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## THE STRUCTURE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE IN THE AUTISM SPECTRUM: AN ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE\*

**Introduction:** This study describes the self-knowledge structure of individuals on the autism spectrum, characterized as a set of personal judgments, evaluative judgments, and judgments related to personal standards. These judgments concern topics associated with personal and physical attributes, relationships with others, and intellectual capabilities.

**Research Aim:** The aim of the research presented in this article was to explore and describe the self-knowledge structure of the participant.

**Method:** The research questions were directed at describing the self-knowledge structure of an adult on the autism spectrum in relation to personality, intellectual, social, and physical domains. The study was conducted within an interpretative paradigm and utilized a dialogical method. For analysis and presentation of the autotelic case study, a single text was selected, which reconstructs the participant's statements. This research material was analyzed and interpreted according to the principles of phenomenography.

**Results:** The presented findings reveal the self-knowledge structure of an adult on the autism spectrum, displaying the participant's self-description, self-evaluation and ideal of self across personality, intellectual, social, and physical domains.

**Conclusions:** Based on the analysis and interpretation of the empirical material, it can be inferred that adults on the autism spectrum possess a self-knowledge structure indicative of a mature stage of development. Evidence for this includes a hierarchical structure of self-knowledge. It is suggested that the level of self-insight may vary depending on the individual's interest in each domain. Practical implications are oriented toward supporting individuals on the autism spectrum in the process of building self-knowledge.

**Keywords:** adulthood, self-knowledge, self-description, self-esteem, self-ideal, autism spectrum

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## INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that the autism spectrum is multifaceted, signifying that this condition is more complex than previously thought. This state encompasses not only distinctive profiles in social, communicative, and behavioral domains but also an autistic way of perceiving reality (e.g. monotropism) and thinking (e.g. visual thinking) (Sedgewick and Douglas, 2024). According to the latest understanding, autism represents an alternative developmental pattern. This means that individuals on the spectrum develop according to an autistic neurotype, which may manifest in unique ways of forming and maintaining social relationships, communicating, and behaving (Grandin and Moore, 2022). The term “spectrum” is used for good reason, as the traits of autism vary widely among individuals. For instance, an autistic person may attempt to establish social relationships but face difficulties due to communication barriers.

A review of research on self-knowledge in adults on the autism spectrum reveals discrepancies among authors. Some researchers argue that individuals with an autistic developmental path do not necessarily struggle with forming self-knowledge but rather with expressing it (Jackson et al., 2012; Coutelle et al., 2020). Studies confirm that autistic individuals develop self-awareness in physical and intellectual domains (Nichols and Stich, 2003; Jackson et al., 2012). Literature also indicates that this group conceptualizes self-knowledge in relation to mental states but struggles to utilize this information in practical contexts (Vickerstaff et al., 2007; Zahavi, 2010; Jackson et al., 2012). Some researchers note difficulties in developing self-knowledge in the social domain (Carruthers, 2013; Jackson et al., 2012). However, other studies suggest that autistic individuals may have well-developed social self-awareness (Nichols and Stich, 2003; Vickerstaff et al., 2007). Polish studies explore the significance of diagnosis and psychoeducational interventions for self-knowledge in this group and identify sources of self-awareness (Kanar and Bąbka, 2024). Self-knowledge in autistic individuals may function as a “social reflection,” resulting from social interactions (Ławicka, 2019). Research by Bleszyński (2019) highlights that an autism spectrum diagnosis may negatively affect self-esteem and provides insights into cognitive awareness of differences and sensory perception in this group.

This study adopts a cognitive approach and Kozielecki’s (1986) theory of self-knowledge. According to Kozielecki, self-knowledge is encoded through descriptive judgments (self-description), evaluative judgments (self-assessment), and personal standards (ideal self). In the cognitive framework, self-knowledge is structured. Kozielecki’s theory includes categories of self-knowledge related to identity (e.g. age, name), physical appearance (e.g. hair color), psychological functions (e.g. skills), and interpersonal contexts (e.g. interactions with others). Consequently, through the analysis and interpretation of empirical data, categories were

identified to illustrate the self-knowledge of individuals on the autism spectrum, divided into personal, intellectual, social, and physical domains.

