



Lifestyles of Intellectually Disabled Adults

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The purpose of the paper is to show lifestyles of intellectually handicapped adults in the context of the Andrzej Siciński concept. The paper presents the results of research carried out following the interpretive trend, in the hermeneutic-phenomenological perspective, using the dialogue method. The study shows that the disabled manifest habits indicating a blocked, withdrawal as well as a here-and-now-oriented style. The analysed persons exhibited a searching style only in a small extent. There were no statements indicating a change-oriented style. The respondents adapted passively to the conditions of their lives, they were reluctant to speak about the future and about the need to change something in their own lives. The analysis and interpretation of the research results revealed three incompatible areas: (1) culture patterns (the way of thinking, norms of functioning in a particular community), (2) resources of their environment, and (3) resources of an individual, which explains why the lifestyles of intellectually handicapped people analysed in the study were oriented towards passive adaptation rather than to development and changes.

KEY WORDS: adulthood, intellectual disability, lifestyles

Introduction

Attempts are being made to describe the psycho-social functioning of adults with intellectual disabilities through the use of the

lifestyle concept.¹ Such an approach finds its substantiation in contemporary special education paradigms, which describe the direction of changes in thinking about intellectually-disabled persons, their lives and their place in the world.² The normalisation paradigm substantiates activities aimed at countering the social exclusion of persons with disabilities by establishing pro-inclusive conditions of life in terms of education, free time, professional employment, independent living as part of protected or supported residence systems. The emancipation paradigm is related to attempts at liberating people with intellectual disabilities from the limitations that society as ascribed them with for decades, considering them deviants, „eternal children”, persons returning to children’s age or moving to old age, persons with delayed adulthood.³ Economic as well as socio-cultural transformations do not omit intellectually-disabled persons. A sign of contemporary times is the confusion of people stemming from the relativism of values, consumerism, the uncertainty of tomorrow, difficulty in finding employment, all of which shines through in their way of life. In the opinion of Amadeus Krause, „Disability does not immunise against these changes, but it delays their internalisation”.⁴ The objective of the study is to show the lifestyles of intellectually-disabled adults within the context of the possibility of them to make choices among the offers available within socio-cultural space.

¹ B. Borowska-Beszta, *Etnografia stylu życia kultury dorosłych torunian z zaburzeniami rozwoju*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń 2013; I. Ramik-Mażewska, *Style życia kobiet z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Studium socjopedagogiczne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe FREL, Warszawa 2018; H. Żuraw, *Udział osób niepełnosprawnych w życiu społecznym*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa 2008.

² I. Chrzanowska, *Pedagogika specjalna, Od tradycji do współczesności*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2015, s. 410–417; A. Krause, *Współczesne paradygmaty pedagogiki specjalnej*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2007, pp. 197–208.

³ J. Modrzewski, *Socjalizacja i uczestnictwo społeczne – studium socjopedagogiczne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2007, p. 163.

⁴ A. Krause, *Człowiek niepełnosprawny wobec przeobrażeń społecznych*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2004, p. 162.

Lifestyle as a descriptive category of the psychosocial functioning of intellectually-disabled persons

Among the forerunners of the lifestyle concept must be named authors such as Alfred Adler (1998), Georg Simmel (1900) or Thorstein Veblen (1981).⁵ Depending on the psychological, sociological or philosophical orientation, the focus was on slightly different aspects of this issue. A. Adler analysed the process an individual uses to choose their lifestyle in the context of psychosocial factors, meaning – experiences internalised earlier, including those related to the feeling of being worse, as well as conscious motives and objectives for the future.⁶ G. Simmel studied relations between money and freedom as well as between personal values and lifestyle.⁷ T. Veblen studied the functioning of people in an industrialised society, who have ever more resources facilitating the shaping of their own lifestyles. Of significant importance for an individual are prestige, consumer goods, consumerism as a way of life.⁸ Over the years, lifestyles were defined and operationalised in various ways depending on the scientific discipline and the objective of studies. Polish scientific literature intensely stresses the sociological path. Barbara Fatyga describes lifestyle as the “culturally-conditioned mode of implementation of needs, habits and norms”.⁹ According to Aldona Jałowicka, lifestyle is expressed in three spheres of reality: (1) the world view (values, objectives, aspirations), available only indirectly to the observer, (2) observable behaviour and activities as well as

⁵ A. Adler, *Sens życia*, transl. by M. Kreczowska, PWN, Warszawa 1986; T. Veblen, *Teoria klasy próżniaczej*, transl. by Ferntzel-Zagórska, Wydawnictwo Muza, Warszawa 1998; G. Simmel, *Filozofia pieniądza*, transl. by A. Przyłębski, Wydawnictwo Aletheia, Warszawa 2012.

