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## The Spirituality of Prisoners

**Abstract:** The authors present the results of research aimed to show the specificity of the spiritual life of persons subject to imprisonment. Their analysis confirmed that persons subject to imprisonment had a statistically significantly poorer spiritual life than the control group which was made up of persons without criminal records. Convicts make much less effort to broaden their own consciousness; they rarely seek the meaning of the surrounding reality, have substantially less spiritual experiences associated with doing good, are less sensitive to art and to external and internal beauty, which is associated with moral choices.

**Key words:** Polish prisoners, spirituality of prisoners, religiousness of prisoners.

### Introduction

Spirituality is an important aspect of human life, and should therefore also be examined in relation to persons subject to imprisonment. The concept of “spirituality” causes much controversy due to the matter of establishing its boundaries. In general, spirituality is often identified with faith and religiousness (Heszen-Niejodek, Gruszczyńska 2004; Skrzypińska 2012). Katarzyna Skrzypińska (2012, p. 82) suggests the definition of spirituality as “fulfilling oneself in the pursuit of establishing the meaning of life, happiness and the search for ultimate things, with the involvement of own cognitive, emotional and behavioral resources, sometimes accompanied by peak experiences.” Kazimierz Popielski (1994) suggests perceiving spirituality as spiritual needs, values, aspirations, and goals. According to Frances Vaughan (1991), spirituality is a subjective experience of the *sacrum*. In contrast,

Irena Heszen-Niejodek and Ewa Gruszczyńska (2004) claim that spirituality bears the status of disposition and is an attribute of every human. Spirituality, as a human disposition, is a potential that can develop throughout life. Among the main manifestations of spirituality available within the inner experience they list: development (self-knowledge, self-realization and self-improvement, use of new experiences, spontaneity, originality and creativity of daily activities); internal freedom (following one's own standards in the choice of goals and means for evaluating effects, lack of internal coercion when acting); openness (acceptance of changes and new experiences, events in life, also unfavorable ones, sensitivity); religious attitudes (religious experiences, their importance in everyday life, their influence on moral choices and behavior, a tendency to reflect upon ethical issues); ethics (a high place of ethical values in the hierarchy of values, care for following them, tendency to reflect upon ethical issues); opposition towards evil (protesting against violence, injustice, harming others); attitude towards others (understanding, tolerance, respect, willingness to provide aid, forgiveness, altruism); engagement (experiencing a sense of community, participation, responsibility, generalized love); meaning (seeking the meaning of life in general, the meaning of individual events, also unfavorable ones, and the meaning of one's activity in the world, the search for a general rule governing the world), and harmony (seeking harmony with the world, internal order, coherence of different forms of one's activity). According to Paweł Socha (2000), the areas that are related to human spirituality are: consciousness and self-consciousness (ability to experience mystical states, awareness of one's limitations); reason and wisdom (reason is related to understanding of oneself and the surrounding world, verbalization and intellectualization of the world, insight and intuition, wisdom refers to the knowledge and the ability to judge the meaning, conditions, transformations of human life); feelings (love, regret, delight, suffering, spiritual dissatisfaction); sensitivity (sensitivity to ambiguity and contradiction, freshness of experiencing oneself, the others and the world, sensitivity to color, shape, hearing, taste or olfactory sensations); morality (the ability to distinguish good from evil, use the criteria of responsibility, justice, tolerance); creativity (the ability to create and the very process of creation itself); aesthetic sense; world view (the system of values; individual and social preferences, is related to giving meaning and significance to phenomena, behaviors, etc.); religiousness (related to religious behavior); faith (the cognitive effort that seeks to accept something as true; the contents of faith can be beliefs, religious imagery, parascience, scientific knowledge).

Another issue is the definition of the already mentioned relationship between spirituality and religiousness. Both concepts, although similar in terms of genesis and function, have different content and consequences (Skrzypińska 2012, p. 76). One of the positions perceives spirituality as a search for meaning, unity, relations with nature, humanity and transcendence. In turn, religiousness includes the faith of a community, combined with teaching motivating to seek holiness and promote

morality. This position illustrates how the two discussed concepts intertwine, having a common part and distinct elements, through which spirituality differs from religiousness. Whereas, the goal of both of these phenomena is without a doubt the process of searching for the *sacrum*, the meaning of life and one's place in the world (Piotrowski, Skrzypińska, Żemojtel-Piotrowska 2013).

The subject of spirituality of persons subject to imprisonment is raised by researchers primarily in the aspect of prisoners' religiousness. The research results in this area are presented below, in chronological order.

The relations between religious attitudes among prisoners and their system of values were discussed by Roman Cieślak (1994). Based on the analysis of the collected material, the author made the following conclusions: half of the respondents perceived themselves as often behaving altruistically; there were no significant differences in this aspect between people with high intensity of positive and negative religious attitudes; 1/3 of all the respondents perceived moral norms as objective, established by God; 2/3 of the prisoners claimed that moral norms are universal – they apply always, everywhere and to everyone. On the basis of statistical data it can be assumed that the perception of moral norms as objective is in some way related to the high intensity of positive religious attitudes; the difference between the subjects with a high intensity of positive religious attitudes and those with a high intensity of negative religious attitudes turned out to be significant, amounting to 0.05; Only 1/5 of the respondents stated that following God's commandments is the most important norm of conduct. These were primarily persons from the group with a high intensity of positive religious attitudes. The most important norm of behavior for over half of the respondents is to be in harmony with oneself.

