In summary, the VSM/Social Story package may be an effective strategy for teaching social skills to children with autism, one which capitalises on the strengths of both these techniques.

Scattone (2008) evaluated the use of video modeling in improving eye contact, smiling, and conversation initiations with a nine-year-old boy with his peers at school. Three different Social Stories TM were developed and implemented in a staggered fashion, beginning with the first to address strictly eye contact, then to address eye contact and smiling with the second, and the final, the implementation of eye contact, smiling, and initiation. The wording of each story was first shown on the video and narrated by adults, who then modeled the target skill(s) during a 5-minute video taped conversation. Presenting the child with the Social StoryTM as well as video modeling proved to be an effective way to improve his conversational skills.

Stacey, Dennis and Angelika (2010) investigated the effectiveness of combining Social Stories and Video Self-Modelling (VSM) to teach social skills to a three-year-old child with autism. A multiple-baseline across behaviors design revealed that video self-modelled Social Stories were effective at improving all three target behaviors: greeting, inviting to play, and contingent responding. In addition, these behaviors successfully generalized across settings, toys, and communication partners. Concomitant behavior changes, namely, increased levels of communicative behavior and levels of social engagement were also observed.

Vandermeer, Beamish , Milford , Lang (2015) investigated the effectiveness of iPad-presented social stories in increasing the on-task behaviour of three young children with autism. A single-subject with multiple baseline across participants design was employed with three 4-year-old children to assess intervention effectiveness during structured table top activities. Observational data were digitally recorded, scored, graphed, and interpreted using 10-second interval measures over 5-min periods across baseline, intervention, and withdrawal phases. he combination of the social story together with the iPad proved to be an effective intervention for one of the three child participants. These findings confirm that the intervention may be effective with some children, but not others.

Musically adapted social stories . Brownell(2002) studied the effect of musical social stories on four boys with autism, ages six to seven. In this single subject design study, a traditional social story and a social story set to music were the respective treatment conditions in the time series. Brownell used social stories set to original compositions for the musical version. In this study ,both conditions showed a positive effect and a return to baseline following their removal .Additionally, the musical social story proved significantly more effective for one of the participants. There was no statistically significant difference in effectiveness between the two types of social stories for the other three participants.

Pasiali (2004)studied the effects of social stories set to music on problem behaviors in one girl and two boys with autism, ages seven to nine. In this study, the social story was set to the tune of a song that the child knew and for which he or she had a particular affinity. The study showed that there was an immediate treatment effect of the musical social stories in reducing problem behaviors. In two of the three cases, the behavior did not rebound when the intervention was removed. In other words, for these participants, across all phases of the single subject design study ,the targeted behavior continued to decline, indicating that the treatment resulted in a learned behavior change.

Liff(2011) explored the effect s of using social stories set to music on the classroom behavior of two elementary age children with severe autism. A single subject design was used to measure the effectiveness of three treatment conditions: a no treatment control condition, traditional verbal social stories, and social stories set to a familiar tune. Results for the first participant were assessed on a percentage of audible attempts to communicate. Results for the second student were assessed on the frequency of out-of-seat behavior. The results showed the verbal social story to be a moderately effective intervention, while the musical story did not prove to be effective.

Written social stories. Thiemann and Goldstein (2001). investigated the effects of written text and pictorial cuing with supplemental video feedback on the social communication of 5 students with autism and social deficits. Two peers without disabilities participated as social partners with each child with autism to form five triads. Treatment was implemented twice per week and consisted of 10 min of systematic instruction using visual stimuli, 10 min of social interaction, and 10 min of self-evaluation using video feedback. Results showed increases in targeted social communication skills when the treatment was implemented. Some generalized treatment effects were observed across untrained social behaviors, and 1 participant generalized improvements within the classroom. In addition, naive judges reported perceived improvements in the quality of reciprocal interactions.

Kuoch and Mirenda (2003) used an ACABA design, with a children’s storybook in the C phase and a Social Story in the B phase, to determine whether the content of Social Stories contributed improved social behaviors or increased adult attention following reading a Social Story with adults. Results suggested that the content of the story, rather than increased adult attention, contributed to improving children’s adaptive behaviors.

Adams, Gouvousis, VanLue, & Waldron (2004) studied the effectiveness of social stories in decreasing "socially inappropriate and undesirable behaviors" in an elementary school student with autism (p. 88). Researchers identified four target behaviors, which included crying, falling, hitting, and screaming. The participating child displayed these behaviors with the greatest frequency and these inappropriate behaviors were addressed with a social story. The researchers wrote a social story for the student that described the target behavior in the context of homework completion; positive alternative behaviors were also included in the story. With the introduction of this social story, the student experienced decreases in each of the four identified problem behaviors. For example, the number of crying episodes decreased by 48 percent and screaming decreased by 61 percent. The student experienced similar decreases in falling (74 percent) and hitting (60 percent). The social story helped the child see that inappropriate behaviors during homework time could be replaced with more appropriate behaviors such as asking for help. The results of the Adams et al. (2004) study support the effectiveness of social stories, but are limited because only one child experienced the intervention.

Quirmbach, Lincoln , Feinberg-Gizz, Ingersol, Andrews (2008) compared two formats of a social story targeting the improvement of social skills during game play using a pretest posttest repeated measures randomized control group design. A total of 45 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ages 7-14 were randomly assigned to standard, directive, or control story conditions. Results demonstrated that the standard and directive story formats were equally as effective in eliciting, generalizing and maintaining the targeted social skills in participants who had prior game play experience and Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) scores from the WISC-IV intelligence test in the borderline range or above.

In their study, Reichow and Sabornie (2009) used a Social Story intervention to increase acceptable verbal greeting initiations with an 11-year-old boy who had a diagnosis of high functioning autism. A withdrawal design with a comparison condition examined the frequency of acceptable verbal greeting initiations during 5 min observation periods. Results showed no acceptable verbal greeting initiations during both baseline conditions, increased frequency of acceptable verbal greeting initiations during both intervention conditions, and maintenance of intervention levels of behavior with visual supports during the comparison condition.

Samuels, and Stansfield (2012). examined the use of Social Stories with four adults with learning disabilities and social communication impairments characteristic of ASD. This study employed an N = 1 multiple-baseline, across-participant, AB design with fade and maintenance probe stages. Each participant was involved in two Social Story interventions. The intervention and data collection was carried out by support staff who knew the participants. Results found that all target behaviours showed positive change during at least one phase of the study, although data indicated a return towards baseline levels across all behaviours into the probe phase.

A multiple baseline across participants design was used to evaluate the effects of Social Stories to help preschool-aged children with characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) increase their engagement in functional behaviors and use sensory integrative-based strategies to promote self-regulation. Three children, 3-5 years old, from a self-contained preschool classroom were selected to participate in the study. The intervention package included reading individualized Social Stories that discussed desired behaviors and self-regulation strategies. The researchers measured the percentage of intervals in which participants engaged in desired behaviors. The frequency of desired behaviors increased for all participants. The use of self-regulation strategies varied across participants. These findings suggested that the intervention was successful in increasing desired behaviors of the three children (Thompson and Johnston, 2013).

Hala Ahmed (2014)explored whether or not Social Stories intervention strategy has positive effects on the social skills of children with autism. Participants were ten children between the ages of five and seven who attended a school for children with developmental disabilities (Tarbya Fekrya). A pre- post design was used to examine the effectiveness of the social stories Intervention Strategy on the social skills of the target children. Findings from this study indicated the effectiveness of the social stories intervention employed in teaching the target children social skills.

Asmaa Abdullah (2014) explored whether or not Social Stories intervention strategy has positive effects decreasing problem behaviour of children with autism. Participants were ten children between the ages of seven and nine who attended a center for autism. A pre- post design was used to examine the effectiveness of the social stories intervention strategy on decreasing problem behaviour of the target children. Findings from this study indicated the effectiveness of the social stories intervention employed in teaching the target children problem behaviour.

Fatemeh,Ghorban ,and Shahram (2015) aimed to investigate the effect of a social stories intervention on the social skills of male students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The sample included 30 male students with ASD who were selected through convenience sampling and randomly assigned to an experimental group (n = 15) or a control group (n = 15). The social skills of both groups were assessed pre- and post-test using Stone and colleagues' Social Skills Scale (which included subscales for understanding/ perspective-taking, initiating interactions, responding to interactions, and maintaining interactions). The experimental group participated in 16 sessions of social stories training, while the control group did not. Overall, the results showed that the social stories intervention improved the social skills of the children with ASD in the experimental group compared with the control group. The effects of the social stories intervention were mostly evident in the subscales for understanding/ perspective-taking, initiating interactions, and maintaining interactions with others.

Picture. Adel Abdulla Mohammed and Amaal Ahmed Mostafa (2012) explored whether or not Social Stories intervention strategy have positive effects on the eating behavior of a girl child with autism. A girl child diagnosed as having autism disorder participated in the study. A pre- post- follow up design was used to examine the effectiveness of the social stories Intervention Strategy on the eating behavior of the target child. Findings from this study indicated the effectiveness of the social stories intervention employed in teaching the target child self management of eating.

Discussion

Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are less able to learn social rules, conventions and behaviours by intuition compared with their typically developing peers. This may impact upon social interaction, social integration, learning and mental health and on occasions may lead to high levels of anxiety and or challenging behaviours. Social Stories have been utilized to improve many types of behaviours including appropriate social engagement (Ozdemir, 2008; Stacey, et al.,2010; Samuels, and Stansfield, 2012) prosocial behavior (Daniella, 2014), social communication (Hagiwara and Myles,1999;Sansosti and

Powell-Smith, 2008), conversational skills (Scattone ,2008), on-task behavior (Vandermeer, et al. ,2015), out-of-seat behaviour (Liff,2011),reciprocal interactions (Thiemann and Goldstein,2001), reducing problem behaviors (Asmaa Abdullah, 2014; Pasiali,2004) ,adaptive behaviors (Kuoch and Mirenda ,2003), decreasing "socially inappropriate and undesirable behaviors (Adams, et al.,2004), acceptable verbal greeting initiations (Reichow and Sabornie, 2009), self-regulation (Thompson and Johnston, 2013), Self Management of Eating Behavior (Adel Abdulla Mohammed and Amaal Ahmed Mostafa,2012)and overall social skills (Hala Ahmed,2014);Quirmbach ,et al. ,2008) among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders.

Some limitations exist to the research synthesis presented here. First, the samples were relatively small. This is a typical limitation of studies with individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Second, the lack of classroom observations prior to the start of the interventions limited the researcher in acquiring a complete understanding of the external variables that may have impacted the results of this investigation. Specifically, a direct observation of each classroom’s language and reading instruction may have provided a deeper understanding of the participants’ background knowledge and learning characteristics. Most of the studies included did not include control groups or other forms of control that would enable one to attribute interventions received.

Although research is still emerging within the area of Social Stories, past and present studies offer encouraging insight to future intervention advancements when working with individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs)

Future Directions.

Although social stories were written specifically for Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) , groups with a different diagnosis could be featured in studies on the use of social stories. For example, children with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD) have academic, behavioral , and social needs that may impact their ability to be successful in the classroom. Additionally , though social stories were for improving many types of behaviours including appropriate social engagement, prosocial behavior, social communication, conversational skills, interactions, reducing problem behaviors ,adaptive behaviors, decreasing "socially inappropriate and undesirable behaviors, acceptable verbal greeting initiations , self-regulation, Self Management of Eating Behavior and overall social skills among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders, there could be a focus on different social skills such as study skills to increase appropriate social skills.

Further research is still required to explore the potential benefits of social story intervention. Such research may include large scale studies, and a further exploration of the exact influence of student attendance, teacher training, classroom conditions and treatment duration and intensity.

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The Effect of Storytelling on Increasing Arabic Vocabulary Skills in At-Risk Preschoolers

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Abstract

Storytelling is as old as the history of human being and has been used since the early ages of education starting by mothers and by all kinds of educators. The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of storytelling on increasing Arabic vocabulary skills in at-risk preschoolers. The participants in this study were 60 preschool children selected from three preschools located within three elementary schools in Zagazig Educational Edara. ANCOVA and Repeated Measures Analyses were employed for data analysis. Findings from this study indicated the effect of storytelling on increasing Arabic vocabulary skills in the target children.

Keywords. Storytelling, Arabic vocabulary skills, at-risk preschoolers

Introduction

Storytelling is an available communicative mean in storytellers 'command which makes audiences familiar with diverse ideas, feelings and thoughts that are delightful, exciting and entertaining for them. The storyteller's tale is a method for transferring and training the formalities stories, traditions, beliefs and history across the generations (Habibi, 2009). Storytelling is the art or profession of telling a story in the form of poem or prose which is carried out live to the audiences. The narrated stories can be in the form of discussion , songs; singing with or without music, illustrated or not along with images other tools. These stories may come in oral, printed or mechanically recorded forms and one of their objectives should be entertainment. In ancient times, history, traditions, religion, customs, and ethnic pride were transmitted from generation to generation by storytellers (Hejazi, 2005).

