

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Author: mgr Katarzyna Skalska

Thesis: Perception of own autonomy and coping resources in students with physical disability

Thesis supervisor: dr hab. Stanisława Byra, prof. UMCS

The doctoral dissertation deals with the problem of the autonomy of students with disabilities in the context of coping and internal and external coping resources. It adopts the understanding of autonomy as decision-making, expressed in the ability to define own plans and make decisions based on them, as well as executive autonomy defined as the ability to act (M. Cardol, B. A. de Jong, C. D. Ward, 2002, p. 972). Students with mobility disabilities subjectively assessed their own autonomy and functioning in the field of social participation, therefore perception of autonomy has been analyzed as possibly different from the evaluation of specialists. The perception of autonomy is part of the subjective concept of disability based on the vision, knowledge and feelings of the respondents in terms of their disability (G. Bręczewski, 2018, p. 29).

University studies for people with disabilities is still a relatively new phenomenon and its analysis covers both aspects related to the adaptation of universities as well as psychosocial functioning of students with mobility disabilities. Until recently, researchers have not focused directly on the autonomy of students with mobility disabilities, although there's literature on the subject associated with it, e.g. subjectivity of students with disabilities (A. Mikrut, 2013), self-determination and social and professional integration (B. Szczupał, 2015), preparation for independence (K. Wojtanowicz, 2015), as well as autonomy in the context of learning (D. Otapowicz, P. Goryń, M. Truszkowska, 2014). In addition, students with disabilities are constantly forced to confront factors of the living environment, which can lead to physical, mental and social stress in their functioning (M. Parchomiuk, 2010, p. 16), and excessive exploitation of internal and external resources may be an obstacle to the development of sense of autonomy in students with disabilities.

The main research problem of the work concerns determination of the relationship between perception of own autonomy and coping resources in students with physical disability. To expand knowledge about the perception of autonomy and coping resources in students with mobility disabilities, as well as their mutual relationships, the method of diagnostic survey was used. Research tools were used that meet the criteria of relevance,

reliability and objectivity. The quantitative research had the advantage of allowing students with disabilities to be reached in various academic centers throughout the country. Research students with physical disabilities were divided into two groups: students from congenital and acquired disability, which allowed more accurate understanding of the meaning of the type of disability experienced for the perception of autonomy as well as level of coping resources. 128 students with mobility disabilities participated in the study, including 72 (56%) students with disabilities from birth and 56 students (44%) with acquired disability.

The work consists of eight chapters. The first chapter deals with issues related to university studying of people with disabilities. Studying falls on a period of early adulthood, which is why the characteristics of this developmental stage are presented, as important to performing the role of a student by persons with mobility disabilities. In chapter two, autonomy has been analyzed at length in the context of physical disability. Analysis of this concept in terms of various scientific disciplines allows us to see its interdisciplinary character, as well as its relationship with universal concepts, such as freedom and human dignity. In chapter three we outline the role of coping resources in maintaining the well-being of the individual, as well as dealing with stress. Due to the research goal of the work, coping resources that may be conducive to the perception of autonomy were analyzed. Chapter four is a methodological chapter containing detailed information concerning the research project: formulated research problems, assumed hypotheses, description research tools, characteristics of the subject groups, as well as a description of the course of research. The next three parts are empirical chapters containing a diagnosis in the field perception of autonomy, strategies and coping resources of respondents (chapter five), analysis of the relationship between the perception of autonomy and coping resources (chapter six), diagnosis of disability acceptance in the examined students, as well as determination of its relationships with the perception of autonomy and coping resources in the respondents (chapter seven). The last chapter of the work is a summary of the research results as well as their discussion with the findings of other researchers. A reference to accepted hypotheses was made and described research limitations, as well as cognitive and practical implications. Based on research results, an action model has been proposed, the application of which may contribute to improvement of autonomy of students with mobility disabilities in the academic community.

The analyses confirmed the predictive value of both coping strategies, as well as individual coping resources. Captured dependencies between a variable in the form of perception of autonomy and independent variables in the form of counseling and coping resources were characterized by low matching. That's why variables adopted to clarify the

perception of autonomy only to a limited extent confirmed their association with a dependent variable. The analysis also showed that acceptance of disability differentiates the nature of the relationship between coping resources and perception of own autonomy in students with physical disabilities. Obtained results inspire further research ventures in this problem area.

Katryna DeBla