⁶ A. Adler, *Sens życia*, op. cit., pp. 30 and 60.

⁷ G. Simmel, *Filozofia pieniądza*, op. cit., pp. 485–500.

⁸ T. Veblen, *Teoria klasy*, op. cit., p. 47 and others.

⁹ B. Fatyga, *Szkic o konsumpcyjnym stylu życia i rzeczach jako dobrach kultury*, [in:] *Socjologia i Siciński*, ed. by P. Gliński, A. Kościański, IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2009, p. 150.

(3) the sphere of items that one chooses or makes.¹⁰ Andrzej Siciński defines lifestyle as a „system of daily behaviour patterns (the mode of „action”, „life activity”), which is specific for a given community or individual¹¹. People behave in a manner that allows one to get to know them, define them, determine the choice of patterns of behaviour from among a repertoire of those available in a specific culture, all constituting a specific „life strategy”. One cannot speak of lifestyle when the behaviour is forced. Within musings on lifestyle, stressed is the need of existence of even minor capacity of rational choice of specific behavior.¹² It follows from sociological perspectives that one cannot understand the lifestyles of individuals or social groups without reference to the cultural context and social requirements. Culture is the grammar of lifestyle components, as well as its ideology.¹³

The significance of lifestyle for the biography of an individual is accented in psychological approaches. A healthy lifestyle is one that provides one the strength and power to cope with troubles, difficulties, and facilitates taking on challenges. In the view of Anna I. Brzezińska, lifestyle is the system of reference for the organisation of experiences gained by an individual in adulthood. Meaning, during adulthood, an individual’s lifestyle manifests itself in a particular manner. Lifestyle is composed of: the pace of activity, the work-life balance, the solidification of one’s circle of friends and the choice of life activities, according to the accepted values.¹⁴

¹⁰ A. Jałowiecka, *Styl życia a wartości*, [in:] *Styl życia. Koncepcje i propozycje*, ed. by A. Siciński, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1976, p. 207.

¹¹ A. Siciński, *Styl życia – problemy pojęciowe i teoretyczne*, [in:] *Styl życia. Koncepcje i propozycje*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1976, p. 15.

¹² A. Siciński, *Styl życia. Kultura. Wybór. Szkice*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, Warszawa 2002, p. 23; P. Taubert, *Lebensstile und Mediennutzung. Theoretische Grundlagen und empirische Umsetzung*, Martin Meidenbauer Verlagsgesellschaft, München 2006, p. 152.

¹³ M. Czerwiński, *Pojęcie stylu życia i jego implikacje*, [in:] *Styl życia. Koncepcje i propozycje*, ed. by A. Siciński, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1976, p. 60.

¹⁴ A. Brzezińska, *Dorostłość – szanse i zagrożenia dla rozwoju*, [in:] *Szanse i zagrożenia rozwoju w okresie dorostłości*, ed. by A. Brzezińska, K. Appelt, J. Wojciechowska, Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, Poznań 2002, pp. 17–21.

For the study, the concept of lifestyle according to Andrzej Siciński was assumed. Determining factors of lifestyle are: (1) human behaviour diversified in terms of scope and form, hence, activities and actions, (2) motivations of behaviour that allows the achievement of objectives, as well as the values related to it, as well as (3) the functions of things – the items that one chooses or creates. The author ties lifestyle with culture. One could say that if culture encompasses the entirety of behaviour patterns, then lifestyle is a sign of choices made from among this selection by an individual.¹⁵ A. Siciński presented his typology that corresponds to the following lifestyles¹⁶:

- Blocked/ limited style – applies to situations of limited capacities to make choices.
- Withdrawal style – entails the avoidance of making choices.
- Searching style – related to making use of the possibility to make choices, motivated mainly by searching for values and the meaning of life.
- The „here and now“-oriented style – describes making choices aimed primarily at achieving a good mood and treating the execution of a task as an objective in itself.
- Conservative style – related to making choices aimed at maintaining the status quo, the domination of conservative behaviour that maintains the current situation as it is. The style has two varieties: a conformist and a ritualistic variety.
- Action-oriented lifestyle that can be described as a mature lifestyle. The style has two varieties: the revolutionary variety (changes through rebellion) and the innovative variety (evolutionary changes).