Since children like animals, these types of stories are the most popular tales among the children. Children mostly like the characters of these stories which are animals and these animals because talk and think like human beings. Children like to imitate the behaviors and actions of the characters in these stories (Dolakova, 2008). According to Dolakova (2008), some types of tales like repetitive and cumulative tales are very suitable for learning language because their plots are short and they contain repetitive rhythms which can assist children remember the plot of the stories and also enable them to reproduce words and structures in a very short time. In addition, these stories include some comprehensive answers for children's repetitive questions which make the teacher or parents exhausted.

A good amount of research has been done regarding the effects of storytelling in education. "Storytelling has demonstrable, measurable, positive, and irreplaceable value in teaching." Stories can help to enhance recall, retention, and application of concepts in new situations. Storytelling raises enthusiasm for learning new subject matter. (Coles, 1989) The excitement of storytelling can make reading and learning fun and can instill a sense of wonder about life and learning" (Bendt & Bowe, 2000 p. 1).

Georgiou and Verdugo (2010) refer to different reasons for providing storytelling to young learners. In a meaningful context, storytelling can combine listening, speaking, reading and writing. Georgiou and Verdugo (2010) believe that in a meaningful context, grammar, vocabulary and speech that can support comprehension are presented through stories. To Wasik and Bond (2001), stories can make language comprehensible and memorable.

Isbell, et al. (2004) explored the impact of storytelling on increasing the reading comprehension among young learners. The outcome of their study revealed that storytelling was effective for improving the comprehension skills among the children. They concluded that the children who listened to the stories had greater reading comprehension than those children who just read the stories. To Cameron (2001), storytelling is a kind of oral activity that has been designed for both listening and involvement, and it can make children participate in class activities. He asserts that eye contact between the teacher and the children can play an essential role in storytelling because eye contact is a kind of behavior which is natural in communication, and it can increase the communication ability among the students in the classroom.

Aram (2006) investigated the effects of an early literacy intervention on vocabulary and alphabetic skills on 156 children from low-income preschools in Israel and found mixed results in regard to increases on vocabulary measures. In this study, three preschools were randomly assigned to participate in each of three interventions: storybook reading, alphabetic skills, and combined. In addition, three preschools from a neighboring town served as the control group. As typical for this type of intervention, in the storybook reading condition, teachers read storybooks aloud to the children at the beginning and end of each book reading session. Teachers encouraged the children to actively participate by asking questions, making comments, and sharing their personal experiences before, during, and after the story reading. In addition, teachers asked open-ended questions, expanded on children's utterances, and discussed and elaborated concepts and issues raised in the book. In the alphabetic skills intervention, children were instructed in phonological awareness, such as segmenting words into syllables and sub-syllables; letter knowledge; and basic writing. In the combined program, one session focused on activities from the storybook reading intervention and one session focused on the activities from the alphabetic skill intervention. Aram assessed vocabulary using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), as well as a measure developed by the researcher in which 20 words (two from each storybook used in the intervention) were selected and children were asked to identify the words from a field of four. The vocabulary measures showed that children in the intervention groups significantly outperformed the control group in book vocabulary, but not on the PPVT.

National Early Literacy Panel (2008) also examined the effects of storybook reading on young children's conventional literacy skills such as decoding, reading comprehension, or vocabulary. The panel found an effect size of d=0.60 for shared storybook reading on vocabulary development. However, although the panel did examine vocabulary as a moderator variable, the studies included in the review included participants that were both preschool and kindergarten aged, and were from various socio-economic backgrounds. The panel did not specifically examine vocabulary development in preschool children who were at risk for later language/literacy difficulties.

So, present research study seeks to explore the effect of storytelling on increasing Arabic vocabulary skills in at-risk preschoolers. It addresses the following questions:

1. Are there differences in post – test scores mean between control and experimental groups on vocabulary skills test ?
2. If the programme is effective, is this effect still evident a month later?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 60 preschool children selected from three preschools located within three elementary schools in Zagazig Educational Edara . The participants were selected based on the results of teacher(female) nominations, screening for vocabulary reading skills, school attendance, and parental consent. Screening procedures of the participants included these steps:

Teacher nominations. The teacher was asked to nominate students who exhibited poor vocabulary reading skills and might benefit from additional instruction.

Screening for vocabulary reading skills. All children were assessed using The Vocabulary Test. Based on the results of these assessments, children exhibiting poor vocabulary reading skills were identified as at-risk and possible participants for this study.

School attendance. Regular attendance was one of the eligibility requirements to participate in this study. Previous school attendance records were reviewed, and children with potentially poor attendance were excluded from the study.

Parent consent. A letter introducing the purpose of the study and a consent form were sent to parents of the potential participants. Written consent was obtained before beginning of the study. In addition, an oral solicitation using understandable sentences was read to the preschool children by the researcher. Children without written consent were also excluded from the study.

Children were randomly classified into two groups: experimental(n= 30 , 20 boys , 10 girls) and control (n= 30 , 25 boys and 5 girls). The two groups were matched by age, IQ, and vocabulary reading skills . Table 1. shows means, standard deviations, t- value, and significance level for experimental and control groups on age (by month) ,IQ , and vocabulary reading skills.

Table 1. *Pre-test means, standard deviations, t- value, and significance level for experimental and control groups on age (by month) , IQ, and vocabulary reading skills.*

Variable	**Group**	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**t**	**Sig.**
Age	Experimental	30	61.35	2.25	-.735	-
	Control	30	61.95	2.76		
IQ	Experimental	30	114.15	4.68	-.816	-
	Control	30	115.25	3.79		
Vocabulary reading skills	Experimental	30	7.00	6.02	-.843	-
	Control	30	7.16	7.11		

Table 1. shows that al t- values did not reach significance level .This indicated that the two groups did not differ in age, IQ , and vocabulary reading skills(pre-test) .

Measure

Vocabulary test . was developed by the researcher for evaluating the vocabulary reading skills of at risk preschoolers .

To test reliability, Cronbach's alpha statistics was first employed . The result demonstrated the test produced patterns of responses that were highly consistent, $\alpha = 0.87$.

Test validity

Ten professors of psychology were given the test to rate the items. Agreement proportions were ranging from 90% to 100% .

Test scoring

The score on each item ranging from 0 to 1 score , and the total score on the test ranging from 0 to 22 points .

Procedure

Screening : The participants in this study were 60 preschool children selected from three preschools located within three elementary schools in Zagazig Educational Edara . The participants were selected based on the results of teacher(female) nominations, screening for vocabulary reading skills, school attendance, and parental consent.

Pre-intervention testing : All the sixty children completed The Vocabulary Test , which assesses Children's vocabulary reading skills. Thus data was reported for the students who completed the study .

Experimental Design: An experimental pretest-posttest control-group design was used in this study. In this mixed design, two groups are formed by assigning half of the participants to the experimental group and half to the control group. Both groups were pretested and posttested in the same manner and at the same time in the study. The bivalent independent variable was the storytelling training and it assumed two values: presence versus absence of storytelling training. The dependent variable was the gain in scores on vocabulary test.

Results

Table 2 shows data on ANCOVA analysis for the differences in post- test mean scores between experimental and control groups in Vocabulary test scores . The table shows that the (F) value was (246.60) and it was significant value at the level (0.01).

Table 2. *ANCOVA analysis for the differences in post- test mean scores between experimental and control groups in Vocabulary test scores*

Source	Type 111 sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Pre	10.148	1	10.148		
Group	401.575	1	401.575	246.60	0.01
Error	92.818	57	1.628		
Total	1297.277	59			

Table 3 shows T test results for the differences in post- test mean scores between experimental and control groups in Vocabulary test scores. The table shows that (t) vale was (17.53). This value is significant at the level (0.01) in the favor of experimental group. The table also shows that there are differences in post- test mean scores between experimental and control groups Vocabulary test scores in the favor of experimental group.

Table 3. *T. test results for the differences in post- test mean scores between experimental and control groups in Vocabulary test scores*

Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	t	Sig.
Experimental	30	13.20	1.34	17.53	0.01
Control	30	7.16	1.31		

Table 4 shows data on repeated measures analysis for Vocabulary test scores. The table shows that there are statistical differences between measures (pre- post- follow up) at the level (0.01).

Table 4. *Repeated measures analysis for Vocabulary test scores*

Source	**Type 111 sum of squares**	**df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between groups	661.250	1	661.250	363.148	0.01
Error 1	105.611	58	1.821		
Between Measures	794.978	2	397.489	193.121	0.01
Measures x Groups	596.933	2	298.467	145.011	0.01
Error 2	238.756	116	2.058		

Table 5 shows data on Scheffe test for multi-comparisons in Vocabulary test scores. The table shows that there are statistical differences between pre and post measures in favor of post test, and between pre and follow up measures in favor of follow up test, but no statistical differences between post and follow up test.

Table 5. *Scheffe test for multi-comparisons in Vocabulary test scores*

Measure	**Pre M= 6.76**	**Post M= 13.20**	**Sequential M= 12.86**
Pre	--	--	--
Post	8.43*	--	--
Follow up	8.10*	0.33	--

Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to explore whether there were differences in post – test scores mean between control and experimental groups on Vocabulary test scores. The study also examined if the intervention was effective, if this effect was still evident a month later.

The results of this study as revealed in tables 3 and 5 show that the storytelling intervention was effective in improving the Vocabulary test scores of children in experimental group, compared to the control group whose subjects did not receive such an intervention.

The findings of the current study were in line with the earlier studies. Joyce (2011) investigated the impacts of song picture books on the vocabulary acquisition among the children in kindergarten. He found that song picture books had a positive effect on increasing the vocabulary acquisition of students in kindergarten. Mohamad Rafik (2005) was another researcher in the area of storytelling who investigated the effects of storytelling on the elementary students. He found that storytelling was effective for the elementary students. Maasumeh Abasi(2014) indicates that storytelling is an effective way to improve the abilities of vocabulary learning for children in kindergartens. Al Rashid (2012) which reported that storytelling was effective in increasing vocabulary learning of less proficient young adults.

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Social Skills of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

Most research on mental health of individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) has focused on deficits. I have studied close interpersonal relationship, social exposure, self-assertiveness of 30 adults with ID, 24-56 years of age. This group has socials skills on average level, but individuals with ID were reported to have close personal relationship on average and high level. Close interpersonal relationship is only one social skill of individuals with ID, where level is high. Further research is needed to elucidate social skills by new methods and research instruments prepared only for these individuals.

Keywords: Intellectual disability, social skills, intelligence quotient, rehabilitation

Introduction

In 1905, Binet and Simon published their article on the first test to evaluate intellectual ability (Binet & Simon, 1905). Thus they began a distinct revolution in psychology. The level of intellectual functioning expressed by the intelligence quotient (IQ) was recognized in the twentieth century as one of key determinants of human functioning in society. It became a kind of a fetish whose role, as it soon turned out, was greatly exaggerated. An individual with a high IQ and developed complex cognitive processes (thinking and reasoning) was treated as an individual potentially satisfied with life. "Intelligence manifests itself in thinking and may even be defined as an ability to cope with difficult problems due to processes of thinking and reasoning" (Nęcka et al., 2006, p. 481). Nevertheless, the belief that a high IQ (well above the norm) is a measure of the quality and satisfaction with life is not entirely justified (Campbell, 1976; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Strelau, 1997). A period of interest in other determinants of functioning in life situations started in psychology. Their nature is social, therefore "such concepts as *social intelligence and social skills or interpersonal skills* and since the beginning of the nineties *emotional intelligence and emotional competence* became popular. The concept of social skills belongs to the same group" (Matczak, 2007, p. 5). The concept of social skills is complex and closely linked to the level of human functioning in society. This term defines basic equipment of every individual to enable functioning in a social group (Argyle, 1994; 1998). This applies to both individuals with intellectual norm and to intellectually disabled. Both of these groups live in different social space: family, local community or society.

In 2002, the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) published its next book tit. *Mental retardation, Definition, Classification, and System of Supports,* in which there is a new definition of mental retardation with not only guidelines for the diagnosis of individuals suspected of this kind of disability, but also the concept of support. Luckasson (2002) and other co-authors of the manual stressed the role of adaptive behavior in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities displayed in their cognitive, social and practical skills. For the first time the definition of this type of disability treated equally limitations in intellectual and social functioning (Luckasson et al., 2002). The most recent definition of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) of 18 May 2013, included in the classification of mental disorders *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* – DSM-5, confirms the assumptions of 2002. In this codification intellectual disability is a condition that is characterized by lower intellectual functioning and limits of adaptation in three domains: conceptual, social and practical (APA, 2013). Intellectual disability in this classification is classified as neuro-developmental disorders and divided into four basic levels (categories): mild, moderate, severe and profound. In addition, global developmental delay and unspecified intellectual disability were classified to a group of disorders associated with intellectual disability (APA, 2013).