The issue of the religiousness of prisoners was also discussed by Arkadiusz Urbanek (2007). Studies conducted among 230 inmates showed that religious activity was very low among prisoners. Indicators of the frequency with which the respondents participated in the distinguished forms of religious life in all studied groups were low, and significant differences were found between juvenile prisoners and adults. Participation in holy mass and other collective prayer meetings is declared by 5% of juveniles, 14% of first-time prisoners and 9% of recidivists. In contrast, individual prayer is practiced by 4.6% of juveniles, 25% of first-time prisoners and 10% of recidivists. The religious activity of imprisoned persons changes considerably with their age. The declared involvement of respondents in religious activity with respect to the age criterion reveals that as the age of respondents increased, so did their participation in religious activity. The highest rates were recorded among people aged 22–26, that is in the group of convicted adults – 50%. Then among people aged 27–35 – 43%; 36–55 and above – 33% of the respondents. Among the youngest group of respondents 18–21 years old – 10% of the inmates declared participation in religious life during their stay in prison.

The issue of religious life among persons subject to imprisonment was discussed by Tadeusz Sakowicz (2007). Of the total number of respondents (N = 4192), 11.8% identified themselves as non-believers, as indifferent – 23.0%, as indicating declarative faith – 30.6%, as confessional – 27.7%, and as deeply religious believers – 6.9%. On the basis of the data analyzed in view of the type of crime committed, the author stated that prisoners exhibit extreme religious attitudes: they are either non-believers (20.9%) or deep believers (21.9%).

Later studies conducted by this author (Sakowicz 2009) revealed that 88.2% of prisoners were believers and 11.8% were non-believers. It is worth mentioning that almost 50% of the respondents did not answer the question about religious practices. A more accurate analysis showed that only 15% of the respondents read the *Holy Bible* daily and once a week. 27.1% of respondents participate in mass daily and once a week, and 36.4% of the respondents pray every day and once a week. Although 97.6% of respondents admit that they know the ten commandments, adherence to them by the respondents is selective. In addition, among the preferred values, the ones indicated most often were family – 75.8%, parents – 41.5%, work – 35.8%, money – 30.9% and God – 26.5%. The results of the studies showed that 55.2% of the respondents said that faith helped them to endure the hardships of prison, while 24.2% had no orientation in this regard. 20.6% of them had a negative position. To summarize the analysis of the religiousness of the subjects, it can be stated that the vast majority of them are believers (88.2%) but only 21.1% practice their religion.

Zbigniew Nowacki (2012) conducted a study among prisoners (N = 116) that revealed that the pastoral work of a cleric can influence the thinking of the inmates, their emotional reactions and cognitive elements. The nature and frequency of the content transmitted by the priests seems to affect, in particular, the feelings and the train of thought of an inmate.

The studies by Wiesław Romanowicz and Dorota Tomczyszyn (2015) conducted in a group of 101 prisoners revealed that 74.2% of the respondents said they were believers, 6.9% believed strongly, 12.9% were undecided, 3.9% were indifferent, and 3.0% were non-believers. In order to approximate the identity orientations of the research subjects, they were asked to comment on the question regarding the broadly understood self-identification. The analysis of the results showed that the respondents' identities focused around religious matters. The greatest number of prisoners (47.5%) identify themselves as Catholics, 28.7% as Christians. The subsequent 12.9% of the research subjects chose different configurations that included identification with religion or a particular confession. Only 11.9% of all respondents do not identify with religion, claiming that first and foremost they see themselves as human – 11.0% or European – 0.9%.

The presented analysis allows to conclude that essentially the research projects within the subject area concerned mainly the religiousness of persons sentenced to imprisonment. There is, however, no research on spirituality, understood more broadly than the notion of religiousness, that is, having not only religious conno-

tations but also related to dimensions such as: searching for meaning, broadening awareness, sensitivity to art, doing good, etc.

## The Method

The purpose of the study was to determine the differences between persons sentenced to imprisonment and non-prisoners in terms of their activities related to spiritual life that concerns religion, as well as those without a religious nature. The following research problems were formulated:

- P<sub>1</sub>: What are the differences between the studied groups in terms of individual dimensions of spirituality that are not related to a particular religion?
- P<sub>2</sub>: What are the differences between the group of persons sentenced to imprisonment and the control group in terms of spirituality, which is rooted in religion?
- P<sub>3</sub>: What is the relationship between non-religious spirituality and the attitude towards religious practices and faith?
- P<sub>4</sub>: What are the differences between the people who represent certain styles/ /types of spiritual life in terms of anxiety, depression and anger?
- P<sub>5</sub>: What are the differences between the subgroups of inmates, separated on the basis of the criterion associated with a particular type of spiritual life in terms of the individual types of quality of life?