Studies by various authors show that intellectually-disabled adults, despite the changes found in their living environments, experience difficult situations related to the execution of development tasks concerning the satisfaction of the need of love, sexual drive, independent living, social participation, professional employment.

¹⁵ A. Siciński, *Styl życia – problemy pojęciowe*, op. cit., pp. 23–24.

¹⁶ A. Siciński, *Styl życia. Kultura. Wybór. Szkice*, op. cit., pp. 77–86.

The problem is excess dependence on parents, social helplessness, marginalisation, social exclusion, lack of suitable support in the environment.¹⁷ I. Ramik-Mażewska characterised the lifestyle of people with intellectual disabilities as home-centric, ritualised by daily activities, entailing passively living their lives, focused on the here and now, and to a lesser extent as oriented on action and change.¹⁸ This indicates that lifestyle is a part of human identity and that it can be a determining factor concerning their development vs stagnation, adaptation vs disadaptation.

Research methodology

Issues of lifestyles of adults with intellectual disabilities are difficult to scientifically explore. More limited cognitive abilities of intellectually-disabled individuals, including limited communication capacities, caused that the dialogue method was chosen to collect empirical material. It is similar to a narrative interview, but additionally entails a free discussion, an attempt at dialogue and negotiations towards a common position, which is substantiated in terms of the studied group. Discussions using the free interview mode revolved around topics related to development tasks corresponding to adulthood, e.g. professional employment, one's economic situation, the family and residential situation, spending free time, social contacts in the local community.¹⁹ The study saw the

¹⁷ B. Cytowska, *Trudne drogi adaptacji. Wątki emancypacyjne w analizie sytuacji dorosłych osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną we współczesnym społeczeństwie polskim*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls” Kraków 2012; Z. Gajdzica, *Edukacyjne konteksty bezradności społecznej osób z lekkim upośledzeniem umysłowym*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków 2007; R. Kijak, *Seksualność człowieka z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną a rodzina*, Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL, Warszawa 2014; A. Krause, A. Żyta, S. Nosarzewska, *Normalizacja środowiska społecznego osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną*, Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit, Toruń 2010.

¹⁸ I. Ramik-Mażewska, *Style życia kobiet*, op. cit., pp. 305–314.

¹⁹ P. Łukasiewicz, *Dialog jako metoda*, „Teksty” 1979, no. 5(47), pp. 105–121; K. Konecki, *Studia z metodologii badań jakościowych. Teoria ugruntowana*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2000, pp. 169–188.

Table 1. Characteristics of the studied persons

First name and age	Profession	Family situation	Professional situation	Place of residence
Estera (52 years)	knitter	married, no children	unemployed	town up to 10,000 inhabitants
Marzena (34 years)	knitter	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 10,000 inhabitants
Bartosz (29 years)	cook in small gastronomy	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 50,000 inhabitants
Marek (40 years)	bookbinder	single, no children	worker	town up to 10,000 inhabitants
Marta (31 years)	cook in small gastronomy	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 50,000 inhabitants
Janek (38 years)	bookbinder	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 10,000 inhabitants
Małgorzata (24 years)	cook in small gastronomy	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 50,000 inhabitants
Sandra (40 years)	bookbinder	married, no children	unemployed	town up to 50,000 inhabitants
Adrian (35 years)	bookbinder	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 50,000 inhabitants
Janina (40 years)	bookbinder	single, no children	unemployed	town up to 10,000 inhabitants

Source: own work.

participation of ten people aged between 25 and 52, with certified minor intellectual disabilities, which have completed special vocational schools. Five people had the profession of bookbinders, three were cooks in small gastronomy and two gained education as knitters. All the people stemmed from the county of Nowa Sól in the Lubusz voivodeship of Poland. Intellectually-disabled adults and their caretakers consented to participation in the study and were informed about the objective of the study. The empirical material was collected during individual discussions with adults with intel-

lectual disability certificates by Monika Pomorska.²⁰ The acquired empirical material was interpreted using the assumptions of the hermeneutic-phenomenological perspective, which allows the representation of the world experienced by the persons studied, to understand the meaning and significance that they ascribe to life situations in terms of lifestyles of intellectually-disabled adults.²¹ The analysis and interpretations of research results had the objective of getting to know and describing the lifestyles of adults with minor intellectual disabilities, thanks to which answers were provided to the following issues: (1) what are the lifestyles of the studied adults with minor intellectual disabilities?, (2) what factors condition the lifestyle choice of the analysed persons?