Adaptive behavior, such as active and passive speech, taking care of one’s own safety, mobility etc., are a set of skills necessary to function in society regardless of the environment in which an individual with intellectual disability lives. This individual requires support in each of these domains (Schalock, 2004). While testing intelligence level of an individual with this type of disability seems to be mastered (Wechsler, 1997), the study of adaptive behavior levels generates difficulties due to lack of reliable and valid diagnostic tools. One of the recognized research instruments to measure skills of adaptive behavior (conceptual, social and practical) for adults and children from birth to 89 years of age is the adaptive behavior assessment system developed by Harrison and Oakland in 2000 (Harison & Oakland, 2000; 2003a; 2003b). This system seems to meet research expectations in this field (Sattler, 2002). It may be useful when planning support in functioning of an individual within 10 adaptive skills (Kostrzewski, 2006). Similar difficulties are encountered while examining social skills of individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. The problem is an objective study of the level of performance of activities related to social life and emotions, which accompany an individual in everyday life.

Social skills can be defined “as determinants that conditions effective functioning in social situations” (Matczak, 2007, p. 5). It is a direct consequence of social training, which is also affected by other components. The concept of skills can be treated in singular or plural, as a whole made up of several components, for example assertiveness, empathy skills or building emotional bonds. The term will be used further in plural, as a collection of individual, specific social skills.

Social skills are related to social and emotional intelligence. Both of these types of intelligence can be considered as the basis for the development of human ability to live in society. Social intelligence was introduced to a set of psychological concepts by Thorndike in 1920. It is an ability to understand and manage people (Strelau & Zawadzki, 2008). Emotional intelligence manifests itself in the ability to understand and experience own emotions as well as other individuals’ emotions and the ability to control emotions. This term was established in 1990 by Salovey & Mayer (Mayer et al., 2001). Emotions also constitute a base for both types of intelligence. This approach is of great importance for the diagnosis of individuals with intellectual disabilities who are not deprived of feelings and are fully capable of empathizing. This means that nothing stands in the way to study emotional and social intelligence of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their social skills.

Goleman (2007) describes the development of social skills. “Components of social intelligence, which I present here, can be classified into two broad categories: social awareness, which is what we sense in others, and social performance, which is what we do with that knowledge” (Goleman, 2007, p. 107). According to Goleman, social awareness includes:

- “Primary empathy: empathizing with others; recognizing nonverbal signals of emotions.
- Tuning : listening carefully; tuning to others.
- Empathic relevance: understanding thoughts, feelings and intentions of others.
- Social cognition: knowledge about how the social world functions” (Goleman, 2007, p. 107).

“The spectrum of social skills include:

- Synchrony: smooth contact at non-verbal level.
- Self-presentation: a compelling self- presentation.
- Impact: shaping the outcome of social interaction.
- Caring: taking care of the needs of others and acting in accordance with them”

(Goleman, 2007 p. 107). The components that make up social intelligence are also elements of social skills, which have become the subject of this study.

Method

Participants

The randomly selected sample consisted of adult participants of therapy workshops (100%), which is an institution for professional and social rehabilitation of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The surveyed group consisted of 30 clients of two therapy workshops from one province in Poland. Among them there were individuals with moderate (18 persons) and severe (12 persons) level of intellectual disability. The age of participants ranged 24 - 56 years of age. While selecting the sample an important principle in social research was applied – a margin of error of the sample (Babbie, 2006). Table 1. shows demographic and diagnostic characteristics of the entire study sample. Comparison of respondents allows to spot the differences: gender (66.7% = females; 33.3% = men), age and degree of intellectual disability (60% = moderate; 40% = severe). Education of respondents is as follows: primary school (53.4%), primary school with middle school (16.6%), vocational school (13.4%) and school preparing for job (16.6%). Respondents lived in urban areas (63.3%) and suburban areas (36.7%).

Table 1. *Participant Demographics*

Overall *N* = 30 ID only		
Adult age	24-56 years	
Adult gender	F = 20	M = 10
Level of ID	moderate = 18 persons	severe = 12 persons
Geographical location Suburban	11	
Urban	19	
Respondent educational level Primary school	16	
Primary school + middle school	5	
Vocational school	4	
School preparing for job	5	

Recruitment

Selection of the sample was conducted among a group of individuals who communicate by means of verbal messages. The period of their participation in therapy workshops was not taken into account, although the data showed that each respondent had been involved in the institution activities for at least two years. Family and financial situation was not a subject of the studies, therefore the data on this issue will not be analyzed. The individuals qualified to the study were participants of activities in the institution which is to prepare them for life in society, and for work, among others, on the open market. The study was conducted individually with each respondent who assessed their own individual effectiveness in performing tasks and activities listed in the questionnaire using a four-level scale, as described in words (definitely good, not bad, rather poor, definitely bad). If a tested person did not understand intentions of the question, an evaluator provided explanation controlled by formal requirements (Babbie, 2006). In case of incomplete answers, an evaluator applied an admissible form of asking extra questions (Babbie, 2006). The time of survey – according to the KKS-A(D) (KKS-A(D) – the Social Competence Questionnaire) instruction – as not determined. Each individual study took an average from 30 to 40 minutes.

Procedure

The aim of the study was to assess the level of social skills in adults with intellectual disabilities of moderate and severe degree who were subject to social training in therapy workshops. The point of interest was the level of social skills of participants of therapy workshops, regardless of their gender or age, assessed by means of the Social Competence Questionnaire (KKS-A(D)) by Matczak (2007). Therefore, social skills measured by KKS-A(D) are defined as "complex abilities conditioning efficiency to cope with particular type of social situations, obtained by an individual in the course of social training" (Matczak, 2007, p. 7). In connection with such scope of the study, the following questions were asked:

1 / Can Social Competence Questionnaire KKS-A(D) be used as a tool to study individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities?

2 / What is the level of social skills of individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities measured by KKS-A(D)?

3 / What is the level of social skills of individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities measured by KKS-A(D), determining the effectiveness of behavior in the following situations: intimate situations, social exposure situations, situations requiring assertiveness?

In order to determine the level of social skills of individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities KKS-A(D) – Social Competence Questionnaire by Matczak (2007) was used for adult non-students, which is a "self-descriptive questionnaire, and its items represent different activities or tasks expressed in an infinitive form" (Matczak, 2007, p. 10). KKS-A(D) is a standardized tool for observational research techniques of a survey. KKS-A (D) consists of three scales examining the effectiveness of behavior in the following situations:

- scale I – close interpersonal relationship (intimate situations), for example confiding to someone with personal problems, comforting a loved one, listening to confidences of others;
- scale ES – social exposure, for example handing flowers to a public person, public acknowledgment for receiving an award;
- scale A – situations that requires assertiveness, for example refusing to lend money to a loved one, refusal to religious agitators.

KKS-A(D) contains 60 diagnostic items and 30 non-diagnostic items, which are not taken into consideration when calculating the result. Diagnostic items allow to obtain the total score. Non-diagnostic items apply to activities unrelated to social character. These include five groups:

- artistic activities, for example "Arrange flowers into a bouquet", "Decorate an apartment
- for a carnival party";
- technical activities, for example "Repair a broken doorknob", "Replace a plug in an electrical cord";
- intellectual activities, for example "Solve crossword", "Play chess";

- sports activities, for example “Swim crawl”, “Throw a ball into a basket”.

Each scale has a fixed number of its own diagnostic items and the number of points that can be scored:

- Close interpersonal relationship – 15 items, max. - 60 pts., min. - 15 pts.;
- Social exposure – 18 items, max. - 72 pts., min. - 18 pts.;
- Self-assertiveness – 17 items, max. - 68 pts., min. - 18 pts.

The final result of the study is the sum of points obtained from answers to all diagnostic questions (max. - 240 pts., min. - 60 pts.), but it is not the sum of individual scales involved. The questionnaire contains 90 items and answers are scored on a scale (definitely good-4, not bad-3, rather poor-2, definitely bad-1). The points must be added up and then the numbers from confidence intervals specified in the KKS-A(D) must be used to get real results with probability of 85% for individual study and with probability of 95% for the group study. Levels and confidence intervals are also expected error term in the sample. The result obtained in this way can be related to sten scores specified in KKS-A(D).

Results

The results are provided in Table 1 including gender, age and degree of intellectual disability, raw scores obtained in a particular scale, level of social skills and total score. As shown in table 2, adults with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities obtained results with no significant difference. The respondents scored in different scales the following numbers of points:

- Close interpersonal relationship scale – mean result 42 pts.; min. result 24 pts., max. result 59 pts.;
- Social exposure scale – mean result 42 pts .; min. result 18 pts., max. result 69 pts.;
- Self-assertiveness scale – mean result 41 pts.; min. result 23 pts., max. result 61 pt.;
- Total score – mean result 160 pts.; min. result 98 pts., max. result 229 pts.
- The results of the studies allow to conclude that:
- 56.6% of respondents have an average level of social skills, and 36.6% of the respondents have a low level of skills;
- 53.3% of respondents have an average level of social skills in terms of efficiency in intimate situations and at the same time 23.3% of respondents have a high level of skills;
- 56.6% of respondents have a low level of social skills in terms of efficiency of behavior in situations requiring social exposure;
- social skills in terms of assertiveness are equal in size to low and average level (46.6%).

Table 2. *Level of Social Skills – Individuals with Intellectual Disability (Moderate and Severe Level)*

No.	Participant with ID			Close interpersonal relationship – scores and level	Social exposure – scores and level	Self - assertiveness – scores and level	Total result – scores and level
	Gender	Age (years)	Level of ID				
1.	F	31	severe	45 – a	51 – a	45 – a	178 – a
2.	F	36	severe	39 – l	47 – a	38 – l	149 – a
3.	M	31	moderate	40 – a	41 – l	39 – l	169 – a
4.	F	36	severe	59 – h	69 – h	61 – h	229 – h
5.	F	30	moderate	46 – a	47 – a	46 – a	177 – a
6.	M	24	severe	49 – h	45 – a	47 – a	168 – a
7.	F	28	moderate	41 – a	34 – l	37 – l	150 – l
8.	F	27	moderate	48 – a	56 – a	42 – a	179 – a
9.	F	27	moderate	40 – a	37 – l	37 – l	149 – l
10.	M	35	severe	24 – l	36 – l	27 – l	108 – l
11.	F	26	moderate	38 – l	32 – l	27 – l	126 – l
12.	F	30	severe	42 – a	29 – l	41 – a	144 – l
13.	F	35	moderate	36 – l	28 – l	23 – l	116 – l
14.	M	28	severe	23 – l	29 – l	28 – l	98 – l
15.	F	25	severe	50 – h	48 – a	30 – l	183 – a
16.	F	27	severe	39 – a	36 – l	32 – l	129 – l
17.	F	56	moderate	40 – a	18 – l	27 – l	118 – l
18.	F	33	severe	44 – a	40 – l	42 – a	154 – a
19.	F	37	moderate	40 – a	47 – a	37 – l	168 – a
20.	F	25	moderate	32 – l	45 – l	45 – a	149 – l
21.	M	50	severe	40 – a	38 – l	51 – a	171 – a
22.	M	30	severe	42 – a	38 – l	43 – l	156 – l
23.	M	31	moderate	50 – h	34 – l	45 – a	171 – a
24.	M	31	moderate	52 – h	42 – l	52 – h	178 – a
25.	F	28	moderate	48 – a	33 – l	33 – l	163 – a
26.	F	28	moderate	37 – l	56 – a	48 – a	176 – a
27.	M	34	moderate	50 – h	53 – a	52 – a	195 – a
28.	M	26	moderate	53 – h	52 – a	57 – a	202 – h
29.	F	28	moderate	39 – a	51 – a	40 – a	165 – a
30.	F	29	moderate	41 – a	52 – a	52 – a	193 – a
Result				7 – l 16 – a 7 – h	17 – l 12 – a 1 – h	14 – l 14 – a 2 – h	11 – l 17 – a 2 – h

l – low level; a – average level ; h – high level

Table 3 summarizes the minimum and maximum numbers of specific scales in KKS-A (D) and in the study and an average for the overall result.

Table 3. *Results of Research – Social Skills of Individual with ID*

Social skills by KKS-A(D)	**Results in KKS-A(D)**		**Results of study - individuals with ID**		
	minimum	maximum	minimum	maximum	medium
Total result – scores	60	240	98	229	160
Close personal relationship – scores	15	60	24	59	42
Social exposure – scores	18	72	18	69	42
Self -assertiveness – scores	17	68	23	61	41

Discussion

To the author's knowledge, this is the first study of social skills of individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities conducted by means of this tool in Poland. The obtained results allow to formulate a few conclusions. Firstly, it can be assumed that the obtained results allow to use KKS-A(D) in vocational (vocational guidance) and social rehabilitation for adults with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. The results can indicate whether an individual may perform work that requires frequent contacts with other people, or whether it is better when their professional activity involves a minimum level of such relations. Secondly, the results of KKS-A(D) show which individuals have serious deficits in social skills, which is an automatic indication to work with them to improve these deficits. The scores of particular scales reflect (of course not fully) adaptive difficulties which can be significantly minimized as a result of social training. An individual is perceived by immediate surroundings through their effectiveness in social situations. The criteria for this effectiveness are: as follows: achievement of one's own goals and behavior consistent with social expectations (Matczak, 2007). KKS-A(D) diagnosis of adults with intellectual disabilities allows to identify those social skills that must be developed or shaped competence to be developed or shape from the ground up to meet these criteria. Thirdly, the studies have shown that age and sex of respondents do not have statistical significance in the study of social skills in adults with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Fourthly, the results have indicated that the majority of respondents have a low level of efficiency of behavior in situations requiring social exposure and assertiveness. It is a valuable directive to continue work with those individuals in rehabilitation program implemented in therapy workshops.

