

## **Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis**

Name of the author of the thesis: Arkadiusz Padrak

Academic title of the doctoral supervisor of the thesis:

dr hab. Lidia Marszałek, profesor of the Mazovian Academy in Płock

The title of the thesis:

Pedagogical perspective of spirituality of a child at an older school age with intellectual disability

Key words phrases: intellectual disability, spirituality, education, integral education, developmental support

### **Abstract:**

This paper discusses certain aspects concerning the spirituality of young people with mild intellectual disabilities. In doing so, it makes apt references to the issue of upbringing and examines related pedagogical recommendations meant to support these people in building their personality, shaping their life path and living a fulfilling life in a “normalised” society.

The level of spirituality of these people has been assessed using a tool, constructed and modified by B. Skowroński and J. Bartoszewski and later adapted to the intellectual level of the said respondents. This tool was used after receiving the full consent of its inventors for the use of their Scale of Spirituality and its requisite modifications. This scale comprises six subscales, covering the following aspects: religious spirituality, expanding consciousness, search for meaning, sensitivity to art, doing good and spirituality in terms of sensitivity to inner beauty (moral choices) and outer beauty (the surrounding world).

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part dwells on the theoretical foundation of this research by discussing the notion of spirituality in different theoretical approaches, besides indicating a personalistic view of the human being as a *person*, regardless of their health and social status. It also discerns the contemporary state of the spirituality of a group of young individuals with mild intellectual disabilities in the

context of their functioning in the modern world. Moreover, it analyses previous research on spirituality and endeavours to explore existing research on the spirituality of people with disabilities.

The second part covers empirical aspects of this research – its methodological assumptions, the demographics of the study group, the research's partial results in the identified spheres of spirituality and the correlations between not only the different spheres but also the individual items in these spheres, using the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  test was performed to ascertain the reliability of the said research tool. This part also details the analyses carried out as part of this research and presents the findings.

The third part – pedagogy-related – covers pedagogical recommendations addressed to those directly involved in the upbringing and education of youth with mild intellectual disabilities. It identifies ways of understanding these young people in terms of how they function in the world and how their spiritual development can be supported. Further, this part includes reflections on integral human education, particularly for people with intellectual disabilities. It propounds that every human being, including persons with intellectual disabilities, regardless of their ability to function in the world, possesses the essential qualities of humanity – dignity, autonomy, sapience and respect. These qualities need to be respected and developed in the pupil to foster a fulfilling adult life.

This research concludes that even though the spirituality of youth with mild intellectual disabilities does not reach the maximum score, it is still above the average assumed in the research tool. This proves that these people can build their spiritual world even without special assistance. Ensuring apt educational assistance on this front – in the form of providing integral education – can support their proper development, with due regard to achieving and maintaining a balance between the different spheres of human development.