The study assumes the following research hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Persons subject to imprisonment are characterized by a much poorer spiritual life, which has its non-religious origin.

Due to the fact that it was not possible to access the results of similar research, and thus it can be assumed that no research project on this subject has been carried out in Poland up to this point, the content of hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> has been formulated on the basis of general knowledge in the field of social maladjustment. Non-religious spirituality is closely connected with areas such as: broadening one's own consciousness, sensitivity to art, doing good, etc. Therefore, one should not expect socially maladjusted/imprisoned persons not to differ in terms of the mentioned areas of spirituality from the control group.

- H<sub>2</sub>: There are no differences between the group of persons sentenced to imprisonment and non-prisoners in terms of spirituality associated with religion.

The intensity of the religious attitude (Śliwak, Bartczuk 2011a, 2011b) may increase in situations of crisis, exemplified by being sent to prison. Of course, a different question is whether this religiousness affects the behavior and life choices made by a person. Hence, in the absence of comparison, one should expect that persons sentenced to imprisonment are characterized by a similar level of religious spirituality.

- H<sub>3</sub>: Non-religious spirituality differentiates the attitude of persons sentenced to imprisonment towards practices and towards faith. Practitioners are charac-

terized by higher spirituality indicators than non-practitioners. In addition, the persons who declare themselves as believers are characterized by a significantly higher level of activity associated with spiritual life than those who declare themselves as non-believers.

H<sub>4</sub>: Anxiety, depression and anger differentiate people with different styles/types of spiritual life.

H<sub>5</sub>: The quality of life differentiates the persons who represent a particular style/ /type of spiritual life.

It should be noted that the hypotheses H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> have an exploratory nature. The application of cluster analysis using the k-means method will make it possible to distinguish individual styles/types of spiritual life.

In order to verify the above hypotheses, the following research tools were used:

1. SD-63 scale for assessing the intensity and quality of spiritual activity related to religion as well as non-religious, developed by B. Skowroński (Skowroński, Bartoszewski in print).
2. SPI/TPI questionnaire – C.D. Spielberger (Spielberger, Reheiser 2009), in Polish adaptation developed by K. Wrześniewski and P. Oleś for measuring anxiety, depression, curiosity and anger as a state (SPI) and characteristic (TPI).
3. Perception of Quality of Life Questionnaire by M. Straś-Romanowska, for assessing the general perception of quality of life and its four dimensions: psychophysical, psychosocial, subjective and metaphysical (Straś-Romanowska, Frąckowiak 2007).
4. Survey questionnaire.

Due to the use of the SD-63 in the research, which is a completely new, authorial scale, the research results on its construction, reliability and accuracy are presented in more detail below. The description of the SPI/TPI Questionnaire developed by C.D. Spielberger and the Perception of Quality of Life Questionnaire developed by M. Straś-Romanowska was only limited to basic information. More information on the methods discussed, their accuracy and reliability can be found in the works of Straś-Romanowska and Frąckowiak (2007) and Wrześniewski, Sosnowski, Jaworowska and Fecenec (2006).

## **Skowroński's SD-63 Spirituality Scale**

As a theoretical base for the Spirituality Scale (SD-63) the concept of Socha (2000) was assumed, who distinguished the following areas related to human spirituality: consciousness and self-awareness, reason and wisdom, feelings, sensitivity, morality, creativity, aesthetic sense, world view, religiousness and faith. The scale is provided with a four-level Likert scale, which consists of the following answer options: definitely yes, rather yes, rather not, definitely not. Both the discriminating power of the scale, and its accuracy and reliability were examined.

The accuracy of the scale was calculated by estimating content accuracy, theoretical accuracy, and criterion accuracy. The content accuracy was calculated using Lawshe's method (Hornowska 2010). The final version of the scale included all the items for which the CVR value was at least 0.75. In Lawshe's opinion, in the case of 9 judges performing the assessment, to consider the scale position as statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , the CVR value should be 0.75 (Lawshe 1975). In the process of studying the content accuracy of the discussed technique, assessment for each scale item was made by 9 judges.

Theoretical accuracy was estimated using exploratory factor analysis, which revealed the existence of 6 factors. Due to the content of the items that were included in the various factors, the following were distinguished: **religious spirituality** (12 items: I pray for others; I feel close to God; I am convinced that God loves me; faith gives strength to overcome difficulties; I pray for peace in the world; I take part in religious ceremonies; I believe that a higher power watches over me; I pray for myself; I turn to God whoever He is; I believe in the communion of saints; I live in peace with God, I am not ashamed of my faith in God); **spirituality as an expansion of consciousness** (4 items: I try to understand myself; I try to understand the surrounding world; I try to understand other people; I seek inner peace); **spirituality as a search for meaning** (5 items: I wonder where I came from; I ask myself the question regarding the meaning of my existence; I ask myself the question regarding the meaning of the existence of the surrounding reality; I wonder why will I die; I wonder who I am); **spirituality as sensitivity to art** (4 items: listening to concerts is a spiritual experience for me; I am sensitive to art; watching the paintings of great masters is a spiritual experience for me; I am sensitive to the beauty of music); **spirituality as doing good** (5 items: I try to do good; I try to notice the needs of other people; I try to follow the "love thy brethren" principle; I care about living in harmony with others; I am sensitive to other people's harm); **spirituality as a sensitivity to internal (moral choices) and external beauty (the surrounding world)** (6 items: I see the beauty of nature; nature can amaze me; I try to distinguish good from evil; I separate the truth from false; I try to be open to other people; I wonder about the legitimacy of my moral choices in life).