Analysis and interpretation of empirical material

A thorough analysis and interpretation of the collected empirical material exceeds the volume capacity of the present article. The lifestyles discerned by A. Siciński are mixed together in the statements of the studied persons. This means that it is difficult to assign one particular lifestyle to them. This part of the study presents selected statements²² indicating that activities of intellectually-disabled adults in terms of their professional work and financial situation, family and residential situation, the mode of spending free time, social contacts, are related to various life styles.

The analysis of statements suggests that the blocked (limited) style in the analysed persons mainly applies to professional work

²⁰ M. Pomorska, *Funkcjonowanie dorosłych osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu lekkim rolach społecznych*, master's thesis written under the guidance of Dr hab. J. Bąbka, Zielona Góra 2016.

²¹ K. Ablewicz, *Hermeneutyczno-fenomenologiczna perspektywa badań w pedagogice*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 1994, pp. 59–60 and others.

²² The text includes the verbatim mode of expression of the persons studied [the translations make every effort to faithfully convey these styles – translator's note].

and vocational education. The studied persons are similar in the sense that they did not choose their professions independently at school. The path of further vocational education was determined by the school teachers: *One could choose to be a cook, carpenter and book-binder. My head teacher chose my profession, because I didn't want to. The lady from the lower secondary school chose my profession, she guided me* (Marta). *Well, this is what the school chose for me, decided that it will be so, in vocational school already* (Adrian). These statements might indicate that the studied persons were not ready to make independent choices, which could influence their later life styles. In addition, the studied persons exhibited dislike for further education that would have increased the probability of finding a job, and would constitute a factor encouraging an active life style. This is confirmed by selected statements: *I rather did not go to any courses, I don't remember anything like that* (Marzena); *When I finished school, I did not learn any more, I did not attend any courses. I did not want to go to any school any more* (Marek); *I would not want to learn any more, what we were taught, one had to learn, three years of vocational school, three years of lower secondary school and two years of primary school* (Adrian). Limited possibilities of learning stemming from intellectual disability explain the dislike for further education. Disability itself is also a factor influencing the lifestyle related to one's professional activity: *I never worked in my profession. I was rather unable to do other jobs too, yes, it's difficult to get a job. Not only is it difficult to get a job, there's my eyesight (that troubles me - J.B.)* (Marzena). Negative experiences collected by the studied persons in terms of work are an example of a factor limiting motivation to undertake professional activity: *I kind of like the profession. I am not working anywhere now, I get two benefits: family and social. In the future I would like to work in gastronomy, but the people would have to be nice. I had a bad boss, who shouted, was rude, and at that other place it was nice, but too many interns* (Marta); *It was impossible to work in my profession. I didn't work at all. I have a disability benefit. I never helped anyone for money* (Sandra). The statements of the studied persons show that the local community lacks offers of jobs that would be suitable for their psychological and physical capacities.

The withdrawing lifestyle was related to the avoidance of the need to make choices by some of the analysed persons, to forgoing social contacts, professional employment, intimate relations and parenthood. One of the studied persons, Estera, had forgone social contacts with acquaintances and neighbours due to the negative experiences she had with visitors: *I am home, I just don't want acquaintances to come.* The limited attractiveness of the disabled for fully-able people makes it difficult for them to make social relations in their environment: *I was just trying to make an acquaintance, but he ditched me and all. I know when he comes, but no, I already let go of it* (Marta). The awareness of limitations stemming from disability is a cause for resignation of the studied persons from professional employment and parenthood. The following statements prove this: *I didn't work anywhere. I had an offer from Zielona Góra, work for me, but I said that I couldn't, because I just couldn't handle it (...)* (Małgorzata). *I am not planning on marriage, I would rather not want to have kids, well, one needs to have suitable conditions, don't they? A room with a kitchen and bathroom is not enough* (Małgorzata). *I am not searching for anyone. I would finally like to get a boyfriend. Maybe in the future I would want to live with him. I'd rather not want to have children, because I just could not handle any child. I cannot cope, and much less with a child* (Marta). The lack of preparation of intellectually-disabled people for independent life is the cause of their withdrawal from roles related to keeping a household, e.g. cooking, cleaning, shopping: *It's mum who cooks. When I come back from the workshop, it's mum who rather does it faster* (Sandra). *I rather cannot help at home, my surrogate family doesn't really let me (...)* (Marta). An example of the inability to cope is the transfer of management of finances to others: *My therapist makes the monthly payments, I trust my therapist and she makes the payments. I get my benefit to my account, but she's the one who takes care of things. I know I can afford everything. I used to not be able to, because my cousin would take my money* (Marta).