Rehabilitation of disabled individuals is to bring them to possibly fullest performance of social roles and life tasks by maximum elimination of difficulties and limitations faced by these individuals. Rehabilitation is also a process of elimination of psychological barriers that exist in a disabled individual. Equipping individuals with intellectual disabilities with appropriate social skills will undoubtedly affect the effectiveness of rehabilitation in terms of social and professional life.

Conclusion

Social skills and their role in life of an individual with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities should be an indicator for individual and group rehabilitation programs, education and therapies in other institutions such as primary schools, middle schools or schools preparing for work. These institutions, which are a part of the system of social support for individuals with this type of deficits, may / must become an important factor in improving social skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Żółkowska, 2004). Social skills also affect social development of individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities in the context of their functioning at home, school and social inclusion (Lerner et al., 2005;

Lerner et. al., 2011). Future research requires the use of tools which study other social skills, such as peer relationships, acceptance of an individual in local community or communication skills. This tool may study social skills which enable social functioning and have a form of a self-descriptive questionnaire allowing individuals with moderate and severe disabilities to express their own opinions about themselves.

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Life Goals and Sense of Meaning or Meaninglessness of Life in Young People with Disabilities

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Abstract

The future, life aspirations and goals are of special value for everyone. In times of dynamic civilization changes and transformations, adolescents want to feel happy and fulfilled. Therefore, they plan their future life, set perspective goals to achieve satisfaction with their decisions and choices. While planning future structured life, youth with disabilities may encounter numerous barriers and limitations. They concern education, getting work and especially the sphere of setting up own family, despite numerous changes and trends of integration and inclusion. The article illustrates own research on life goals, plans and a sense of meaning or meaninglessness of life in young people with a disabilities

Keywords :Young adults, disabilities, problems, barriers, life aims.

Introduction

It ought to be assumed that people who are able to formulate and set their life goals, as well as to implement them in everyday life, are the individuals whose life is satisfying and complete. They not only meet their basic needs, but also aim for positive developmental changes, better quality of life and look for the meaning of life. Every individual strives to be happy attempting their life to be fulfilling having a lot of dreams and plans. While gaining knowledge about oneself and the world, one wants to determine which goals and desires can be achieved, what to strive for, what goals are to be planned in the further adult life.

Chrzanowska (2015) addressed the issue of adulthood in people with disabilities and recognized that "many researchers focusing on adulthood in people with disabilities note that this matter is marginalized in the special education, but also other fields of science, which concern disability issues," (Chrzanowska 2015, p.592). This issue has been addressed recently and is a challenge of our times, thus the options for the adult life still remain an open question for many young people with disabilities. It incorporates self-reliance, independence, making commitments, competences, quality of life, objectives, and plans for life, with a sense of their meaning or meaninglessness of life. Thus, "people who can set both small, close, daily targets and implement them, as well as more distant targets, operate in a more satisfactory way which enables their further development through the acquisition of subsequent competences. This favors task oriented approach to solving problems. In case of impaired efficiency, it reduces or even eliminates focus on deficits, transferring attention and commitment to the task one wants to do"(Brzezińska,,Kaczan, Rycielska, 2010 p.9).

It is worth to point out that since 1991 we have observed in Poland the development of professional activation offers for people with disabilities. A real indicator of this change is the legislation designed to improve the situation of people with disabilities implemented in 1989. These include i.e.: Constitution, the Law on professional rehabilitation of disabled persons, the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, Construction Law, the Law on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, the Bill of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Law on equal opportunities for people with disabilities (2007) and many others. Also such activities as: Operational Program Human Capital (OPHC) or Priority VI - The labor market open to all, or VII Promotion of social integration can be enumerated. Unfortunately, “people with disabilities are no longer treated exclusively while drafting projects, but are one of the groups at risk of social exclusion" (Wolski, 2010, p. 17).

Review of Literature

Young People with Disabilities and their Search for the Goal and Meaning of Life

Despite numerous integration and inclusion projects, social discriminatory behavior is still an important determinant for young people with disabilities. It poses the most serious barrier that is the psychological discomfort in the form of a conviction of social marginalization, exclusion, social distance, fear and uncertainty about employment opportunities, and performing responsibly social role of the employee in the workplace. Kowalik (1999) indicates in his paper the following types of discrimination against people with disabilities as distancing, or avoiding close social contacts, devaluation, or dissemination of negative beliefs about people with disabilities, delegitimation as sanctioning a negative attitude towards people with disabilities, segregation or isolation from the whole social environment, and extermination as destruction of people who can be classified as a particular social group, which is characterized by lack of concern and interest.

However, young people with disabilities wish to plan their lives, set life goals, plan life with meaning, and strive to obtain even small range of life satisfaction just like others. A young man entering adulthood begins to set life goals and tasks. According to Adler (Adler, 1986, p. 943), "the life goal is a primary objective pursued by an individual to achieve a specific form of superiority (feeling of power), which will allow them to compensate for the original sense of inferiority". Human actions are purposeful and task oriented. In the social and interactive model of disability," it is regarded as the effect of architectural and legal barriers, as well as mentality. A person becomes disabled because the social environment is not able to ensure conditions for them to enter into the role of a full-fledged citizen"(Bedyńska, Rycielski, 2010, p. 8).For a young person with disabilities, such issues as life plan, life goals and a sense of meaning in life are crucial. The plans, goals in life are "the product of the development, maturation, the result of multiple experiences in learning about the world, the result of reflections" (Szewczuk,1990, p. 210). Such an attitude is conducive to overcoming the problems of everyday life, but also life's problems, and coping with many difficulties. "Excessive focus on the past, and in particular in difficult situations, negative experiences, unsolved or poorly resolved issues are a source of strong, negative tension. For this reason, it is difficult to concentrate fully on what is happening today, not only on implementing one’s own plans "(Brzezińska, Kaczan, Rycielska, 2010, p. 19).

Also, the most important need for a man, especially for young people with disabilities is the need for the meaning in life. The questions posed in this field concern positive and negative experiences. In psychology, "sense" occurs frequently together with the notion of existence, or life. In this context, it means a need for a sense and the like. (See: Meissner - Łozińska, 2011, p. 71). According to Popielski (1993, p. 202), "experience of a sense of meaning in life can be described as experience of mental state which is satisfactory and encouraging to life by an individual. This is a subjective state, and as such - objective, but individualized, experienced in the process of engagement in life and mediated by the process of evaluation." Young people with disabilities may also experience feelings of hopelessness with own life, especially in difficult situations, associated with a lower sense of meaning in life, which is combined with a lack of sense, or lack of superior value. A sense of futility is the ground of many mental disorders. They include: a sense of being worthless, anxiety, neurosis, depression (cf. Frankl, 1978). Young people with disabilities often present a negative image of oneself, the world or even their own future, which is not without significance for putting one's own goals, life tasks and building a sense of purpose, and sometimes even a sense of meaninglessness of his own life.

Research

Method

Research was conducted using the method of diagnostic survey and elements of qualitative method. The techniques used included interview developed by the author and Osgood's semantic differential. The author's own research was performed in a group of 120 respondents by means of interview techniques. 60 subjects were young people with disabilities and the control group included 60 able-bodied young people. The study was conducted in province Podkarpacie in Poland at the turn of 2015/2016 as a part of the research into the life problems of people with disabilities, which has not been published yet. In order to accomplish the research procedure, the main problem was formulated in the form of a question: what are life goals, plans and a sense of meaning or meaninglessness of life in young people with disabilities?

Sample

Women dominated in the experimental group (63.3%), while the young men constituted 36.6%. A similar trend was observed in the control group where more than a half of the sample of healthy young people were girls (56.7%) and the young men constituted 43,3%. As for the ages of the young people with disabilities, the vast majority were aged 25 - 30 (70.0%), and the age band 18 - 22 included 30.0%. 73.4% of the subjects in the control group, which is the vast majority of the respondents, was in the age band 25 - 30, and the least number of subjects were aged 18 - 22 (26.7%). Vast majority of young people came from the urban environment, both in the group of young people with disabilities and healthy young people (66.7% in the experimental group and 80.0% in the control group).

The family status of the respondents did not appear too optimistic. In the group of young people with disabilities nearly all respondents (80.0%) live with their parents, and siblings (20.0%). It must be noted that despite adulthood none of the young people with a disability lived on their own. The opposite situation was observed in the control group where 33.3% of the able-bodied young people already set up their own families and lived on their own. When it comes to housing conditions, in a group of healthy young people dominated very good and good housing conditions as 86.6% of the subjects claimed and only 3.3% or one person acknowledged that conditions were not good. In the group of young people with disabilities 40.0% of the respondents admitted that their living conditions were not good, that they are not satisfied with their living conditions and the others were of the opinion that their living conditions were good, and so claimed 60.0% of the respondents of this group.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was also adopted that young people with disabilities have plans, goals in life on their personal lives, education, family, work - the same areas of life that able-bodied young people, however they experience the sense of meaninglessness of life apart from its meaningfulness. It should be observed that the life objectives and plans for young people with disabilities are the possibilities for further education, starting own family, getting the profession, material - existential security, personal happiness. It is worth noting that young people with a disability due to some health limitations, make life plans, decisions about the future always keeping in mind not only their own abilities but also limitations.

Results

Life Goals and Plans Concerning Setting up Own Family

A family is of a particular value for a modern man. For young people with a disability plans on setting up own family are one of the most important goals and aspirations. Despite problems and obstacles resulting from their disability, they want to live in and have their own family. My research showed that among the surveyed young people with disabilities 70.0% of the respondents admitted to have plans and goals in life to start a family. This group included also a significant number of young people who still do not know whether due to their disability they may plan to start their own family. 10.0% of the respondents claimed that they do not plan to start their own family in the future. In the control group that is able bodied young people, however, 96.3% of the respondents admitted to plan to start their own family, and only one person still did not know, that is has no plans, goals, assumptions related to setting own family in the future. In conclusion, it should be stated that young people with disabilities do not know, are not sure whether they meet a life partner to start a family because of the awareness of their own dysfunction, disease, health restrictions. This group also includes some individuals who were sure that everything they do fails, and especially in terms of managing to establish own family.

Desire to Have Children

Another challenge young people with disabilities encounter, but also an important goal in life is the desire to have own children. The study revealed that only 66.7% of the respondents with disability were convinced they want to have their own child or children. While 20.0% said that they are not prepared for the role of a father or a mother, or did not express the desire to have children of their own and the others admitted they did not know whether they want to become parents (13.3%). In the control group, however, all able-bodied respondents admitted that they want to become parents in the future (100.0%). So young people with a disability are often not prepared for the role of a mother or a father, and justify it with a fear of probability to give birth of a child with a disability, who might have similar health problems and limitations.

Financial Independence

The studied young people with disabilities were also asked whether financial independence plays an important role in their lives. According to the respondents, the majority felt that financial independence is important in their life, and so said 70.0% of the respondents, but up to 30.0% of the young people in this group admitted they did not know if it is valid or not. Also, none in this group of respondents stated that financial independence is not important in life. It can be concluded, therefore, that young people with disabilities feel that if there are problems relating to their own health, financial independence is not so important. It is second only to health, however, it can help in the process of treatment, rehabilitation and therapy.

In the group of healthy adolescents, all respondents that is 100.0% admitted that financial independence is important in life and awaited. It plays an important role in better quality of life and life satisfaction, well-being of a man and their satisfaction.

Objectives, Plans of Employment and Profession

In the literature, many authors emphasize the barriers and limitations, and difficulties associated with people with disabilities in the context of seeking to take up work. "Good internships started and effectively carried out in the framework of EU subsidies have brought the expected results. The situation of both disabled people and their environment improved, in particular in professional activation. Unfortunately, most of these actions have not found its continuation in the form of long-term projects "(Wolski, 2010, p. 17). Unfortunately, this group requires continued funding in the labor market. Many fears and uncertainties associated with the entry into a professional role are also presented by the disabled.