This article is based on research conducted for a doctoral dissertation titled “Self-Knowledge in Adults on the Autism Spectrum” prepared by the author (Kana, 2022).<sup>1</sup> The study employs an autotelic case study approach to present a segment of empirical data on the subject. According to the literature, such an approach aligns with a researcher’s interest in a specific phenomenon (Stake, 1997). The selected case was analyzed and interpreted using a phenomenographic perspective, revealing the structure of self-knowledge in line with the cognitive approach and Kozielecki’s (1986) theory of self-knowledge. This study focuses on a detailed and profound understanding of one individual’s experiences rather than making broad generalizations about the entire population of individuals on the autism spectrum. This approach captures unique aspects of self-knowledge within the context of the autistic neurotype and provides insights into how individual experiences shape self-knowledge in its various dimensions.

## RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTION

The analysis of the collected material aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the structure of self-knowledge in adults on the autism spectrum?
2. What is the self-knowledge of adults on the autism spectrum in the personal domain, considering its components: self-description, self-assessment, and ideal self?
3. What is the self-knowledge of adults on the autism spectrum in the intellectual domain, considering its components: self-description, self-assessment, and ideal self?
4. What is the self-knowledge of adults on the autism spectrum in the social domain, considering its components: self-description, self-assessment, and ideal self?
5. What is the self-knowledge of adults on the autism spectrum in the physical domain, considering its components: self-description, self-assessment, and ideal self?

The aim of the research presented in this article was to understand and describe the structure of the self-knowledge of the studied individual.

<sup>1</sup> A synthetic description of the research was published in the scientific quarterly *Niepełnosprawność – Zagadnienia, Problemy, Rozwiązania* (IV/2023, No. 49) under the title *Self-Knowledge of Adults on the Autism Spectrum*. This publication provides a collection of information about the conducted study and a concise summary of the research findings.

## RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The study was conducted within the interpretive paradigm, which enabled the exploration of the meaning of the phenomenon under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2010). Given the participation of an individual on the autism spectrum, maintaining personalized contact was of particular importance. To gather empirical material, a dialogical method was employed (Norris et al., 2020). In compliance with anonymization requirements, any details in the quoted statements that could identify the participant, such as age, were removed from this article.

To create an autotelic case study, one transcript of a conducted interview was selected. To provide a fuller picture of the chosen case, factual information was included. At the time of the study, the individual was in early adulthood, married, and unemployed. After graduating from high school, they began but did not complete university studies. Their daily activities included raising a child. The selected participant had an autism spectrum diagnosis, communicated verbally, and was within the intellectual norm. The individual consented to participate in the research, was informed about its purpose, and was aware of their right to discontinue the interview at any time.

## DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The empirical material was analyzed and interpreted using the phenomenographic perspective, following the stages outlined by Marton and Booth (1997) and Franke and Dahlgren (1996). To present the research findings, a case study framework was applied in relation to self-knowledge and its significance within the experiences of an individual on the autism spectrum.

The literature identifies three types of case studies: autotelic, instrumental, and mixed. An autotelic case study involves an in-depth analysis of a specific case. According to the literature, the researcher focuses on a selected case because it is interesting “in itself”, rather than because it is representative or illustrative of the studied phenomenon (Stake, 1997). An instrumental case study aims to draw general conclusions or deepen understanding of a broader phenomenon. A mixed case study examines multiple cases to gain deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Stake, 1997).

In this article, the autotelic case study approach was deemed most suitable, allowing for the detailed presentation of research findings focused on a particular case of interest.