The criterion accuracy was calculated by correlating the scale of spirituality with the criterion that was the intensity of the religious attitude, as well as the religious strategies of coping with stress. For this purpose, Prężyna's Scale of Religious Attitude Intensity and Pargament's RCOPE Questionnaire were used. Positive interdependence between spirituality and religiousness was expected, as indicated by the authors Socha (2000), Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005), Heszen-Niejodek (2006) and Jarosz (2010). High levels of spirituality should correlate with religious intensity and positive stress coping strategies, which was indeed confirmed by research (Skowroński, Bartoszewski, print).



The scale's reliability was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and split-half reliability. Cronbach's internal compliance Alpha coefficient for the whole scale was 0.94, and for individual subscales it ranged from 0.83 (doing good) to 0.96 (religious spirituality). The other coefficients amounted to: 0.83 for expanding awareness; 0.86 for search for meaning, 0.85 for sensitivity to art, and 0.85 for sensitivity to internal (moral choices) and external beauty (the surrounding world). The Inventory Reliability tested using the split-half method amounted to 0.733 (Spearman-Brown coefficient). The correlation between the halves, as Pearson's correlation coefficient, amounted to 0.714 (Skowroński, Bartoszewski, in print).

### **SPI/TPI questionnaire**

The method's author is C. D. Spielberger (Spielberger, Reheiser 2009). The discussed research applied the Polish adaptation prepared by Wrześniewski and colleagues (2006). The research has confirmed the accuracy and reliability of the method used (Wrześniewski et al. 2006).

### **Perception of Quality of Life Questionnaire**

The author of the tool is Maria Straś-Romanowska, the creator of the holistic concept of quality of life, which consists of four dimensions: psychophysical, psychosocial, subjective and metaphysical (Straś-Romanowska, Frąckowiak 2007). The tool consists of 60 assertions, 15 for each dimension of the quality of life. The research conducted by the author of the questionnaire confirmed its accuracy and reliability (Straś-Romanowska, Frąckowiak 2007).

### **Survey questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in the research was constructed for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire concerned only a few basic dimensions such as: age, marital status, sex, education.

### **The studied group**

Two groups of men were involved in the study: the first were male prisoners from penitentiary institutions (N = 361) and the second (N = 203) were students of Warsaw universities (UW and UKSW). The research on the prisoners took place in the autumn of 2015, the research on students were conducted in 2013–2015. The following table provides detailed information concerning the groups, including marital status, education and age.



Table 1. Characteristics of the studied groups: prisoners (N = 361) and students (N = 203) in demographic terms.

Variables	Persons placed in penitentiary institutions		Students			
			UW		UKSW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Marital status						
married	84	23.3	12	17.1	15	11.3
divorced	66	18.3	0	0	0	0
widower	38	10.5	0	0	0	0
single	123	34.1	58	82.9	118	82.7
conjugal relationship	50	13.8	0	0	0	0
Education						
Master of Arts/Sciences	14	3.9	0	0	0	0
Bachelor of Arts/Sciences	15	4.2	0	0	1	0.8
secondary, general education	38	10.5	62	88.6	102	76.6
technical secondary education	54	15.0	8	11.4	30	22.6
vocational	89	24.6	0	0	0	0
junior high school	38	10.5	0	0	0	0
primary	113	31.3	0	0	0	0
Age	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
	35.2	9.45	23.2	0.7	22.8	0.9

Source: own research.

In the group of prisoners the most numerous were bachelors (34.1%), the least numerous were widowers (10.5%). Among the students of UW and the UKSW the most numerous were also bachelors: 82.9% and 82.7%, respectively. Nearly 88.6% of students of UW have a general secondary education, while in the case of students of UKSW, the group consists of 102 people (76.6%). Among the prisoners, only 3.9% have Master’s degrees, 4.2% have Bachelor’s degrees, 10.5% have general secondary, and 15% have technical secondary education. The average age of the prisoners was slightly over 35 years, while among UW students it was 23 years and among UKSW students it was 22.8 years.

## Research results

The table below shows the differences between the prisoners and the control group in terms of the individual dimensions of spiritual life. It turned out that statistical-

ly significant differences between the studied groups occurred in all non-religious areas of spirituality: expansion of consciousness ( $t = 0.380, p < 0.001$ ), search for meaning ( $t = -3.500, p < 0.001$ ), sensitivity to art ( $t = -4.907, p < 0.001$ ), doing good ( $t = -5.665, p < 0.001$ ), external and internal beauty ( $t = -4.146, p < 0.001$ ), as well as the general result covering both religious and non-religious spirituality ( $t = -3, 531, p < 0.001$ ).