The study confirms that young people with a disability set plans, life goals concerning work and becoming a professional, but not all subjects. Among the respondents, 10.0% admitted that despite their education, professional training, they did not intend to or seek work, and explain this fact by their own health limitations resulting from the disability. In the control group, all able bodied young people claimed to have career plans, and the vast majority of young people from this group already had a job (80.0%). The subjects with a disability admitted that they want to work as a teacher helper, a social worker or a psychologist (50.0%) and an IT specialist (26.7%), a tailor (10.0%) or a shop assistant (10.0 %) and in other professions. In the control group that is healthy youth, the preference for professions such as a teachers (30.0%), an IT specialist (40.0%), a social worker (20.0%), a doctor / a vet (10.0%) was indicated. Therefore, it becomes clear that young people with disabilities prefer in their life goals, tasks and professions which are useful, but do not require such a high education as a medical profession, which has been omitted in this group, and was indicated by the healthy youth.

Adulthood, and the Meaning of Life in Young People with Disabilities

The young people with a disability were asked in the study if they reflect over their own lives, its meaning. The studies confirmed that most young people with disabilities perceive their lives as ordinary (40.0%), a minority of the respondents admitted to have "good life" (30.0%), but there were also subjects in this group, who found that their lives were grim as 30.0% of the respondents claimed). Young people with a disability perceived their life not only as ordinary and well arranged, but the notion that life is grim informs about negative feelings towards own life, its meaning, thinking about what they live for. Such statements are full of disappointment and despair.

The studied youth admitted that they often feel dissatisfaction with their own life (80.0% of the young people with disabilities), and only 20.0% said that they are dissatisfied with their own life, although often reflect on its meaning. They treat problems and stereotypes resulting from health directed towards them as barriers or a challenge. In the control group, 60.0% of able bodied individuals perceived their lives as ordinary and fascinating, and admitted that they get along well and feel happy 40.0%). The young people without disabilities did not feel dissatisfied with their own lives, perceived them as interesting and satisfied, very positive and thought very rarely about their lives in the context of dissatisfaction with it (26.7%).

The respondents were also asked how they behave when feeling dissatisfied with their own lives. Studies have confirmed that in the event of dissatisfaction with one's life young people with disabilities are full of despair, reflect on its lack of sense, wonder why they live and isolate from others (60,0%), weep and lament(20,0%) and are upset and shout (20,0%). In the control group, at times of dissatisfaction with one's life, the respondents admitted that they talk to friends, people close to them about their life difficulties (50,0%), and try not to show others that they have serious problems in life (30,0%), or seek some form of relaxation and try to relieve the tension (20,0%).

Factors Influencing the Meaning of Life in Young People with Disabilities

It was assumed in the study that well-being in life, favorable material situation may be important for young people with disabilities, as it has a decisive impact on a better quality of life and meeting basic and vital needs and the needs arising from illness or disability. Conversely, difficult, unfavorable financial situation of the family and the person with disabilities can have a significant impact not only on the quality of life of people with disabilities, but also on not satisfying basic needs, including the need for treatment, rehabilitation, therapy, instrumentation or prosthesis. For young people with disabilities difficult material situation causes a lot of barriers and restrictions in the pursuit of standardization of functioning, but also in meeting many needs, which in turn can lead to feeling of discomfort, marginalization, exclusion, that is, in a sense, lost not only for life, but in the sense that life has meaning and some reluctance to life.

The data from own research showed that according to young people with a disability, 50.0% of the subjects claimed that their financial situation, usually resulting from the situation of the family is good, this means that it is sufficient to satisfy not only basic needs, but many others that can increase the quality of life, and also feeling that despite the disability, life is meaningful and beautiful. However, 33.3% of the respondents said that their or their families' financial situation is enough to meet only basic needs, and their life, its quality and sense are not optimistic. Other respondents from the group of young people with disabilities (16.7%) admitted that their situation is difficult, and sometimes it is not enough for the family to meet basic needs, and this difficult situation was aggravated by medical expenses, rehabilitation, therapy and other expenses involved in the process of rehabilitation. This group of respondents do not see both good quality of life, the joy and satisfaction with life and the belief that life is beautiful and it has sense despite numerous constraints, obstacles and setbacks.

In the control group, however, significantly more able-bodied respondents (65.0%)claimed that their financial situation and their families' is very good and good and people are both satisfied with the quality of their own lives, as well as fully convinced as to the meaning of life. The rest of the surveyed young respondents believed that their financial situation is not very favorable, it is not enough to meet their basic needs (35.0%). These people are not fully satisfied with their quality of life and not always satisfied as to its meaning. The conclusion is that the financial situation of them and their families significantly affects not only their quality of life and treatment, rehabilitation process, but the affirmative sense of meaning in life.

Difficulties and a Sense of Meaninglessness of Life

Young people with disabilities are experiencing many difficulties resulting not only from a disability, but with a lack of understanding of their needs, barriers and restrictions, and often even social stereotypes and exclusion. In these difficult situations, they may not feel alone, helpless, which is not without significance for their self-esteem and feelings associated not only with the lack of meaning in life, but with a sense of its meaninglessness. Our study confirmed that the group of young people with disabilities frequently had such thoughts, approach and attitudes towards life: up to 45.0% of the respondents admitted that they often think so, and 16.7% believe that they think that way on the every day basis and the rest of them believe that they have such thoughts rarely.

However, in the group of healthy young people that is the control group, the situation is different, up to 80.0% of the respondents believed that this way of thinking is triggered very rarely in them, and 20.0% stated that sometimes they think that way, when they face sudden difficulties, problems of life, which they cannot overcome independently. So tested healthy young people admitted that they rarely feel dissatisfied with their own lives and see a sense of meaninglessness of life.

The studied young people were also asked in what situations they feel particularly a sense of meaninglessness of their lives. The young people with a disability stated that sense of meaninglessness of life appears in crisis, when everything "they do goes wrong," when there is a lot of failures and when they fail, nothing comes out, when they get depressed, and have a breakdown (so says 60.0% of the respondents). The subjects have also such a negative attitude towards life in a situation of social comparison e.g. "When I see that a peer, a friend is always better than me," - 36.7%, and in situations where they feel isolated, a distance towards them or social stereotypes are created.

In the control group, the healthy respondents pointed to other situations. The first option was the situation when something fails, and so said 45.0% of the respondents, but the second situation when such feeling of meaninglessness of life can occur is a situation of very poor school grades - 16.7% of the respondents' answers in this group, and the rest mentioned many other reasons, eg. heartbreak, loosing dear ones, death of a loved one or a crises, other traumatic life events.

It was also interesting to investigate in course of the study if young people with disabilities make comparisons of their own situation, problems, failures with their peers. As was hypothesized, the interviewees' responses confirmed that situation, which means that young people with disabilities not only too often make comparisons of oneself with their non-disabled peers' situation (83.3% of the respondents).These comparisons result in a very negative picture of oneself and one's situation that is as someone inferior, unwanted with problems and failures in life, and lack of sense of life, etc. In contrast, only a minority of this group of respondents do not make this kind of negative comparisons (16.7%). So the studied young people with disability not only experience the feeling of discomfort caused by their disabilities, but also the vast majority of them compares their problems with healthy, non-disabled peers. Especially such comparisons make them feel the difference in the situation of networking with the environment, having friends, the loved one, own family, work, the lack of barriers: health, architectural, psychological, mental, high self-esteem of young able-bodied people, ability to accomplish tasks, goals in life, independence and resourcefulness in life and a better quality of life, welfare and satisfying life and a sense of meaning of own life. Therefore, only a few in a group of young people with disabilities did not make comparisons of their own situation and problems in life with a group of healthy young people - their peers.

The study also attempted to determine how the youth with disabilities determines the level of a sense of meaninglessness of life. It was assumed that sense of life is a situation of reflecting on its meaning, and even its nonsense that is figuring out why the fate punished or hurt them, why they are different from their peers, why they have to live with many problems, barriers that surround them including stereotyping, marginalizing and exclusion.Long-term crisis situation, a sense of hopelessness and rejection, a lot of setbacks and life's problems can eventually lead to existential questions including the basic one about the meaning of life, or perhaps lack of its sense. More than half of the respondents from a group of young people with disabilities (65.0%) admitted that they felt a sense of meaninglessness of their lives and often adopted such thinking at the average level, and 25.0% at a low level and the rest of the group assessed the level of their sense of meaninglessness of life at a high level (10.0%). In conclusion, it is clear that young people with disabilities reflect on the meaning of their life and see it not only in terms of its meaning, but also its meaninglessness assessing it on average at a medium level.

This situation was compared with the control group. The healthy young people without problems arising from disability recognized that they mostly think about life, life goals, and believes that they have meaning, and if there are difficult situations, crises and thinking of the lack of sense in life, it was at a low level, and so said 96.7% of the respondents from this group, and the remaining percentage was the low level (3.3%).It must be concluded that the level of a sense of meaninglessness of life in a group of healthy young people is low in majority of them.

The study also attempted to determine how often young people with disabilities reflect on their own life and its sense. And so it turned out that study hypothesis was confirmed and

73.4% of the respondents from this group reflected on meaning and meaninglessness of their own life. While all the others, as confirmed by studies, very often and often reflected on their life and dimensions of its meaning or meaninglessness (26.6%), especially when they experience difficult or painful situations. The situation was differentin the control group. 40.0% of the able-bodied individuals reflected very often on their own life, how to live creatively, what goals and tasks to realize what direction to take for best well-being, a sense of life satisfaction, quality of life and its meaning. Only 36.7% believed that they sometimes reflect and 23.3% were satisfied claiming not to think about their life and its meaning or meaninglessness.

The studied young people were also asked what gives life its true sense (what values). And so, in the opinion of young people with disabilities the highest in the hierarchy of values were the closest family, who provide support, assistance, participate in treatment and rehabilitation, choosing routes and purposes, life tasks and so stated 80.0% of the respondents. In the second place in the hierarchy of values were friends who are important and offer help and support (20.0%). The respondents did not choose other out of many life values. The hierarchy of values indicated by healthy youth was similar. And so, youth indicated in the first place the family they grew up and eventually the one set up by them 70.0%, then friends (20.0%) and in last place was the faith (3.3). None of the able-bodied young people pointed other values.

Finally, the subjects were asked about ways of experiencing satisfaction with their own lives. Studies confirmed that 40.0% of the young people with disabilities admited that they are satisfied with their life, and 20.0% admitted that they only sometimes tend to be satisfied with their own lives and the other respondents, or 40% are fully convinced that they are not satisfied with their own lives and the problems experienced. In the control group, the answers were slightly different. And so many healthy young people are of the opinion that they are satisfied with their life (63.3%), and sometimes, that means there are times they are really satisfied with their own lives – 36.7%. Situations causing their satisfaction are i.e. good grades at school, group of friends and acquaintances, praise and acceptance from others, success and love, having a partner in life, a marriage, a family and a satisfying, well-paid job.

In the group of young people with a disability, situations causing their satisfaction were i.e. good grades at school, having friends, acceptance of the dear ones, and success in rehabilitation, therapy, treatment.

Conclusions

Analyzes relating to young people with disabilities are not easy, as they concern the young people who are on the threshold of adulthood and have to ask a lot of questions about their lives and goals, life tasks, challenges, simultanously trying to understand and accept their disability and difference, accept the meaning of life, or live in the belief that it is a difficult challenge, or perhaps it is meaningless. During the period of adolescence in young people there are many goals for future, forecasting challenges of adulthood, but also a lot of existential questions like: Who am I? What is the meaning of my life? What can I achieve in life? etc. "The key task for the formation of identity is to find the answers. A young man asks this question to oneself and to others, especially to those who are important to them. Looking for information about the I, they take up new tasks for themselves, and wait for feedback on their performance.The disability as a feature has an impact on what answer a teenager will formulate "(Wiliński, 2009, p. 208). They have to become aware of these features of disability, their own limitations, but also opportunities to understand the opinions and others assessments about themselves and realize opportunities to help, support.Finally, it is acceptance of oneself, and own disability and acceptance that despite disability one is a valuable person (Wiliński, 2009, p. 209). Finally, it can be concluded that the "individual approach towards people with disabilities, including their current state, that is not only the needs and skills, but above all, the degree of willingness to change their situation, can increase the efficiency of activation" (Wolski, 2010 p. 8). The problem of meaning or meaninglessness of one's life applies to each person, but in varying degrees of its severity. In relation to young people with a disability it is an issue of great importance, and requires specific, individual multicontext help and support. "The main areas of support should concern among other things: work, family, housing, education, leisure activities, but also participation in social life (ie. Political) culture" (Chrzanowska, 2015, p. 595).

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Examining the Computer Attitudes and Internet Attitudes of Substitute Teachers: Self-Confidence towards ICT*

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Abstract

The goal of this quantitative study was to determine the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The participants of the study included 348 substitute teachers studying to receive their teaching certificates in pedagogical proficiency classes at a university in Zonguldak, Turkey. The study included three instruments: Computer Attitudes Scale-Marmara (BTO-M), Survey of Factors Affecting Teachers Teaching with Technology (SFA-T), and Attitude Scale Towards Internet Usage (ASTIU). The data were analyzed through independent samples t-tests, Anova tests, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and regression analysis. The results indicated that there was a positive and a significant relationship between the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT. In addition, the results suggested that substitute teachers' self-confidence towards ICT positively affected their computer attitudes and internet attitudes.