## RESULTS

The analysis and interpretation of the interview transcript revealed that the participant has a well-formed structure of self-insight, consistent with Koziol's (1986) theory of self-knowledge. This indicates that the individual conceptualizes self-knowledge in four domains: personal, intellectual, social, and physical. The participant constructs descriptive judgments, evaluative judgments, and judgments about personal standards, allowing for the identification of phenomena relevant to the subject matter.

### Conceptualization of self-knowledge in the personal domain

Self-knowledge in the personal domain was categorized based on its components: "factual self-description", "personal self-esteem," and "the ideal of self", "reflecting the aspiration for personal growth".

Category "factual self-description" encompasses statements about real aspects of the personal domain without evaluative judgments.

Tell me what you know about yourself.

In my daily life, I take care of my child. I have secondary education, post-secondary school [Married, M.K.] works from 6:00 to 14:00. They are a [profession, M.K.].

When I was 11, they diagnosed me with autism. Earlier, it was early childhood autism, but at 18, they changed it to high-functioning autism.

These statements reflect a detailed, descriptive approach. Notably, the participant avoids discussing personality traits or temperament, focusing instead on identity-related information (e.g. age, work experience). The diagnosis of autism is presented as a factual element, with no evaluative or emotional connotations.

Category "personal self-esteem" reflects the participant's introspective judgments about behaviors and emotional states, formed independently of external opinions or comparisons.

Are you satisfied with the person you have become?

I am satisfied because I am constantly developing.

I am a little different. For example, I understand disabled people very well because I am one of them, although it's not very visible in me.

The participant expresses satisfaction with personal growth while acknowledging the need for emotional development, particularly in handling stress.

The person being studied is open to personal development. Despite general satisfaction with themselves and their growth within the autism spectrum, they recognize the need to make changes in their life. This particularly concerns the emotional sphere. Category “the ideal of self, reflecting the aspiration for personal growth” pertains to aspirations for improvement in emotional reactions and personal behaviors.

Would you like to change anything in the way you react to various situations/emotions?

Maybe in stressful situations, it would be better to manage emotions.

These findings indicate that the participant’s self-knowledge in the personal domain integrates descriptive, evaluative, and aspirational elements concerning identity and emotional or behavioral traits.

### **Conceptualization of self-knowledge in the intellectual domain**

Self-knowledge in the intellectual domain was categorized as: “self-description with a distinctive character”, “detailed self-esteem”, and “a progressive ideal of self”. The conceptualization of self-knowledge in the intellectual domain includes detailed information provided by the studied individual about their resources, skills, and capabilities, as well as difficulties in the cognitive sphere. The category of “self-description with a distinctive character” refers to statements in which the person on the autism spectrum details and precisely defines the scope of their intellectual competencies.

How do you handle acquiring new knowledge and skills? What comes easily to you, and what do you find challenging?

I really enjoy mathematics and math problems, logical puzzles, and sudoku. I like everything related to numbers. I enjoy learning foreign languages; I pick up new languages very quickly. Solving various problems, whether mathematical or logical, calms me down (...). However, when it comes to household tasks, for example, cleaning my room, when I start learning something new, I usually have to write everything down at first – what to pay attention to, what needs to be done – and over time, I learn it by heart and no longer need the notes. But if I must do something in a different sequence than what is written and learned, it’s as if I have to learn it all over again.

The studied individual frequently referred during the conversation to their resources, such as their mathematical knowledge. At the same time, they are aware of their challenges, such as performing tasks without a predetermined sequence.

In reference to the participant’s statements, the category of “detailed self-assessment” was identified. This category pertains to the individual’s conscious competencies, addressing both strengths and challenges in this area.

Are you satisfied with your knowledge and skills?

What I can say about myself is that I have a logical mind, and mathematics comes to me very quickly (...). However, when it comes to, for example, Polish language, reading comprehension, understanding literature, and so on, it's not as easy.

The above example demonstrates that the studied individual is aware of their strengths related to mathematics and logical sciences while also recognizing their difficulties, such as analyzing texts.