Table 2. The differences between the group of persons sentenced to imprisonment and students in terms of individual dimensions of spirituality

	Group type	M	SD	t	df	p
Religious spirituality	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	33.21	9.64	.380	562	.704
	control group	32.86	11.96			
Spirituality as expansion of consciousness	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	12.73	2.69	-4.896	562	.000
	control group	13.82	2.24			
Spirituality as a search for meaning	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	11.83	3.91	-3.500	562	.001
	control group	13.10	4.51			
Spirituality as sensitivity to art	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	9.88	3.02	-4.907	562	.000
	control group	11.24	3.36			
Spirituality as doing good	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	15.63	3.013	-5.665	562	.000
	control group	17.05	2.56			
Spirituality as external and internal beauty	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	18.83	3.73	-4.146	562	.000
	control group	20.16	3.50			
Spirituality – general result	persons placed in penitentiary institutions	102.11	18.81	-3.531	562	.000
	control group	108.22	21.28			

Source: own research.

Hypothesis  $H_1$  was confirmed in its entirety. Persons sentenced to prison are characterized by a much poorer spiritual life manifested by the expansion of consciousness, search for meaning, sensitivity to art, doing good, sensitivity to external and internal beauty.

The research results also confirmed the  $H_2$  hypothesis, since the groups do not differ in terms of spirituality related to religion.

Subsequent analyses concerned the answers to the question regarding the relationship between spirituality and faith. For this purpose, a variance analysis was performed in which the grouping variables were: attitude towards faith and then attitude toward religious practices. The results of the variance analysis are presented in the tables below.

Table 3. The results of the variance analysis in the scope of individual dimensions of the spiritual activity of persons sentenced to prison, distinguished on the basis of the category "attitude towards faith"

		N	M	SD	F	p
Religious spirituality	strong believer	69	32.38	9.54	.371	.774
	believer	175	33.66	9.87		
	poor believer	63	33.38	9.99		
	non-believer	54	32.63	8.69		
Spirituality as the expansion of consciousness	strong believer	69	12.52	2.63	.180	.910
	believer	175	12.76	2.71		
	poor believer	63	12.78	2.91		
	non-believer	54	12.83	2.51		
Spirituality as a search for meaning	strong believer	69	12.10	3.83	.175	.913
	believer	175	11.71	3.89		
	poor believer	63	11.79	4.13		
	non-believer	54	11.91	3.90		
Spirituality as sensitivity to art	strong believer	69	9.95	2.82	.215	.886
	believer	175	9.94	3.06		
	poor believer	63	9.60	3.17		
	non-believer	54	9.92	3.01		
Spirituality as doing good	strong believer	69	15.23	3.39	.670	.571
	believer	175	15.80	2.94		
	poor believer	63	15.71	2.79		
	non-believer	54	15.46	3.01		
Spirituality as external and internal beauty	strong believer	69	18.61	3.54	.159	.924
	believer	175	18.90	3.64		
	poor believer	63	18.98	3.76		
	non-believer	54	18.70	4.24		

		N	M	SD	F	p
Spirituality – general result	strong believer	69	100.79	18.94	.208	.891
	believer	175	102.78	18.90		
	poor believer	63	102.25	18.55		
	non-believer	54	101.46	19.09		

Source: own research.

It turned out that the attitude towards faith does not differentiate the respondents in terms of spirituality. There were no differences between those who declared themselves as strong believers, believers, poor believers and non-believers among persons sentenced to prison, both in terms of religious and non-religious spirituality. This is thus a negation of hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>. The same applies to the variable “attitude towards religious practices,” which also does not differentiate the persons sentenced to prison on the basis of their relation to religious practices (practitioners, poor practitioners and non-practitioners). Details are presented in the table below.

Table 4. The results of the variance analysis in the scope of individual dimensions of the spiritual activity of persons sentenced to prison, distinguished on the basis of the category: attitude towards religious practices

		N	M	SD	F	p
Religious spirituality	I am a practitioner	119	32.77	9.27	.190	.827
	I am a poor practitioner	139	33.37	9.93		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	33.50	9.72		
Spirituality as the expansion of consciousness	I am a practitioner	119	12.57	2.68	.326	.722
	I am a poor practitioner	139	12.78	2.64		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	12.84	2.80		
Spirituality as a search for meaning	I am a practitioner	119	11.97	3.77	1.072	.344
	I am a poor practitioner	139	11.46	3.96		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	12.16	3.99		
Spirituality as sensitivity to art	I am a practitioner	119	9.91	2.69	.087	.916
	I am a poor practitioner	139	9.80	3.22		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	9.95	3.13		
Spirituality as doing good	I am a practitioner	119	15.46	3.11	.960	.384
	I am a poor practitioner	139	15.91	2.90		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	15.45	3.04		

		N	M	SD	F	p
Spirituality as external and internal beauty	I am a practitioner	119	18.61	3.66	.320	.726
	I am a poor practitioner	139	18.98	3.47		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	18.88	4.14		
Spirituality – general result	I am a practitioner	119	101.30	18.03	.184	.832
	I am a poor practitioner	139	102.30	18.63		
	I am a non-practitioner	103	102.79	20.05		
	Total	361	102.11	18.81		

Source: own research.