Keywords :Computer attitudes, internet attitudes, self-confidence towards ICT, substitute teachers.

Introduction

People have witnessed many developments and innovations related to new technologies in different areas and observed the changes that have affected the routines of their life. This situation has had an impact not only on social, cultural, and economic aspects of the community, but it has had a substantial effect on the technologies used in the educational arena. In this information age, schools, which invested in new technologies, were able to successfully disseminate knowledge on the use of technologies among teachers to provide quality teaching and learning for their students. The most prominent feature of this era is that it is called the information age as people are becoming more aware of the fact that having access to a specific knowledge is easier through technologies such as computers and internet. Since obtaining information through technology saves time and effort, training people to effectively use new technology and establishing positive attitudes towards such tools must be considered as a pivotal concern.

With information age, changes occurred in the field of information and communication technologies not only brought comfort into people's life but it eliminated the barriers preventing effective communication and provided fast and effective communication among peers (Özgür, 2013). The rapid changes in new technologies enabled some individuals to develop positive attitudes towards such tools in order to improve their knowledge and effectively communicate with others. On the other hand, getting adapted to the rapid changes in ICT has become a challenging issue for some other individuals as they started to observe deficiencies in their self-confidence towards ICT (Adıgüzel, 2010). Several factors have dictated the computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence of people towards ICT. These factors included but were not limited to having an experience with computers in early ages, possessing a computer, and having access to ICT (Yucel, Acun, Tarman, and Mete, 2010).

Computer Attitudes

There have been efforts put into place in many countries to increase the instructional usage of computers in schools (Deniz, 1997). The widespread use of computers in schools has created fundamental changes in the perceptions of individuals, in instruction and learning, and leadership process (Deniz, 2000). In addition, the usage of computers in the classrooms has affected the attitudes of both students and teachers. There have been several definitions made about attitudes. Eren (1993) suggested that attitude is a recognition process of values that are associated with a person's own beliefs. According to Mathis, Smith, and Hansen (1970), attitude is attributed to a person's psychological thoughts, feelings and behaviors. In that sense, computer attitudes refer to the tendency of a person towards computers, computer use, and the effects of computers on thoughts and feelings of society (Deniz, 1995). In general, the computer attitudes include computer anxiety, self-confidence in computers, interest in computers, fondness to computers, and prejudice against computers (Lloyd and Lloyd, 1985; Marcoulides, 1989). Research has been conducted about computer attitudes and it specifically focused on gender, experience, and computer literacy (Tans, 1990).

According to research conducted by Coilis and Williams (1987), males were more involved and interested in computer related activities than females. In another research, Tans (1990) found that both males and females had positive attitudes towards computers and that there were no significant differences on attitudes towards computers between males and females. A person's experience about computers depends on several factors: taking computer courses, spending enough time on computers, having a computer at home, and being able to use computers for various purposes (Anderson, 1987). In a study, Loyd and Gressard (1984) suggested that there was a meaningful relationship between developing positive attitudes towards computers and being experienced on computers. Ventura and Ramamurthy (2004) investigated the effect of computer experiences on students' achievement. They found that there were no significant relationships between two variables. Tans (1990) indicated that individuals lacking in computer literacy may establish computer anxiety in their cognition. He added that there was a strong relationship between computer literacy and computer attitudes.

Internet Attitudes

Internet has been one of the most indispensable technologies that people use as a venue to reach to knowledge and resources. Comparing to a decade ago, people have frequently been using internet as an active tool to collect information from certain resources. In this case, internet is the biggest international web, which creates communication among all computers (Yalin, 2002). The importance of internet has become clearer in this information era. It is evident that the needs and attitudes of people, who constantly seek knowledge, have increased (Akkoyunlu, Saglam, and Atav, 2006). The use of internet has become common not just in business related activities, but it has widely been used in schools to allow administrators, teachers, and students to benefit from the advantages of accessing knowledge through technology (Gökçearslan and Seferoglu, 2005). Internet has been in education for different purposes including instruction, research, social media, sharing information, and as educational tools (Akkoyunlu and Yılmaz, 2005). Using internet teaches students how to take responsibility in reaching knowledge and establish learning experiences in their school or community. Students would be able conduct research and learn how to communicate with others about their research topics and projects (Altun and Altun, 2000).

Research suggests that providing professional development for teachers on how to use internet may allow teachers to pass their knowledge onto next generations (Dursun and Çevik, 2005). According to Usta, Bozdoğan, and Yıldırım (2007), there was a difference in internet attitudes of students based on their genders. They suggested that students, who had a computer at their homes, had higher internet attitudes than those who did not have a computer. Researchers claimed that students, who started using computers at early ages, had more positive attitudes towards internet than students, who started using computers during college years. Lastly, they found that students mainly used internet for educational purposes and social media. Another research results have showed that many universities prefer using internet in their classrooms as a convenient tool to teach certain courses (Gurcan, 1999). Internet enables academic researchers to have access to advanced universal technologies. Many students use internet to obtain information through electronic libraries and databases for their research projects or homework (Gurcan, 1999). Küçükahmet (2001) claimed that using internet for educational purposes should be mandatory for all schools as it provides oppurtunitites for students to adapt to new technologies and benefit from their advantages. He added that this approach would increase positive internet attitudes of the students.

Self-confidence towards ICT

Self-confidence refers to a person's belief in meeting challenges while performing on a certain task (Woodman and Hardy, 2003). Self-confidence towards ICT includes positive beliefs towards technology and communication related activities. Developments in ICT have dramatically changed over the time. Such developments have created fundamental changes in instructional and learning methods and strategies in school settings (Sam, Othman and Nordin, 2005). In this era, the use of ICT requires classroom teachers to be role models, productive, and effective in teaching and learning process (Tezci, 2010). Recent studies have focused on measuring the perceptions of students and teachers towards ICT. According to Madge, Meek, Wellens, and Hooley (2009), students use ICT to make friends and communicate with their peers and family. Kayri and Çakır (2010) claimed that students were willing to use ICT for life-long learning situations. Ma, Andersson, and Streith (2005) conducted a study and found that self-confidence towards using computers and finding the technology beneficial were two key factors affecting the attitudes of teachers towards computers while teaching.

Roussos (2007) has suggested that lack of knowledge in ICT should be considered as a disadvantageous situation for students and teachers. Lack of knowledge and experience of teachers about ICT creates lack of self-confidence and anxiety towards such technologies. Ertmer (2006) claimed that self-confidence was a strong indicator for teachers to use technologies in their classrooms. According to research, individuals with high levels of self-confidence had more tendencies in using ICT than those who had low levels of self-confidence (Sam et al., 2005; Shashaani and Khalili, 2001). Research also showed that gender (Olgletree and Williams, 1990), knowledge, and experience (Garland and Noyes, 2004; İşman and Çelikli, 2009) may be crucial factors in determining self-confidence of individuals. In a study, Bakırcı, Eyduran, and Erdemir (2009) found that teacher candidates did not receive enough training during the undergraduate years to develop their understanding on how to use computers for educational purposes. Lack of such training negatively affected the self-confidence of teacher candidates towards ICT (Acuner and İpek, 2011; Oral, 2008). In another study, Ekici and Kutluca (2010) indicated that the attitudes and self-confidence of teacher candidates towards ICT were positive in general and that genders and frequency in using computers were crucial indicators in determining such attitudes and self-confidence.

Purpose of Study

Research has been conducted to measure the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of in-service teachers and teacher candidates towards ICT, however only little research has been conducted to investigate the attitudes of substitute teachers towards technology. Moreover, there has been no research conducted on the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT in Turkey. As a result, there is a deficiency in research in regards to the perceptions of substitute teachers towards ICT. Therefore, this research examined such perceptions of substitute teachers to resolve deficiency in the field and to make a contribution to the literature. In line with this, the aim of this is study was to investigate the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT. In line with this aim the following research questions were studied:

1- What are the computer attitude and internet attitude levels of substitute teachers?
2- What are the self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT?
3- What is the relationship among computer attitude, internet attitude, and self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT?
4- How do self-confidence levels towards ICT explain the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers?

Methods

Model

This quantitative study included a correlational design to examine the relationship between the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT. The participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. The methodology of this research included a survey method, which aimed to describe a phenomenon in the past and present. The validity and reliability of the study were ensured using the member checking approach.

Table 1. *Percentages of genders and departments participating in the study*

Variables	**Group**	**N**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Genders	Male	93	26.7	26.7
	Female	255	73.3	100.0
Departments	Turkish Teachers	184	52.9	52.9
	Math Teachers	61	17.5	70.4
	Science Teachers	51	14.7	85.1
	Social Studies Teachers	52	14.9	100.0

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a university, which included substitute teachers studying to receive their teaching certificates in pedagogical proficiency classrooms. The study was conducted during 2014-2015 school years in Zonguldak, Turkey. It employed a survey model and a random sample approach. The sample of the study included 348 participants (see Table 1). The participants included 93 males (%26.7) and 255 females (%73.3). In addition, the study included 184 Turkish teachers (%52.9), 61 Math teachers (%17.5), 51 Science teachers (%14.7), and 52 Social Studies teachers (%14.9).

Data Collection Tools

Computer Attitudes Scale-Marmara (BTO-M): The instrument was developed by Deniz (1994) and includes 42 items. This 5-point Likert scale instrument included five possible responses: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. The reliability of the instrument was measured and the coefficient alpha showed reliability as it was .92. When the items on the instrument were examined it was found that some of the items such as 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 20, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, and 42 included reverse coding. Therefor the Likert scale for these items was treated accordingly. The validity of the instrument was measured using test-retest approaches. The instrument was used to investigate the computer attitudes of substitute teachers.

Survey of Factors Affecting Teachers Teaching with Technology (SFA-T): This instrument was used to measure self-confidence of substitute teachers towards ICT. The instrument was developed by Papanastasiou and Angeli (2008). The Turkish adaptation of the instrument was employed by Tezci (2010). The instrument included 9 items and was constructed as a 5-point Likert scale. It included five possible answers: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. The reliability of the instrument was measured and the Cronbach's alpha showed reliability as it was .76.

Attitude Scale Towards Internet Usage (ASTIU): The instrument was used to measure the attitudes of substitute teachers towards internet usage. It was developed by Tavsancıl and Keser (2005). This 5-point Likert scale instrument included 31 items and had five possible responses: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. The reliability of the instrument was measured and the coefficient alpha showed reliability as it was .89. The instrument was pilot tested with 132 participants for its validity and the Cronbach's alpha was found to be .84.

Data Analysis

This quantitative research included the examination of three instruments and their relationships. SPSS 20.0 was used for data analysis. After the data collection, the data were analyzed based on arithmetic means, standard deviations, independent samples t-test results, Anova test results, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and regression analysis. Independent samples t-test was used to determine the differences on genders of substitute teachers on the basis of computer attitudes and internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT. Anova tests were conducted to determine the differences on majors of substitute teachers on the basis of computer attitudes and internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT. Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the relationships between the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT. Lastly, regression analysis was conducted to determine whether self-confidence levels towards ICT explain the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers.

Results

Table In this part, the results are presented according to mean scores of substitute teachers on the basis computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT. The mean differences between genders and majors of substitute teachers were evaluated. In addition, the relationships among variables including computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT were investigated. Lastly, whether self-confidence towards ICT explained the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers was examined.

Table 2. *Summary of ranges, means, and standard deviations on variables*

Variables	**N**	**Min-Max**	**M**	**SD**
Computer attitudes	348	1.00 - 5.00	3.74	.89
Self-confidence towards ICT	348	2.00 - 5.00	3.82	.93
Internet attitudes	348	1.00 - 5.00	3.89	.92

The mean values on computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT were examined and the results showed that substitute teachers had the highest mean score on internet attitudes (M = 3.89, SD = .92) and the lowest score on computer attitudes (M = 3.74, SD = .89). Substitute teachers had higher mean scores on self-confidence towards ICT (M = 3.82, SD = .93) than computer attitudes (see Table 2).

Table 3. *Independent samples t-test results on variables between genders*

Variables	**Group**	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**t**	**p**
Computer attitudes	Male	93	4.05	.81	3.96	.00
	Female	255	3.63	.90		
Self-confidence towards ICT	Male	93	3.98	.86	1.99	.04
	Female	255	3.76	.95		
Internet attitudes	Male	93	4.03	.87	1.73	.08
	Female	255	3.83	.93		

The mean differences between genders of substitute teachers based on the computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT were evaluated and the results suggested that there were significant results on computer attitudes with conditions, *t*(346) = 3.96; *p* = .00 and on self-confidence towards ICT with conditions, *t*(346) = 1.99; *p* = .04. On the other hand, the findings indicated that there were no significant differences on internet attitudes with conditions, *t*(346) = 1.73; *p* = .08 (see Table 3).