On the basis of an analysis of these statements one can conclude that just one person exhibited behaviour that would indicate a searching life style, which found its expression in various areas of activity. Bartosz was one of the few who stated that he chose his pro-

fession himself: *I chose my profession myself, there were only three to choose from: cook, carpenter and bookbinder. I am happy with my profession, I learned a little here at school about pork chops and mince-meat chops (...). If I prepared myself, I definitely could teach someone something. Some courses, one could try that, no?* The searching attitude is expressed by his professional activity, interests, as well as the modes of spending free time: *No, I do not work in my profession, but if I have something at home, then I do it, I cook. I have my benefit. If I wanted to, I could work, but I do some work under the radar here and there, as a help (...). I work on the side at times, sometimes, well, recently I helped some acquaintances at a construction site, because somebody is building a house, you know, dig something, anything (...), one does what one does. I search for such work by myself, if I see some flyers or something, I ask (...)* (Bartosz). Of his own accord, Bartosz became a member of a basketball team and finds his fulfilment in sport: *I looked at the website, they needed people, there was an ad that they are recruiting, and I signed up, they said, okay, we'll take you, and so I play. I am also interested in speedway. I go with friends, we have a group, we go my car to races of Falubaz. We have season tickets for the Euroleague and the Polish league. My acquaintances from basketball also go to speedway races sometimes, but they are not really great fans* (Bartosz). The style of searching in terms of interests and the mode of spending free time is proven by statements of two further people: *Me, I go to trips, oh, with this one Danusia, she arranges trips to the mountains, I was in the mountains, in Zakopane, then at Babimost I was for a week, I visited Gdańsk, I travel if I can or if I have some money to spare, I want to go, so I go, and I save up and then go* (Estera). *Last year we were supposed to take a trip to Hungary. We were to go, but there was no money. We collect money for trips during workshops. We are trying to encourage the vicar to arrange some financing from the curia so that we could take a holiday somewhere* (Janek). The here-and-now style is exemplified by statements of the analysed persons concerning the acceptance of their mode of living, enjoying daily rituals and participating in consumption. An example of a person accepting their life situation is Estera: *I just do things, who wants socks, who wants sweaters, if they want it sewn on a machine, I do it. I have a social benefit and I make ends meet with what I sell. I am now 42 years old, where could I go. The money is*

right, it has to be right, I need to have enough to pay my gas bill (Estera). I don't have a thousand from my work, I get up to a thousand. I am satisfied. Once I had almost two thousand (...). We have enough money, we have to. I am happy with my work and my earnings. I also get a social benefit (Marek). The analysed persons did not talk about their passions and interests. They frequently spend their free time at the computer, using the Internet: *On the computer, there's the Internet, games, for instance, I don't know, I play cards, on the computer, and I try (...). I check if the computer is better at cards than me (...)* (Janek). Beside that, the studied persons keenly watch television, go on walks, ride bicycles, work in the garden, do embroidery, crochet, go to stores: *I sometimes watch something, an interesting film. The computer, games and the Internet. I sometimes take trips with the association. When I come back from workshops, I eat and start on my embroidery straight away, and I sell it to a friend, she hangs it in her room* (Sandra); *I watch series, I ride my bicycle. I watch for instance Maria Wesółowska [a court show – translator's note], Detectives, Na Wspólnej [a Polish soap opera – translator's note], Trudne sprawy [Tough affairs, a scripted reality show – translator's note], what else (...)* (Małgorzata). Janek participates in church life in his locality. He is an altar server and actively participates in almost any mass and church event: *What can one do? I go to church. As altar server – acquaintances encouraged me once, once, come, what will you be doing sitting at home (...)* (Janek). Participation in occupational therapy workshops brings a lot into their lives: *I am a member of the association from the very beginning, when it was formed. Now it is not always work any more. Here we learn songs, we had Christmas Eve recently, we sang in the market square, and now we were with the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. When there is something going on, I take pictures* (Marek); *Now Mondays we Nordic walking and sing at the association, we have rehearsals. And now shows for the blind, we will be singing* (Sandra). The studied persons have low aspirations concerning their further lives. They live with what the day brings them. They find joy in purchasing clothes, bicycles, a computer: *I just bought a new computer, perhaps I will have a better bicycle one day. Everything will go its own way and that is that..., to see something, all it takes is to get on my bike and go see it. The nearest future: Well, that's going to be tough, I've been thinking a lot, I am thinking*