In order to distinguish individual styles/types of persons sentenced to prison, taking into account the different aspects of their spiritual life, the cluster analysis using the k-means method was applied. The analysis revealed 4 clusters, respectively amounting to: 113, 112, 88 and 48 people. Detailed data is presented in the table below.

Table 5. Final cluster centers obtained using k-means cluster analysis method (values expressed in standard deviation units)

	Cluster			
	1 (N = 113)	2 (N = 112)	3 (N = 88)	4 (N = 48)
Religious spirituality	.77583	-.13331	-.18367	-1.17865
Spirituality as the expansion of consciousness	.74356	.34498	-.64263	-1.37726
Spirituality as a search for meaning	.82012	-.64560	.31998	-1.01091
Spirituality as sensitivity to art	.70121	-.43330	.18606	-.98085
Spirituality as doing good	.73704	.29803	-.54813	-1.42562
Spirituality as external and internal beauty	.76479	.30886	-.79008	-1.07262

Source: own research.

The first group (cluster 1, N = 113) are the persons whose spiritual life is the most intense compared to the persons from the other three groups. This applies both to religious spirituality and spirituality related to the expansion of consciousness, search for meaning, sensitivity to art, doing good, external and internal beauty. Thus it can be said that these are **persons characterized by an active spiritual life focused on religion.**

The second group (cluster 2, N = 112) is formed by persons characterized by poorer spiritual life, having their religious connotations (compared to the first group), smaller intensity of spiritual life related to seeking meaning and lower level of sensitivity to art. However, these are people engaged in spiritual life, which is manifested by the expansion of consciousness, doing good and being sensitive to external and internal beauty. Thus, this group can be called **persons characterized by moderate intensity of spiritual life not focused on religion**.

The third group (cluster 3, N = 88) consists of people for whom spiritual life is limited mainly to the search for meaning and sensitivity to art. Religious spiritual life, the expansion of consciousness, doing good and external and internal beauty are much less important. These are persons with a **limited intensity of spiritual life not focused on religion**.

The smallest group are the respondents from cluster 4 (N = 48). They can be characterized as persons whose spiritual life is extremely poor, for whom spirituality in every examined aspect is not an essential form of life activity. In addition, each aspect of the spiritual activity of this group is at the lowest level compared to the three previous groups. This group was called the **persons characterized by poverty of spiritual life**.

The next step in the analysis was to determine the differences between the individual subgroups (distinguished using the k-means cluster analysis method) in terms of: quality of life, anxiety, anger and depression, both as a condition and as a characteristic. The idea was to answer the question regarding the relationship between spirituality and the variables mentioned above.

In order to determine the differences between the groups, a single-agent analysis of variance was applied, as well as Games-Howell's *post hoc* test, which can be used in the case of failure to meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance as well as for comparisons of unequal groups. The averages and standard deviations are shown in the table below.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics (the means and standard deviations) for variables that measure anxiety, anger and depression (as echoes and condition), obtained by subgroups distinguished on the basis of the spirituality criterion

	Subgroups	N	M	SD
Anxiety as a characteristic (TPI)	1	113	20.87	4.64
	2	112	22.03	4.15
	3	88	21.46	4.89
	4	48	20.92	4.57
Anger as a characteristic (TPI)	1	113	20.90	6.53
	2	112	21.56	5.75
	3	88	21.40	7.17
	4	48	21.73	6.22

	Subgroups	N	M	SD
Depression as a characteristic (TPI)	1	113	19.29	5.51
	2	112	20.68	4.85
	3	88	19.43	4.68
	4	48	19.25	4.59
Anxiety as a condition (SPI)	1	113	19.85	5.83
	2	112	21.88	5.41
	3	88	20.93	5.29
	4	48	20.17	4.11
Anger as a condition (SPI)	1	113	19.02	7.27
	2	112	21.43	6.70
	3	88	20.0	7.56
	4	48	19.14	7.28
Depression as a condition (SPI)	1	113	19.41	6.01
	2	112	21.29	5.70
	3	88	20.11	5.34
	4	48	19.64	4.71

Source: own research.

The differences between the groups distinguished on the basis of the criterion of intensity of spiritual life in its various aspects (thanks to applying the k-means cluster analysis method), in terms of anxiety, anger and depression as a characteristic was found to be statistically insignificant, concluding that spiritual life does not differentiate persons sentenced to prison in terms of fear, anger and depression as a characteristic. It is worth pointing out that anxiety, anger and depression, understood as a characteristic, are a relatively constant feature of the individual.