Table 4. *ANOVA test results on variables among departments*

Variables	**Groups**	**M**	**SD**	**N**	**F**	**p**
Computer attitudes	Turkish Teachers	3.61	.87	184	3.48	.01
	Math Teachers	3.83	.89	61		
	Science Teachers	4.03	.93	51		
	Social Studies Teachers	3.80	.86	52		
Self-confidence towards ICT	Turkish Teachers	3.77	.92	184	1.80	.14
	Math Teachers	3.73	.96	61		
	Science Teachers	4.09	.92	51		
	Social Studies Teachers	3.82	.90	52		
Internet attitudes	Turkish Teachers	3.91	.93	184	1.98	.11
	Math Teachers	3.78	.95	61		
	Science Teachers	4.11	.90	51		
	Social Studies Teachers	3.71	.82	52		

Substitute teachers' majors based on the computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT were examined and the findings indicated that there were significant results on computer attitudes with conditions, *F*(3,344) = 3.48; *p* = .01. The findings also suggested that there were not any significant differences among the majors of substitute teachers on the basis of self-confidence towards ICT with conditions, *F*(3,344) = 1.80; *p* = .14 and internet attitudes with conditions, *F*(3,344) = 1.98; *p* = .11 (see Table 4).

Table 5. *Correlation matrix results among variables in the study*

Variables	**Computer attitudes**	**Self-confidence towards ICT**	**Internet attitudes**
Computer attitudes	1.00		
Self-confidence towards ICT	$.26^{**}$	1.00	
Internet attitudes	$.14^{**}$	$.32^{**}$	1.00

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationships among computer attitudes, internet attitudes, and self-confidence towards ICT of substitute teachers were analyzed using Pearson's correlation (see Table 5). The results of the analysis indicated that there was a positive and a meaningful relationship between computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers (*r* = .14; *p* <.01). The findings also showed that there was a positive and a meaningful relationship between substitute teachers' computer attitudes and their self-confidence towards ICT (*r* = .26; *p* <.01). Lastly, the results indicated that there was a positive and a meaningful relationship between substitute teachers' internet attitudes and their self-confidence towards ICT (*r* = .32; *p* <.01).

Table 6. *Results of the regression analysis on the study variables*

Dependent Variable	**Independent Variables**	**β**	**t**	**p**	**F**	**Model (p)**	**R^2**
Self-confidence towards ICT	(Constant)	1.79	6.88	.00	31.66	.00	.15
	Computer attitudes	.23	4.57	.00			
	Internet attitudes	.29	5.80	.00			

Finally, regression analysis was conducted to determine whether self-confidence levels towards ICT explain the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers in pedagogical proficiency classrooms (see Table 6). According to this model, %15 of total variability in self-confidence towards ICT was explained by internet attitudes and computer attitudes of substitute teachers. The findings also showed that substitute teachers' self-confidence towards ICT positively affected their computer attitudes (β = .23) and internet attitudes (β = .29).

Discussion

In this study, the computer attitude levels, internet attitude levels, and self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT were examined. The perceptions of substitute teachers on these three factors were observed at an adequate level meaning that their attitudes were considered to be positive. These findings are similar to research conducted in parallel studies. In a study, Tans (1990) found that people tend to develop positive computer attitudes while using computers to obtain information. Küçükahmet (2001) suggested that teachers developed positive internet behaviors as they started to reinforce the use of more internet in their instructional approaches. In addition, such reinforcement helped both students and teachers to develop self-confidence in ICT (Sam et al., 2005; Shashaani and Khalili, 2001). These findings indicate that substitute teachers are familiar with computers and internet as they have adequate self-confidence towards ICT and tend to use these technologies to teach in their classrooms or to obtain information on a specific topic. The study findings also showed that the computer attitude levels, internet attitude levels, and self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT were different on the basis of their genders and majors. In parallel findings, gender of the participants found to be key indicators affecting computer attitudes (Tans, 1990), internet attitudes (Usta et al., 2007), and self-confidence levels towards ICT (Olgletree and Williams, 1990). Garland and Noyes (2004) and İşman and Çelikli (2009) claimed that teachers' experience with computers may affect such attitudes as well. According to the study results it is viable to suggest that males have more access to computer, internet, and ICT compared to females in Turkey.

The relationships among computer attitude, internet attitude, and self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT were examined and the findings showed that there was a meaningful and a positive relationship between computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers. Similar research findings suggested that people, who have experience with computers in early stages of their life, would develop positive attitudes towards internet (Anderson, 1987; Loyd and Gressard, 1984). Moving from this point, it may be suggested that substitute teachers who know how to use computers in real life would have no difficulties in using internet in the classroom for instructional purposes. The results also showed that the relationship between computer attitudes and self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT was meaningful and positive. Based on similar research findings, Ekici and Kutluca (2010) found that using computers frequently increased the self-confidence levels of teachers towards ICT. However, in another study, the researchers found that lack of training on computers decreased the self-confidence levels of teachers towards ICT (Acuner and İpek, 2011; Oral, 2008). At this point, it may be claimed that the experiences of substitute teachers with computers are the strong factors affecting their self-confidence towards ICT. In addition, study findings indicated that the relationship between the internet attitudes and self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT was meaningful and positive. In parallel study results, researchers found that the use technology such as internet became inevitable for educators as they started using more and more internet in their classrooms due to the fact that it was a fast and comfortable way of accessing new knowledge (Akkoyunlu et al., 2006; Gökçearslan and Seferoglu, 2005; Yalin, 2002). In this case, it may be concluded from the study findings that using more and more internet to access to new resources increased self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT.

In the last part of the study, whether self-confidence levels towards ICT explain the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers were examined. The results showed that self-confidence levels of substitute teachers towards ICT had positive impacts on their computer attitudes and internet attitudes. Researchers claimed that establishing self-confidence towards new technologies would increase frequency of computer and internet usage among teachers during their instructional times (Ertmer, 2006; Madge et al., 2009; Sam et al., 2005; Tezci, 2010). Based on research findings, it may be suggested that when substitute teachers develop self-confidence towards ICT, it will be likely that they would use more computers and internet as instructional tools to communicate with others in order to access educational resources for their students.

Implications and Suggestions

In conclusion, this study showed that there were meaningful and positive relationships between computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers, and their self-confidence levels towards ICT. The widespread use of technologies such as computers and internet have been common in the classrooms as they save time and money and enable teachers to easily have access to new educational resources for their students. With information age, having beneficial outcomes from computer and internet usage require educators to successfully know how to adapt to ICT. As the academic success of students and teachers may be linked to the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT, it is strongly advised that stakeholders in education should provide access to new technologies in their schools and encourage teachers to participate in informative trainings and seminars on such crucial topics. That way, teachers would be informed enough about the advantages of computers, internet, and ICT in order to enhance their students' academic achievement through technology driven teaching strategies. Lastly, it is important to note that the generalizability of the findings of the present study was limited by the small sample size and the use of self-reporting surveys. It is recommended that future studies may be built on the current one and include larger sample sizes in order to be able to generalize the findings and provide a more detailed understanding of the factors that underlay the computer attitudes and internet attitudes of substitute teachers and their self-confidence towards ICT.

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The Educational Role of Sport Practiced by People with Disabilities

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Abstract

The purpose of the conducted research was to analyze the processual dimension of transformations of a disabled person's life which take place under the influence of experiences related to practicing sport. In the article I try to prove the similarity of the sport structure with the educational system structure, where apart from strictly educational functions, there are also socialization processes taking place, diverse in terms of measures and results. The basis for the realization of the purpose mentioned above was the personal experiences of the researched individuals. Hence, the research exploits qualitative data, collected during participant observations and in-depth free interviews conducted among the disabled practicing sports. Analysis and interpretation of the research material was performed in accordance with grounded theory methodology. The article has been prepared as a consequence of research carried out between 2013 and 2016 among the society of the disabled who practice professional sports. The studies refer to the characteristics of the sports career path of people with disabilities which, regarding its specificity, has strong roots in institutionalized practices related to inclusion, continuation and maintaining the main action, i.e. practicing sport.

Keywords: sport, disability, socialization, education.

Introduction

The subject of this work[8] is the matter of the special educational experience of the disabled who practice sport on a professional level. I present this notion by referring to the concept of symbolic interactionism theory, in the approach of the Chicago school (Glaser & Strauss 1965; Mead 1956; Strauss, 1959; Strauss et al., 1985). These are the grounds on which I prove that the conversion which is designed and required by a given institution, corresponds to various experiences at subsequent stages of the training, leading to the general transformation of the perception of the reality by an individual. I do not try to deliberate or reconstruct the personality of disabled people engaged in professional sport in my analyses. I am more interested in the social processes of activation and maintaining a basic action, i.e. practicing sport, and the accompanying procedures that are carried out by institutions responsible for organizing that action rather than in the underlying personality features, which are not a subject of analysis in this article.

I assume in the presented article that the main aspect of what is transmitted “cannot be found in non-confidential contents, but rather in the organization of the training actions themselves” (Bourdieu 1996, p. 84). In the article I will be focusing on the analysis of pedagogic practices assignable to the training system, which is connected to the so-called integration code, termed by Bernstein (1999) as invisible pedagogy. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) call it a camouflaged pedagogy, requiring a student, who in this case is a future trainee of extreme sports of the disabled, to identify with the master or a more experienced friend, at the expense of authentic subordination.

The article has been prepared as a consequence of research carried out between 2013 and 2016 among the society of disabled people practicing extreme sports. This research makes an attempt to develop a general characteristic related to both a sports career path, which regarding its character is strongly rooted in institutionalized inclusion practices, as well as continuing and maintaining this way of life, i.e. practicing sport by the disabled

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[8] The article has been drawn up on the basis of research carried out within the scope of the project entitled Physical activity as a source of change in the life of a person with a permanent body dysfunction - an analysis of the identity reconstruction process, financed by the National Center of Science (2015/17/D/HS6/00184).

individuals. The article covers an analysis of one of the threads outlined, in such a way that it is related to providing an answer to the following question: In what way does the process of sport education of the disabled take place, and what role is played by interpersonal relationships between the coach and the mentee, as well as between the group and its member?

Method

Data Collection

The research material applied in this study encompasses the personal experiences of disabled people realizing their physical activity through participating in various forms of sport. Semi-structured free interviews were conducted with representatives of this category of disabled people. Questions posed in the interviews covered topics such as the role and meaning of the researched people's participation in institutionalized forms of sporting activities. By applying triangulation of data, the study also included some records from participant observations made during meetings and sporting events, training sessions and consultations (Adler & Adler 1994). The research was performed between 2013 and 2016 across Poland, in training centers devoted to and adapted to the needs of the disabled. While starting to develop this text, the empirical material comprised 97 interviews and 35 records from observations (as of 1 July 2016). The interviews were performed with 47 women and 50 men between 16 and 50 years old. The interviews usually lasted from 40 to 120 minutes. Before analysis, the interviews were transcribed word-for-word, preserving the details of the interviewees' utterances as faithfully as possible.

The premises that supported the selection of the above mentioned techniques arise first of all from accepted ontological (human experiences, interpretations, knowledge, evaluations and interactions are perceived as significant interdependencies of the social reality) and epistemological assumptions (the legal manner of data generation on the basis of those ontological assumptions is comprised of interaction, conversations with people, listening to stories and gaining access to knowledge, evaluations, impressions of individuals). Secondly, the acquired data are of a whole and in-depth character, which is compliant with the notions put forward by Rubin and Rubin (2012), according to which the qualitative research is applied in relation to those notions which require a deeper understanding, served best by detailed examples and elaborated narration.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an iterative constant comparative process involving descriptive and interpretive analyses (Patton, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Analysis of the research material was performed in accordance with grounded theory methodology. Data analysis involved open coding and axial coding. All interviews were encoded with open coding. Afterwards, with the application of axial coding, the codes were ordered and selected, leading to the generation of the most significant analytical categories, revealing the complex relationships between them. As a result, ten key themes were distinguished, which reflected the main contexts of the physical activity of the disabled in the scope of their psychosocial rehabilitation and improvement of quality of life. Later, the article describes three levels of the influence of sport practiced by a disabled person on how they perceived themselves and their life situation. As a consequence, this allowed the question to be answered about the mechanisms of sport’s influence on a disabled person’s life which improve their quality of life.

The research used interviews performed with physically disabled people. The main criterion for selection was acquiring the disability in adult life (i.e. from the moment when a person becomes 16 years old) and practicing sport (for at least one year). The selection of subsequent cases for the research was of a theoretical character (*theoretical sampling*), based on the constant comparative method. Thanks to theoretical sampling, the researcher, while collecting, encoding and analyzing the materials, makes simultaneous decisions about where and what data to collect (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While applying the constant comparative method in the search for other data, the researcher makes an attempt to choose cases that are both highly diverse and similar to each other, to understand the maximum number of conditions differentiating the presence of categories and their mutual correlations (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Such a manner of performance resulted in people representing various kinds of physical disability being part of the researched sample. There were people with quadri- and paraplegia, spastic paralysis and those with amputated legs. The selection of cases lasted until the theoretical saturation of the generated analytical categories was achieved. Although saturation as a concept has been interpreted in different ways, Strauss and Corbin (1990) have suggested that it is a "matter of degree". They argued that saturation should be concerned more with reaching the point where it becomes "counter-productive" and that "the new" that is discovered does not necessarily add anything to the overall story, model, theory or framework. In the current study, the above recommendation was followed in relation to reaching the saturation of themes.