a lot, but I don't know what will become of it (Marek); I wouldn't want to have a pet, a new computer perhaps. I will save up from my benefit, I will save up and get a new computer (Janina); I spend my money on food, on clothes (Marta); To have my own room (...) That's most important... (Małgorzata).

The conservative (maintaining) style shines through in statements concerning fear of change in the lifestyle, e.g. moving away from home, clear declarations concerning the will to continue living with parents: *We live here in the settlement, we have two bedrooms. I am not planning on moving away for the moment (Marek).* In the discussions, one could see that the studied persons renounced their emotional and sexual needs, concluding that this sphere of life is not as important for them. The studied were aware that they are disabled and that, for this reason, they cannot develop fully: *I am single. I don't have a girlfriend. I don't have any plans yet. I haven't thought about it, I don't know if I would like to start a family yet. I once thought about it, but I rather do not want to move out. I have two brothers, I live with my brothers and parents (Adrian); I don't have a wife. I have a mother, I live with my mother and siblings. I am single. I don't have a girlfriend. I don't have any plans yet (Marek).* Family life provides the studied persons with a feeling of safety, but it limits their autonomy, the ability to set challenges, to change their lifestyles. Only two of the studied women established families. The remaining ones were unmarried and had no children. The analysed persons exhibited no statements proving a mature life style focused on planning, action and change.

Discussion of the study results

The interpretation of the statements shows that the studied persons exhibit behaviour indicative of the blocked, withdrawing and here-and-now-oriented styles. There are hence indications that suggesting thinking of the lifestyles of intellectually-disabled people as home-centric, ritualised through daily activities, entailing passively living lives, focusing on the here and now, and to a lesser extent

oriented towards action and change. The studied persons adapted to the conditions of their existence, but this was passive adaptation that sees the person being subordinate to their environment, adapt to the living conditions.²³ The studied intellectually-disabled persons were not keen to speak about the future and the possibility of changes in their lives, e.g. further education through participation in courses, in employment, moving out of their parents' home. The plans focused on having e.g. their own room, purchasing a computer, a bicycle, going on a trip, etc. No statements were found indicating perspective plans, innovative activities aimed at changes, hence, creative adaptation and a mature life style. The life situation of the studied persons is similar to the existence of intellectually-disabled adults described by Western authors in terms of social inclusion and quality of life. Differences entail social awareness to the benefit of Western countries, in terms of social participation of intellectually-disabled persons, as well as initiatives facilitating their preparation to be independent and autonomous in adulthood, the promotion of supported housing or making changes in the local environment, so as to increase activity and counteract ritualism and the passivity of this social group.²⁴ The graduated concept of lifestyles shows that intellectually-disabled persons can be supported, to the extent of

²³ K. Obuchowski, *Adaptacja twórcza*, Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 1985, pp. 208–220.

²⁴ I. Ramik-Mażewska, *Style życia kobiet*, op. cit., pp. 305–314; S. Abbot, R. Mcconkey, *The barriers to social inclusion as perceived by people with intellectual disability*, "Journal of Intellectual Disability Research" 2006, 10, pp. 275–287; P. Bramston, H. Chipuer, G. Pretty, *Conceptual principles of quality of life: an empirical exploration*, "Journal of Intellectual Disability Research" 2005, 49, pp. 728–733; I. Hall, A. Strydom, M. Richards, R. Hardy, J. Bernal, M. Wadsworth, *Social outcomes in adulthood of children with intellectual impairment: evidence from a birth cohort*, "Journal of Intellectual Disability Research" 2005, 49, pp. 171–182; M.L. Wehmeyer M.L., N.W. Garner, *The impact personal characteristics of people with intellectual and developmental disability on self-determination and autonomous functioning*, "Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities" 2003, 16, pp. 255–265; N.J. Wilson, H. Jaques, A. Johnson, M.L. Brotherton, *From social exclusion to supported inclusion: adults with intellectual disability discuss their lived experiences of a structured social group*, "Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities" 2017, 30, pp. 874–858.