Table 7. The differences between the groups distinguished thanks to the application of the k-means cluster analysis method in terms of anxiety, anger and depression, understood as a characteristic and as a condition

		Sum of squares	df	F	P	Post hoc test
Anxiety as a characteristic (TPI)	between the groups	87.515	3	1.410	n.i.	
	within the groups	7385.493	357			
	Total	7473.008	360			



		Sum of squares	df	F	P	Post hoc test
Anger as a characteristic (TPI)	between the groups	34.720	3	.280	n.i.	
	within the groups	14736.050	357			
	Total	14770.770	360			
Depression as a characteristic (TPI)	between the groups	141.180	3	1.886	n.i.	
	within the groups	8906.382	357			
	Total	9047.562	360			
Anxiety as a condition (SPI)	between the groups	254.385	3	2.940	.033	Games-Howell's test 1 < 2,3,4
	within the groups	10296.191	357			
	Total	10550.576	360			
Anger as a condition (SPI)	between the groups	372.450	3	2.413	.046	Games-Howell's test 1 < 2,3
	within the groups	18365.372	357			
	Total	18737.823	360			
Depression as a condition (SPI)	between the groups	220.642	3	2.349	.042	Games-Howell's test 1 < 2,3
	within the groups	11176.394	357			
	Total	11397.036	360			

Source: own research.

The variance analysis revealed completely different results in terms of anxiety, anger and depression as a condition, interpreted as variable in time and intensity (as opposed to a characteristic). It turned out that the group of persons sentenced to imprisonment representing style/type I, i.e. the **persons characterized by an active spiritual life focused on religion**, revealed a significantly lower indicator of anxiety ( $p < 0.05$ ), anger ( $p < 0.05$ ) and depression ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to persons representing type II and III, and in the case of anxiety as a condition, also type IV. Thus, this was a partial confirmation of hypothesis  $H_p$ , since spirituality differentiates the subjects in terms of depression, anxiety and anger, understood, however, as a condition rather than as a characteristic.

The differences between the types/styles of life in terms of spiritual activity separated by the use of the k-means cluster analysis method in terms of quality of life revealed one statistically significant difference, which is related to metaphysical quality. It turned out that the persons sentenced to imprisonment, **characterized by an active spiritual life focused on religion**, demonstrated a significantly higher level of metaphysical quality of life than the persons representing the other subtypes of spiritual life.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics (the averages and standard deviations) for variables that measure individual categories of quality of life, obtained by subgroups distinguished on the basis of the criterion of spirituality

	Subgroups	N	M	SD
Psychophysical quality of life	1	113	46.98	6.99
	2	112	45.66	6.99
	3	88	48.06	6.56
	4	48	45.94	6.89
Psychosocial quality of life	1	113	43.32	6.76
	2	112	42.60	5.76
	3	88	43.77	5.04
	4	48	43.64	5.23
Subjective quality of life	1	113	46.40	6.56
	2	112	45.32	5.22
	3	88	46.85	5.50
	4	48	45.71	4.78
Metaphysical quality of life	1	113	47.51	6.68
	2	112	45.28	5.67
	3	88	46.06	6.04
	4	48	45.98	5.35
Overall quality of life	1	113	184.39	22.26
	2	112	178.85	19.69
	3	88	184.74	17.24
	4	48	181.27	17.50

Source: own research.

In the case of the other types of quality of life as well as the overall quality of life indicator, the differences between persons representing different styles/types of spiritual life were found to be statistically insignificant. Therefore, Hypothesis  $H_5$  was largely not confirmed.

Table 9. The differences between the groups distinguished thanks to the application of the k-means cluster analysis method in terms of individual dimensions of the quality of life

		Sum of squares	Df	F	p	Post hoc test
Psychophysical quality of life	between the groups	319.882	3	2.254	n.i.	
	within the groups	16888.600	357			
	Total	17208.482	360			
Psychosocial quality of life	between the groups	79.678	3	.771	n.i.	
	within the groups	12303.884	357			
	Total	12383.562	360			
Subjective quality of life	between the groups	135.002	3	1.391	n.i.	
	within the groups	11550.504	357			
	Total	11685.507	360			
Metaphysical quality of life	between the groups	293.179	3	2.666	.048	Games-Howell's test 1 > 2,3,4
	within the groups	13088.345	357			
	Total	13381.524	360			
Overall quality of life	between the groups	2394.358	3	2.052	n.i.	
	within the groups	138831.049	357			
	Total	141225.407	360			

Source: own research.

## Discussion

The aim of the research was to show the specificity of the spiritual life of persons subject to imprisonment. The analysis of the research results confirmed that persons subject to imprisonment had a statistically significantly poorer spiritual life than the control group comprising persons without criminal records. Convicts thus make much less effort to broaden their own consciousness, rarely seek the meaning of the surrounding reality, have substantially less spiritual experiences associated with doing good, they are also less sensitive to art and to external and internal beauty, which is related to moral choices.

On the one hand, it would be difficult to expect the prisoners to demonstrate high indicators in the field of spirituality (unrelated to religiousness) when they are socially unfit. On the other hand, it should be noted that these dimensions of non-religious spirituality are extremely important aspects of the functioning of every human being. As the analysis of the research shows, prisoners are characterized by a low level of non-religious spirituality. This conclusion constitutes an important information for persons working with prisoners. It is necessary to cover all the dimensions of spirituality in social rehabilitation and therapeutic activities. Furthermore, it is important to continually improve and to seek new and effective interactions during the development and implementation of programs that take these aspects into account.

