

## **Dissertation evaluation**

**Title of dissertation:**           **Characteristics of social network relationships that improve social inclusion and wellbeing of women with intellectual disabilities in the Czech Republic**

**Author of dissertation:**       **Merita Poni**

**Evaluator:**                       **PhDr. Iva Strnadová, Ph.D.**

People with intellectual disability live longer which has brought the attention of professionals to assessment of the quality of life and wellbeing of this population in adulthood and during ageing. Special attention is given to women with intellectual disability who are often overlooked or neglected (Walsh et al. 2000). The choice of the topic of dissertation and its focus on social networks of women with intellectual disability was therefore highly up-to-date.

The submitted dissertation is logically structured into six chapters, bibliography and five appendices. It is a good piece of analytical work in which the literature references and own reflection is balanced. The abstract provides a clear picture of the dissertation and its objectives.

The importance of the study is sufficiently discussed in chapter one and two. I especially appreciate subchapter 1.2.2 Double discrimination of women with intellectual disabilities.

The central research question “how do social networks impact the community inclusion and social wellbeing of women with intellectual disabilities” was successfully answered as well as two research sub-questions.

The methodology of semi-structured interviews with mothers and sisters of adult women with intellectual disability aged 20 – 40 was a good choice.

Chapter four could serve as a model for analyzing the data gained by semi-structured interviews. The approach used for data analysis - comparison on the level of subjects' age

groups and proxy participants – was fully appropriate. While data was grouped into the four major themes, data content analysis has been further divided into two parts corresponding to appropriate research sub-questions.

Chapter five is an outstanding display of your ability to evaluate own research theory in the light of critically reviewed literature.

You have reached justified conclusions in chapter six and demonstrated their significance for future practice. Well done!

The suggestions for the viva:

- One of the issues mentioned by proxy participants (see chapter 5, p.83) was the rejection of some children with intellectual disability by their father. What might be ways to encourage the acceptance of fathers towards their children with disabilities?
- In chapter five (p. 95) you come up with a very good observation that mothers' "fear of abuse has led to an over-protection attitude which in turn has resulted in learnt dependency" of women with intellectual disability. Do you have any ideas how could this issue be addressed by professionals working with families of people with intellectual disabilities?

You have demonstrated the ability to work independently and have shown responsibility and passion while working on your submitted dissertation. The insights from your perspective being a lecturer in the field of gender greatly assisted to the outcome of your work.

I recommend the dissertation to be accepted to the viva.

**Evaluation: 1**

Prague, 30. 7. 2008



PhDr. Iva Strnadová, PhD.