

Paweł Krasuski
Institute of Pedagogy
Faculty of Education and Psychology
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

Doctoral dissertation
supervising by Zofia Palak habilitated Ph. D., prof UMCS

FUNCTIONING OF FAMILY SYSTEM WITH A CHILD WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND STYLES OF COPING WITH STRESS

Abstract

The aim of the dissertation entitled: *Functioning of Family System with a Child with Physical Disability and Styles of Coping with Stress* is the empirical diagnosis of the relationships between the functioning of a family with a physically disabled child and the styles of coping with stress. The research problems: diagnostic and correlative in order to examine the family systems where children with physical disability are raised, as well as the correlative connections between the variables and their force. A systemic idea of the family was assumed. The conducted studies concern two phases of family life cycle: the stage with pre-adolescent child and the stage with adolescent child.

The dissertation structure contains subsequently: list of abbreviations, introduction, five chapters, conclusion, bibliography, list of tables, graphs and scheme, as well as the annex.

The thesis consists of two parts. The first one is of theoretical-cognitive nature. Here the author undertakes critical analysis of literature. He presents the synthesis of the hitherto state of knowledge in many domains of science, necessary to develop the subject he is dealing with. The theoretical part of the dissertation consists of three chapters.

The first chapter, entitled: *The family in systemic approach* demonstrates the formation of the systemic idea of family, which is the point of reference in the analyses undertaken in the foregoing theses. It describes the assumptions of *General System Theory (GTS)* by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and the basic terms connected with it, as well as the practical implications for the humanities and social sciences. Then it presents the understanding of family in the light

of General System Theory and discusses David H. Olson's Circular Model, which is one of the ways to adapt GTS to the description of family system reality. Besides, the first chapter characterizes family relationships with reference to the systemic paradigm, with special consideration of parent-child relationship, expressed by parental attitudes.

The second chapter of the dissertation: *Disability of motor organ – pedagogical contexts* presents the theoretical issue of disability through defining and categorizing the notion of physical disability. It shows problems connected with bringing up a disabled child in the family, disclosing the issue of social contexts of disability, especially the subject of social attitudes and stereotypes concerning people with disability and their families.

The third chapter of the first part of the foregoing thesis: *Disability as a stressor affecting the family system* presents disability with reference to the idea of family stress. It defines the notion of stress on the basis of the most common biological and social theories. It describes the idea of family stress, demonstrating disability as a stressor and its effect upon relationships in the family system.

The second part of the dissertation (chapters four and five) is of methodological-empirical nature. The third chapter, entitled: *Methodological bases and organization of author's studies* is devoted to the methodology of conducted studies. It defines the rudimentary terms in this field, paying special attention to pedagogy. It presents main and detailed research issues, as well as working hypotheses corresponding to them. The fourth chapter also contains the description of applied research tools and the conducted research procedure, including: organization and course of the author's own studies, description of the examined group, as well as ways of statistical working out of the results.

The last, fifth chapter of the dissertation, entitled: *Analysis and interpretation of author's own study results* is devoted to presenting the results of conducted studies together with their interpretation. Results of studies on an examined group are presented for each diagnostic tool. Next the author of the dissertation conducts statistical concluding of the assessment of relationship between dependent (family assessment scales and parental attitudes) and independent variables (styles of coping with stress and accomplishment of developmental tasks in the family life cycle). The result of the analyses is verifying the posed main and detailed research hypotheses. The fifth chapter is finished with summary of the results of the author's own studies with indication of practical implications.

Conclusion contains a concise balance of the performed theoretical analyses and empirical studies. It also indicates new research areas revealed during the conducted studies exceeding the framework of the foregoing dissertation.

The last elements of dissertation structure are: bibliography, list of schemes, tables and graphs, as well as the annex showing the applied research tools.

Key words: family system, systemic approach to the family, family relationships physical disability, child with disability, (disabled child), stress, style of coping with stress, stress in family system.

Pawel Kwasuski