Data analysis was supported by CAQDAS – *Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software*. Work on the analytical-conceptual level was carried out with the NVivo program, which supported the process of ordering and sorting the data, creating categories and developing hypotheses and constructing an integrating diagram (Lonkila, 1995; Richards, 1999).

Results

Within the educational process, so-called *orienting significant others* (Kuhn, 1964, p. 18) bear a special significance for an individual, often becoming *biographic guardians*, i.e. people who exert an active influence on the fate of an individual.

In the case of disabled sportsmen, they may be both other competitors or a coach. While the coach practically always occupies the role of *formal-institutional* significant other, in numerous cases he is also a *formal-spontaneous* significant other. These roles can be divided between the coach and another sportsman, but someone who always needs to meet certain criteria. First of all, it should be a more experienced person who is perfectly aware of institutional principles, but also of informal organizational rules. Secondly, this person is older. Thirdly, with certain trophies, they are a titled individual. The significant other could be a competitor who introduced the disabled person into the world of sport, which is equally important but not necessary. From the perspective of the educational process of a disabled individual, it is also significant, so it should be a person with a certain past, and someone who is an example of the transformations of a disabled individual who undertakes or continues their sporting careers.

The Role of a Coach as a Significant Other

The attitude of continuous verification of one's qualifications, or as it was put by my interviewees, striving for "perfection", is a result of pedagogical practices referring to the training relationship, which hides motives for developing specific ethics of practicing sport in the disabled. The sports training is intended to increase the level of bodily fitness, as well as improve mental attitude, necessary during competition. The result should produce a human being, not only a trained sportsman. The leading role is adopted by coaches and instructors, proven by the fragment of a statement, included below:

> *And now I'm laughing a little, but I didn't feel like laughing earlier, actually I hated school, and when I started to practice sport properly I actually was out of the frying-pan into the fire again, because I had the same teacher as before, this time as a coach, but I needed to toe the line, to obey his instructions, and generally be so nice and compliant, but I had always been some kind of little devil* [w19.15][9]

Hence, the description of relationships between a disabled person practicing sport and one that makes a certain "road sign", pointing out the desired action, may be applicable to the notion of coaching, introduced by Strauss. According to Strauss, "A coaching relationship exists if someone seeks to move someone else along a series of steps" within the social space (Strauss, 1959, p. 112). The main qualities of the coaching relationship are rooted in the fact that a pupil, while going through subsequent stages, needs a guide (Niedbalski 2016). This is not only about the conventional sense of teaching skills, but also about the fact that while the "coached" is moving within the social space, there are highly important processes taking place inside them requiring an explanation of the particular actions' sense, and the whole activity as such. In order to explain this, it is best to refer to Bourdieu and Wacquant, according to whom "the teaching of a *métier*, a craft, a trade, (...) requires a pedagogy which is completely different from that suited to the teaching of knowledge (...) There are numerous modes of thinking and action, and oftentimes the most vital ones are transmitted from practice to practice, through total and practical modes of transmission founded upon direct and lasting contact between the one who teaches and the one who learns" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 222). It is also confirmed by the experiences of my interviewees. The following fragment of an interview may serve as an example here:

> *My teacher, or I'd say even more, my guide and the man who shaped me, was my first coach, Mr. Kowalski* [the last name changed by the researcher - note by JN]. *He showed me not only how to train, how to perform the exercises properly, but first of all he created this positive aura around him, he was like my second father, who listens and advises, but also gives a good belting when needed."* [w. 13.7.]

The "coach-guide" can employ various tactics while adopting the role of an educator, one of which is *prescription*, i.e. the manner in which you can fulfill yourself in sport and become successful. Therefore, the coach's role is to point out what needs to be done, what you need to distinguish yourself with, which qualities need to be developed and which should be gotten rid of. In one word, it is a formula which may not necessarily guarantee success on its own, but the application of which may bring a given person closer to their goal (Niedbalski, 2016).

> *A coach is inevitable, because he is not only the person who shows you what to do at a given moment, but he just has the knowledge, he knows what should be done to achieve success. You need to rely on him and trust him, as such a relationship is necessary because it helps a lot. I can see that my younger friends see a second father in the coach, someone very close, who they are not afraid to talk to about different stuff with. But our coach is also a person who knows how to approach everyone, how to talk to them, how they feel and how to motivate them. And he really tries to help, not only in sport, but in general, in totally mundane issues* [w.13.13].

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[9] Within the whole article, next to the fragments of my interviewees' speeches, I provide information on the year in which a given interview was conducted (the first number) and its order number, specifying its place in the sequence of interviews (the second figure).

What is more, coaches apply schedules which determine the subsequent steps that need to be followed by a disabled individual to achieve progress gradually. A coach introduces the participant to subsequent stages of their development, not only shaping their career, but also exerting a certain influence on their biography. Therefore, they perform continuous work on the participant's biography and identity (Niedbalski, 2016). Other stages, and their completion, are not only the achievement of the next career levels for the disabled, but it means they also go beyond their own - often symbolic - boundaries, related to the acceptance of self and their disability.

> *For me personally, the things I do here have a double value. Firstly, I have a chance to step out and stop being a poor disabled person who always needs someone to wipe their ass. But secondly, it is a personal thing for me, because it gives me a possibility to defeat my worries and anxieties, which are often hardest to face* [w.15.12]

Another tactic, which is of an educational dimension, is "to challenge". It is significant here for these challenges to be "dosed", with the proper frequency tailored to the given person, and possible to be achieved with a certain level of involvement and effort. Therefore, a coach may not only motivate the participant, but also trigger their positive emotions related to the achieved successes.

> *The coach's task is to keep the sportsman believing that he can be better and can constantly improve. A coach must not only train, but also stimulate the sportsman, to strengthen his belief in his own power. This is a never-ending motivation, such… hm..., such continuous work on the sportsman, so he does not doubt himself for even a moment, especially when his performances are bad, when it's hard for him, but also so he doesn't slip into the delusion of his grandeur, when he is successful and on top* [w15.5].

Hence, the coaching process of a disabled person should lead to their constant improvement, including both the physical abilities of their bodies, and the development of cognitive skills related to the proper manner of reading and interpreting the transformation taking place in their lives. In the personal dimensions, on the one hand it means reconstructing the image of self, consisting in the conversion of "I" from the disabled person. This is often based on a stereotype cognitive schema, which is actually a product of the internalization of social patterns related to the perception of incomplete capability of an individual, and on the other proper self-perception as a fully-fledged sportsman.

An Educative Role of a Reference Group

Entrance into the world of sport comes not only from face-to-face contact with a coach, but also from meeting others, i.e. the direct entrance into the group and co-creation of customs, standards and objectives within its intentional community. Sport is a form of activity of the disabled which forms a space for certain interactions between its participants, and which includes numerous social actors. It is broadly related to the fact that participation in various forms of physical activity, including sports, is of a group character, and it frequently adopts the form of organized actions. The formation of a group, apart from the obvious consolidation of its members around issues of the sport, also takes place on the basis of commonness of a life situation, related to held dysfunctions and the resulting needs (Sajkowska 1999, p. 11; Niedźwiedzki 2010, p. 85). Therefore, sport can play a role that is especially significant in the educational process of an individual, becoming an anchor for developing faith in their own power and possibilities. Additionally, contact with people with similar dysfunctions, practicing a given discipline, can reinforce the belief about their hidden potential.

> *When you start playing sport, especially at the professional level, it's not like you do whatever you like. On the contrary, you need to subordinate yourself to the coach, the*

> *applicable principles, or the rigor of life, but also to the people who you either play with in a team or train with. Because usually a coach takes care of several people at the same time, and he needs to devote a certain amount of time to each one of them, and at the same time foster the right atmosphere. But it's also true that the sportsman must integrate with the remaining people, to become close to them, to be able to cooperate, because otherwise it's simply impossible to practice or work* [w.13.13].

Among the crucial indicators of socialization to get familiar with are the various secrets of the game, including the ones which are shared between members of the group as "expert knowledge". The experienced players often constitute a resource of knowledge to those who have just started their adventure with sport. Hence, transmission of knowledge among the group members takes place, which additionally strengthens its internal unity, ensuring the continuity of functioning. At the same time, this is the principle that governs the reconstruction of separate people's statuses, as on the one hand we deal with people that have the "authority" label attached, and on the other hand there are "pupils". Hence, so called role controllers may appear, i.e. people whose task it is to help a new group member become familiar with, understand and realize a new role. The unique balance inside the group can be maintained in this manner, but this is also a significant process in terms of existing group members legitimizing new people.

> *I felt at home among my present friends from the group. But it was not like this at the beginning. That must have lasted a while. You know, it's like I needed to get used to them, and they needed to get used to me. It must have taken a while, but we got to know each other gradually* [w.14.3]

However, first of all, in the perspective of the presented notion, it is crucial to acquire the manner of perceiving the surrounding reality and the interconnected response to the individual's environment (Niedbalski, 2015). A group provides each member with certain resources, on the one hand with a certain matrix through which they interpret their own and others' behaviors, and on the other with the stimulation to act, consolidating a belief that these actions are right. Therefore, when a given individual becomes a member of the group, they start to gradually change not only their thinking, but also how they function and react to other people. Therefore, we encounter a situation in which a disabled person acquires a feeling that their involvement in a sporting activity is right, bringing not only physical but also mental and social benefits.

Becoming a member depends on the degree to which specific requirements are met and its principles are adopted, as well as on the individual identifying with it. This in turn becomes possible when the cognitive perspective represented by team members is recognized, understood and then accepted and internalized. A group of active people practicing sport becomes a reference group. Thus, we reach a situation where a disabled person undergoes a gradual metamorphosis related to the acquisition and translatability of the cognitive perspective, thanks to being a member of a group of disabled people who are physically active, within which their role of a sportsman is shaped.

> *Since I started moving, coming here and meeting people, I started looking at myself, and generally at people, in a completely different way. Before, I had the impression that nothing was awaiting me, that I was doomed to live in my house, maybe in front of the computer, but not with people, but virtually. It's different here, I feel that I can do more, but I'm also required to do more. And I think it's so normal, not sitting on your ass and wanting others to do everything for you* [w.15.5]

Participation in a group influences not only the shape of a collective identity, but also potentially the (re)construction of the whole system of self-definition of a social actor (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014, p. 139). Through observation and identification with others, the individual internalizes new roles and the interconnected identities, motivational and interpretation schemas, as well as the accompanying validations related to e.g. conditionings of the social value of an individual (Berger & Luckman 1983, pp. 214-218).

Discussion and Conclusion

The presented article raises the notions of changes that take place in the life of a physically disabled person which are caused by his engagement in a sporting activity. The conclusions drawn from the research prove that practicing sport is a process of transformations taking place at the body level as well as the perceptions of disabled people, both of which are related to the influence exerted by particular individuals and whole groups that the individual becomes a member of. A key place in the process is taken by people with the label of significant other, usually drawn from the sporting environment. They are older and more experienced colleagues of the young student, or people responsible for training and helping the individual adjust to adopting the role of sportsman. In the latter case, it is instructors and coaches who play the function of both teacher and educator. Practicing sport is also related to an individual entering a new environment, which in turn means the necessity to become familiar with the governing rules and principles. The most significant element is the gradual attainment of a certain scope and kind of knowledge, and the acquisition of a specific cognitive perspective. Thus, a *reference group* is established, which not only influences the perception of the surrounding social reality, but it also often becomes a counterpoint for previous experiences of the disabled person.

The research carried out proved that the mechanism of sport's impact on a disabled person is based on an educational process, where a significant role is played both by significant individuals and whole communities. It happens because people usually realize themselves in a group of people who share a common background. At the same time, for an action to be completed successfully, the sportsman needs to adopt certain common principles helping them understand the situation. As suggested by Lipiec (1987, pp. 19-20), the foundation of those basic principles, supports "the creation of a complicated structure of connections and relationships, both basic, first of all based on direct interpersonal relations, and complementary, usually reaching for regulatory frameworks and customary imponderabilia." The element that connects all members of a given group is the acceptance of the assets of the sport, which enables the common realization of a specific value. Therefore, sport education must be understood as a process where, first of all, the successive construction of bonds in the direct environment takes place. Secondly, it includes integration of the group, which must be related to the approval of others and the creation of relationships with groups of a similar character. Thirdly, socialization is the process of following co-created social subjects. Finally, the socialization process, in order to bring about the desired results, should be of an axiologically positive character. In such a situation, sport is not just a purpose, or an ordinary measure to achieve the objective, but it is a value for a person and culture, a place of humanism and civilization. Therefore, it can be stated after Dziubiński (2012, pp. 60-63) that, regarding its role and significance, sport must be understood within an educational framework, and its power must be utilized for the harmonious development of its participants.

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