The results of the study confirm the assumption that there are no differences between the group of persons sentenced to imprisonment and persons not sentenced to imprisonment in terms of spirituality associated with religion – indeed the groups do not differ in terms of spirituality associated with religion. Research conducted by Sakowicz (2009) and Romanowicz and Tomczyszyn (2015) reveals that prisoners declare a high rate of religiousness. The conclusions of Sakowicz's study (2009) may serve as the justification for the lack of differences in religiousness between the studied groups. The author showed that more than 90% of the prisoners studied came from a religious family, and over half, 55% of the respondents indicated that faith helped them through the struggles of incarceration.

A surprise in the research was that the attitude towards religious practices and the attitude towards faith did not differentiate groups of people sentenced to prison in terms of non-religious spirituality. It was expected that practitioners would have higher spirituality indicators than non-practitioners, and that those who declare themselves as believers would be characterized by a significantly higher level of spiritual activity than those who declare themselves as non-believers.

The analysis of the research results proved that the attitude towards faith does not differentiate the subjects in terms of spirituality, since there is no difference between those who declare themselves as strong believers and those who define themselves as poor believers and non-believers. This conclusion pertains both to religious and non-religious spirituality. A similar conclusion applies to the attitude towards religious practices, which also does not differentiate the persons sentenced to prison on the basis of their relation to religious practices (practitioners, poor practitioners and non-practitioners) in terms of spirituality. It should have been expected that prisoners, both believers and practitioners, would have a higher spirituality indicator. Statistical analysis showed no significant differences in this regard. On the one hand, the prisoners come from religious families and faith helps them survive the difficult period of isolation (Sakowicz 2009); hence, perhaps, they habitually declare they are believers. On the other hand, involvement in religious practices may be the result of free time management and the

pursuit of other, non-spiritual benefits. In conclusion, it can be assumed that the self-declaration of prisoners' religiousness and practicing it are of external nature and are not based on internal spirituality. The research results confirm the conclusions of Sławomir Zaręba (2003), who emphasized that auto-declarations in terms of religiousness only provide information on the nature and intensity of attitudes towards religion, and they do not reflect the entire scope of human religiousness. However, spirituality is not tantamount to religiousness, therefore spiritual persons are not necessarily religious, despite the fact that both these areas overlap. As Skrzypińska (2012) claims, spirituality and religiousness are similar in terms of their genesis and function, but they have different content and different consequences of experiencing them.

It was expected that people with a more intense spiritual life would be different from those with a less intense spiritual life in terms of anxiety, depression and anger. Thanks to the use of the k-means cluster analysis method it was possible to isolate the individual types of spiritual activity among persons sentenced to imprisonment. The first group consists of persons characterized by an active religious life focused on religion. The second group are respondents with a moderate intensity of spiritual life not focused on religion. The third group is characterized by a limited intensity of spiritual life, not focused on religion. The least numerous group consists of people who are characterized by a poverty of spiritual life.

The differences between the isolated types of spiritual life in terms of anxiety, anger and depression understood as a characteristic (which means they are fairly permanent) were found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that spiritual life does not differentiate the persons who are sentenced to imprisonment in terms of anxiety, anger and depression understood as a characteristic. Further statistical analysis revealed some differences in terms of anxiety, anger and depression understood as a condition. It was found that the group of persons sentenced to imprisonment representing type I, i.e. the **persons characterized by an active spiritual life focused on religion**, revealed a significantly lower indicator of anxiety, anger and depression compared to persons representing type II and III, and in the case of anxiety as a condition, also type IV. One should point out that the indicators of anxiety, depression and anger understood as a condition are temporary and transitory.

It was assumed that the type of spiritual life differentiates people in terms of quality of life. The differences between the individual types of spiritual life in terms of quality of life revealed one statistically significant difference, which is related to the metaphysical quality. It turned out that the persons sentenced to imprisonment, characterized by an active spiritual life focused on religion, demonstrated a significantly higher level of metaphysical quality of life than the persons representing the other subtypes of spiritual life. In the case of the other types of quality of life as well as the overall quality of life indicator, the differences between persons representing different types of spiritual life were found to

be statistically insignificant. The metaphysical component is related to spiritual and transcendental values that help the prisoners survive the period of isolation. That is why it seems that the level of the metaphysical quality of life is especially important to people sentenced to imprisonment. It is a response to the difficulties and problems of incarceration and it is a method of adjusting to the situation.

As it was mentioned before, there are very few studies on the spirituality of prisoners in Polish literature. When taking up the subject of spirituality among prisoners, authors usually focus only on the selected dimensions of spirituality, especially religiousness, and they do not make attempts to analyze the entire phenomenon. This study is not only a valuable supplementation to the research area involving the spirituality of the incarcerated, but it can also be an incentive to take up subsequent research projects associated with the spirituality of persons sentenced to prison.

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