their capacities, in transitioning to further lifestyle categories. This remains in line with the assumptions of the emancipation paradigm and the concept of empowerment, meaning, preparation of a disabled individual to take control of their life, and support them in making decisions/²⁵ Every person, regardless of whether they are fully able or disabled, requires such a life style that would enable them to take on challenges stemming from development tasks and facilitates creative adaptation to changing conditions of existence. Life goals provide life with meaning and force the individual to constantly develop.²⁶ Within this context, it is worth searching for factors conditioning the lifestyle choices of the studied persons. The analysis and interpretation of the study results allowed the disclosure of three areas that did not fit in with each other: (1) cultural patterns (mode of thinking, norms of functioning in a community), (2) resources of one's environment, and (3) resources of the individual; these explain, why the lifestyles of intellectually-disabled persons were oriented towards solidifying the present state of affairs, and not towards development. Contemporary paradigms of special education indicate emerging changes in the mode of thinking about intellectually-disabled persons and their place in the world. However, changes in cultural patterns do not translate to relevant resources of the environment, which would take into account e.g. better availability of professional activity centres, protected housing or therapeutic support for disabled persons and their families. The analysed persons did not have suitable internal resources that would facilitate development-oriented lifestyles instead of stagnation. It was noted earlier that during early adulthood, the lifestyle of an individual begins to shine through. An analysis of empirical material permitted the understanding of just how strongly lifestyle is conditioned by the human body, including limitations stemming from intellectual disability, the life experiences collected earlier on

²⁵ A. Krause, *Paradygmaty pedagogiki*, op. cit. pp. 189–202; G. Theunissen, W. Plaute, *Handbuch Empowerment und Heilpädagogik*, Lambertus Verlag, Freiburg 2002, pp. 150–153.

²⁶ K. Obuchowski, *Galaktyka potrzeb. Psychologia dążeń ludzkich*, Zysk i S-ka Wydawnictwo, Poznań 2000, pp. 316–320.

and the resources of the social environment. One cannot escape the attitude towards oneself, the world and others that was shaped in childhood; these have a significant impact on the choice of a specific lifestyle, as is stressed in psychological concepts. The choice of lifestyle is related to processes of establishment of an individual's identity, as well as learning.²⁷ In the period of establishment of identity, an individual must have the possibility to experiment, try out various roles, take on obligations. Disabled persons have limited experiences in this regard, a fact that limits their identity development. The same applies to processes of learning various social behaviour patterns or roles. One can change their behaviour if the array of their activities is not sufficient in light of new requirements. In such a situation, their experiences must be adapted, or transformed²⁸. Thanks to this, an individual's mode of functioning is retuned. Intellectually-disabled persons experience limitations related to learning, which hinders and at times prevents creative adaptation²⁹. Lifestyle should not be tied only to one's adulthood, when it actually manifests itself. One's lifestyle is a consequence of what happens with intellectually-disabled persons during early stages of development. It is important to develop personal resources in intellectually-disabled persons from the yearly years so as to enable them to make choices, set tasks, all of which facilitates a development-oriented lifestyle.

Conclusion

The normalisation and emancipation paradigm allows one to paint alternative visions of life for intellectually-disabled persons,

²⁷ A. Brzezińska, *Współzależność kontekstu rozwoju stylu życia i struktury Ja*, [in:] *Nauka. Humanistyka. Człowiek. Prace dedykowane Profesor Krystynie Zamiarze w czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2005, pp. 57–74.

²⁸ J. Piaget, *Równoważenie struktur poznawczych*, transl. by Z. Zakrzewska, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1981, p. 16.

²⁹ K. Obuchowski, *Adaptacja twórcza*, op. cit., pp. 208–220.

which will not be available to many of them. Excess demands placed on intellectually disabled persons with respect to a mature lifestyle related to innovation, motivation to change and make choices may contribute to their lack of adaptation and give rise to defence reactions. Helplessness, passivity, focus on the here and how that shone through in the lifestyles of the analysed persons cannot be treated as something bad. There is a need of discourse that accepts the social approval for intellectually-disabled persons being different³⁰, as well as such an approach that would allow them not to choose lifestyles in the way fully able persons do it. The support of such people on their way to an adult, active and happy life remains an open issue.

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³⁰ E. Zakrzewska-Manterys, *Upośledzeni umysłowo. Poza granicami człowieczeństwa*, Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa 2010, p. 108.

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