The ideal of self was presented through the participant's approach to making changes in their cognitive functioning. The individual's statements reveal their openness to intellectual growth in acquiring new knowledge and improving communication skills, including understanding instructions provided by others. The following statement exemplifies the category of "progressive ideal of self":

Would you like to learn something new or change anything in terms of your skills and knowledge?

I'd like to work on improving how I absorb knowledge to make it easier for me. It would definitely be simpler then, because for now, learning new things isn't coming easily (...). And maybe then it would be easier to talk with my mom, because now it usually takes me a long time to understand my mom and do things the way she says.

The category of "progressive ideal of self" highlights the desire for continued intellectual development in the individual on the autism spectrum.

The presented research findings concerning self-knowledge in the intellectual domain show that an individual on the autism spectrum conceptualizes information about themselves while incorporating all its components, in accordance with Koziński's (1986) theory of self-knowledge.

### **Conceptualization of the self-knowledge of an adult on the autism spectrum in the social domain**

The reconstruction of the self-knowledge of the studied individual in the social domain revealed its categories: "self-description reflecting a sense of distinctiveness", "socio-empathetic self-esteem", and "an ideal of self, demonstrating the need for social acceptance".

The category of "self-description reflecting a sense of distinctiveness" includes statements where the participant indicates an awareness of their differences from others. The individual on the autism spectrum recognizes that, to some extent, they differ from their surroundings due to factors such as facial expressions or maintaining eye contact.

Describe yourself and what you know about yourself in social relations.

I don't know how some people manage to maintain contact all the time without difficulty. It doesn't generally bother me, but I'd like the people who talk to me to understand me, because sometimes I want to say something, but I can't always express it, and sometimes when I speak, it takes me a bit longer because I can't summarize things. Sometimes I mix up words; there are times when I hear a new word, and later I want to use it, but I don't necessarily use it correctly or in the right context.

Controlling my facial expressions – I can't control them at all, and sometimes I don't even realize that my expression is changing, and I only find out about it from other people (...). I know that facial expressions contribute a lot to how the other person perceives what someone is saying and maintaining eye contact too. I've never managed to maintain it continuously.

The analysis of the individual's statements shows that they perceive their distinctiveness in the social sphere, particularly in aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication.

The statements of the research participants revealed that they encountered negative opinions from others about themselves. Such information is integrated into their self-knowledge system. Although the individual on the autism spectrum does not accept the labels assigned to them, for example, by family members, they acknowledge these labels when verbalizing evaluative judgments. The category of "socio-empathetic self-assessment" shows that, on the one hand, the participant is aware of their strengths to support others, while simultaneously understanding their difficulties in establishing and maintaining relationships with others.

What can you say about yourself in the context of relationships with your family, friends, and other people around you?

I also have empathy for other people, for example, my mom could walk past someone in need without any issue, but I can't do that. If I see someone in need, I usually stop by that person and ask if I can help in any way (...). I could never understand people who mock such individuals (...). And disregarding their needs.

I didn't have any issues at work. But when it comes to friendships, it's harder.

They see me as a bad or sick person, even though I'm not sick; I just perceive things differently than they do (...) The problem is I take their words personally. I can't listen to it and not take it to heart. So, when they insult me, even if they write to X and not directly to me, it's still unpleasant for me.



The category of “socio-empathetic self-assessment” illustrates how the participant conceptualizes self-knowledge in relation to the social sphere.

The category of “ideal of self, demonstrating the need for social acceptance” encompasses statements in which the participant expresses a desire for changes in the social sphere. These changes concern both traits associated with the autism spectrum (e.g. maintaining eye contact) and the pursuit of acceptance and understanding from their surroundings.

Would you like to change something in your relationships with other people?

I'd like to learn how to maintain eye contact when talking with another person.

I would prefer for my family to understand me.

I still care about such relationships and would like to finally find someone who accepts me as I am, someone who sees the world as I do, who understands me, and who I can talk to. Sometimes there are things you don't want to discuss with your family; you want to talk to someone else. I'd like to have such a person.

The self-knowledge of an adult on the autism spectrum in the social domain shows that the individual experiences negative interactions in relationships with others. These are connected both to their difficulties in social competencies and the lack of acceptance from their surroundings.

### **Conceptualization of the self-knowledge of an adult on the autism spectrum in the physical domain**

The self-knowledge of the research participant in the physical domain was described using the categories: “imprecise self-description”, “self-assessment expressing self-acceptance” and “weakly expressed ideal of self”.

The participant's statements revealed that they conceptualize self-knowledge in the physical domain; however, their self-description is not as clear and precise as in other areas of self-knowledge. The category of “imprecise self-description” includes descriptive judgments that, while detailed, do not reveal distinctive characteristics regarding the participant's appearance.

Tell me about your physical traits?

As for my appearance, I don't like long hair because I don't like it when it gets in my eyes (...). If I need to get my hair cut, I have to go to my mom because I never know how to describe the hairstyle I'd like (...). When it comes to clothes, I usually wear the outfits that someone once showed me.

The self-description regarding external appearance and physical traits did not include basic details such as height, weight, or eye color. It mainly referred to the participant's difficulties in choosing a hairstyle or clothing.

The participants' self-assessment reflects their actual attitude toward issues related to the physical domain. The category of "self-assessment expressing self-acceptance" encompasses statements in which the person on the autism spectrum does not have clear preferences in the discussed area. At the same time, the participant indicates self-acceptance concerning their appearance and general physical traits.

Are you satisfied with your physical traits?

I can't really pick clothes for myself to look good (...).

I honestly never know what hairstyle I want because I don't know which one is nice.

I'm actually okay with how I look.

A consistent picture emerges, aligned with previous categories, regarding the participant's ideal of self. The participant indicates that the physical domain is not included in their plans for self-improvement.

Would you like to change anything about your physical traits?

I mean, in terms of appearance, for now, I don't think I want to change anything.

The category of weakly expressed ideal of self provides information about the self-acceptance of the person on the autism spectrum in the physical domain.

The self-knowledge of an adult on the autism spectrum in the physical domain, while encompassing all its components in line with Kozielecki's concept, is not expanded to include distinctive individual traits.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The structure of the self-knowledge of the research participant pertains to the personality, intellectual, social, and physical domains, incorporating all its components in accordance with Kozielecki's theory of self-knowledge. Based on Kozielecki's concept, self-knowledge in the personality domain was divided into the categories: "factual self-description", "personal self-esteem" and "the ideal of self, reflecting the aspiration for personal growth". In this domain, the participant creates a self-description that includes information about their actual state, such as education or marital status. The basis for self-esteem in this area is linked to the ability of self-reflection. The indi-

vidual on the autism spectrum analyzes their behavior and emotional states and subsequently forms evaluative judgments. Their ideal of self, on the other hand, relates to the desire for further development, such as enhancing emotion-regulation strategies.

Based on the presented results, it can be inferred that individuals on the autism spectrum conceptualize self-knowledge in the personality domain regarding their behavioral and emotional traits. However, they experience difficulties in practically applying this knowledge. This finding is consistent with previous studies on this topic (Vickerstaff et al., 2007; Zahavi, 2010; Jackson et al., 2012).

From the participant's statements, phenomena can be identified that demonstrate their self-knowledge in the intellectual domain. The category of "self-description with a distinctive character" revealed that the individual on the autism spectrum verbalizes detailed information about their knowledge and skills. The category of "detailed self-assessment" proved significant, presenting not only knowledge of the participant's intellectual resources but also evaluative judgments regarding difficulties in this area. Such self-knowledge indicates a need for growth, which is described in the category "a progressive ideal of self".

The presented results align with previous studies by authors such as Nichols and Stich (2003) and Jackson et al. (2012), who recognized that self-knowledge in the intellectual domain is well-developed in individuals on the autism spectrum. In line with Błeszyński's (2019) research, autistic individuals engage in self-presentation concerning their strengths and challenges, which this study confirms.

In the social domain, self-knowledge was described using the categories: "self-description reflecting a sense of distinctiveness", "socio-empathetic self-esteem" and "an ideal of self, demonstrating the need for social acceptance". The participant is aware of their distinctiveness from others, such as in the area of social skills. It is noteworthy that difficulties in this sphere are not a direct issue for the participant; however, they express a desire to acquire competencies in these areas to better establish relationships with others. The participant is aware that certain social skill deficits hinder interactions with their surroundings. Despite negative experiences in social relationships, their evaluative judgments highlight traits such as sensitivity to individuals with disabilities. These judgments also illustrate the impact of social interactions on shaping self-esteem. The ideal of self in this domain reflects the need for acceptance from others and reveals cognitive dissonance in the participant. From one perspective, the individual wishes to form relationships with someone who would accept them as a person on the autism spectrum. Conversely, the participant expresses a desire to change certain traits stemming from their autistic neurotype. The empirical material developed does not confirm findings from studies suggesting that self-knowledge in the social domain is not conceptualized by individuals on the autism spectrum (Carruthers, 2013; Jackson et al., 2012).

The participant's self-knowledge in the physical domain was described using three categories: "imprecise self-description", "self-assessment express-

ing self-acceptance” and “weakly expressed ideal of self”. The participant uses detailed descriptive judgments that lack distinctive features. The individual is aware of difficulties, such as choosing clothing, yet is satisfied with their appearance and does not wish to change anything in this regard. As a result, the ideal of self is weakly expressed.

According to the findings of Gillihan and Farah (2005), individuals on the autism spectrum conceptualize self-knowledge in the physical domain. The presented analysis supports these assumptions. It can be inferred, however, that this is an area in which these individuals engage in less self-reflection, potentially due to their acceptance of their appearance (Łukaszewski, 1974).

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis and interpretation of the research material provided an answer to the research question: “What is the structure of self-knowledge in adults on the autism spectrum?”. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the empirical material, it can be inferred that adults on the autism spectrum possess self-knowledge that is developed to a mature stage (Kozielecki, 1986, p. 265). This is evidenced by the structure of self-knowledge, which incorporates its central components – self-description, self-assessment, ideal of self and spans personality, intellectual, social, and physical domains. Another criterion supporting the maturity of self-knowledge in individuals on the autism spectrum is its hierarchical structure (Kozielecki, 1986). This means that the components of self-knowledge complement each other. An exemplification of this hierarchical structure is the integration of information, such as difficulties in behavioral traits (e.g. awareness of a lack of control over facial expressions – first cluster) with descriptive judgments related to the social sphere (e.g. issues in interpersonal relationships – second cluster). These clusters complement and are organized across different areas.

It was concluded that self-knowledge in the personality domain is mature, with the participant’s statements reflecting a coherent self-concept (Kozielecki, 1986). The study demonstrates that individuals on the autism spectrum may require support in applying their self-knowledge in practice within the personality domain, such as for self-regulation.

According to Kozielecki’s (1986) theory of self-knowledge, an individual capable of self-reflection can generate knowledge about intra-individual differences. The empirical material regarding the intellectual domain indicates that the individual on the autism spectrum is not only aware of cognitive challenges (e.g. difficulty interpreting text) but also understands and utilizes their strengths (e.g. solving mathematical problems as a calming strategy). This enables them to leverage their potential for instance, in professional settings.

The analysis of the empirical material revealed that self-knowledge in the social domain was influenced by the opinions of others. This suggests that social interactions can serve as a source of self-knowledge (Brzezińska, 2006). According to the literature, incorporating information about oneself from external sources may lead to an inaccurate sense of one's social competencies, potentially resulting in reluctance to engage in interactions (Kantar and Bąbka, 2024).

The level of self-awareness may vary depending on the individual's interest in a particular domain. The participant conceptualizes self-knowledge in the personality, intellectual, and social domains, while their knowledge of the physical domain is less precise. Although phenomenographic studies do not provide insight into the causes of specific phenomena, it can be inferred that physical appearance is not a significant aspect of self-knowledge for the participant, which may explain the reduced need for self-reflection in this area.

Practical conclusions focus on supporting individuals on the autism spectrum in developing self-knowledge. It is essential to incorporate psychoeducational activities aimed at fostering self-knowledge across personality, intellectual, social, and physical domains.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study serves as a contribution to further exploration of self-knowledge in individuals on the autism spectrum. The qualitative nature of the research was intended to reveal the structure of self-knowledge from the perspective of an individual participant. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of people on the autism spectrum.

A significant limitation was the adoption of a phenomenographic perspective for analyzing the empirical material, presented as an autotelic case study. The developed categories were subject to the researcher's subjectivity, which was mitigated by seeking clarification of the participant's intentions during the interview. The participant communicated their specific viewpoints verbally during the study.

The theory of self-knowledge used (Kozielecki, 1986) focuses solely on the information verbalized by the individual, which may have influenced the study's outcomes, especially for a group with communication difficulties. Therefore, the study involved a participant capable of verbal communication and relied on the researcher's experience in working with individuals on the autism spectrum.

This study is open-ended, meaning the results can be interpreted using other criteria. However, it is concluded that the set objectives were achieved, and the analysis and interpretation of the empirical material addressed the research questions posed in the article.

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## STRUKTURA SAMOWIEDZY W SPEKTRUM AUTYZMU – ANALIZA JEDNOSTKOWEGO DOŚWIADCZENIA

**Wprowadzenie:** W opracowaniu opisano strukturę samowiedzy osoby w spektrum autyzmu jako zbioru sądów osobistych, wartościujących i sądów o standardach osobistych, które dotyczą tematów związanych z właściwościami osobowościowymi i fizycznymi, a także relacji z innymi ludźmi oraz możliwościami intelektualnymi.

**Cel badań:** Celem prezentowanych w artykule badań było poznanie i opisanie struktury samowiedzy badanej osoby.

**Metoda badań:** Problemy badawcze ukierunkowano na opisanie struktury samowiedzy dorosłej osoby w spektrum autyzmu w odniesieniu do obszaru osobowościowego, intelektualnego, społecznego i fizycznego. Badania były zrealizowane w paradygmacie interpretatywnym oraz z wykorzystaniem metody dialogowej. W celu analizy i prezentacji autotelicznego studium przypadku wybrano jeden tekst, będący rekonstrukcją wypowiedzi badanej osoby. Materiał badawczy przeanalizowano i zinterpretowano zgodnie z założeniami fenomenografii.

**Wyniki:** Zaprezentowane wyniki badań ukazują strukturę samowiedzy dorosłej osoby w spektrum autyzmu. Ukazano samoopis, samoocenę i ideał własnej osoby uczestnika badania w obszarze osobowościowym, intelektualnym, społecznym i fizycznym.

**Wnioski:** Na podstawie analizy i interpretacji materiału empirycznego można domniemywać, że dorosłe osoby w spektrum autyzmu mają ukształtowaną samowiedzę w stadium dojrzałym. Świadczy o tym m.in. struktura hierarchiczna wiedzy o sobie. Uznano, że poziom wglądu w siebie może się różnić w zależności od zainteresowania jednostki danym obszarem. Wnioski praktyczne są zorientowane na proces wspierania osób rozwijających się w spektrum autyzmu pod kątem budowania samowiedzy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** dorosłość, samowiedza, samoopis, samoocena, ideał własnej osoby, spektrum autyzmu

