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Education through work in rural families – active labour market participants’ retrospections

Wychowanie przez pracę w rodzinach wiejskich – retrospekcje aktywnych uczestników rynku pracy

Abstract

Introduction. The article is theoretical and empirical in nature. It raises issues relating to education through work in rural families. The theoretical part defines education through work; it analyses stages of career development, as essential from the point of view of the research planned: pre-vocational, pro-vocational, vocational; it also characterizes active labour market participants. Furthermore, methodological assumptions are presented, as adopted, as well as the results of a research done in 2023 among active labour market representatives of the Baby Boomer, X, Y and Z generations.

Aim. The purpose of the research was to establish opinions of active labour market participants on self-care activities and household chores as performed by them during the pre-vocational, pro-vocational and vocational education periods, to identify differences occurring in this respect between the representatives of the various generations, as well as to define the influence of education through work on educational and vocational choices made.

Methods and materials. The research used the individual case method and the interview technique according to interview instructions.

Results. From the information obtained, it arises that all of the research subjects has experienced education through work in his/her family home. The people responsible for

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preparing children and young people for performing, initially, self-care activities, and then various household chores, were both their parents and grandparents, as well as elder siblings. Due to diverse determinants of life regarding the passage of time, economic or technological/technical changes or transformations of the countryside, tasks entrusted to young people varied and were adjusted to their needs; however, these did not affect their educational and vocational decisions directly (still having an effect on the development of their soft skills).

Conclusion. Notice should be taken of the necessity to educate children's parents/guardians (not only from rural areas) with respect to preparing them in an early and, whenever possible, systematic manner to perform self-care activities and household chores, as adjusted to their psychophysical abilities. It is representatives of educational institutions who may/should deal with such education (they also educate young people through and to work), whereas forms of supporting parents/guardians in this respect do not necessarily have to be formal meetings; these may also include talks during individual contacts, or information on the subject posted on the institutions' websites.

Keywords: family, rural family, education through work, generations Baby Boomers, X, Y, Z, professionally active people.

Abstrakt

Wprowadzenie. Artykuł ma charakter teoretyczno-empiryczny. Poruszono w nim kwestie związane z wychowaniem przez pracę w rodzinach wiejskich. W części teoretycznej zdefiniowano wychowanie przez pracę, przeanalizowano istotne z punktu widzenia zaplanowanych badań etapy rozwoju zawodowego: przedzawodowy, prozawodowy, zawodowy, oraz scharakteryzowano aktywnych uczestników rynku pracy. W dalszej części zaprezentowano przyjęte założenia metodologiczne oraz wyniki badań przeprowadzonych w 2023 r. wśród aktywnych na rynku pracy przedstawicieli pokoleń baby boomers, X, Y oraz Z.

Cel. Celem badań było poznanie opinii aktywnych uczestników rynku pracy na temat realizowanych przez nich czynności samoobsługowych i zajęć domowych podejmowanych w okresie kształcenia przedzawodowego, prozawodowego oraz zawodowego, wskazanie różnic występujących w tym zakresie pomiędzy przedstawicielami różnych generacji, jak też określenie wpływu wychowania przez pracę na dokonywane wybory edukacyjno-zawodowe.

Metody i materiały. W badaniach wykorzystano metodę indywidualnego przypadku oraz technikę wywiadu według dyspozycji do rozmowy.

Wyniki. Z uzyskanych informacji wynika, że każdy uczestnik badania doświadczył wychowania przez pracę w domu rodzinnym. Osobami odpowiedzialnymi za przygotowanie dzieci i młodzieży, początkowo do realizacji czynności samoobsługowych, a następnie zróżnicowanych obowiązków domowych, byli rodzice, dziadkowie, a także starsze rodzeństwo. Z uwagi na zróżnicowane uwarunkowania życiowe związane z upływem czasu, zmianami gospodarczymi czy techniczno-technologicznymi oraz przeobrażeniami polskiej wsi, powierzane młodym ludziom zadania różniły się i były dostosowane do aktualnych potrzeb, jednak bezpośrednio nie wpłynęły na podejmowane przez nich decyzje edukacyjno-zawodowe (oddziaływały jednak na kształtowanie się kompetencji miękkich).

Wnioski. Należy zwrócić uwagę na konieczność edukowania rodziców/opiekunów dzieci (nie tylko z terenów wiejskich) w zakresie wczesnego i w miarę systematycznego przygotowania ich do wykonywania czynności samoobsługowych oraz realizacji obowiązków

domowych, które dostosowane będą do ich możliwości psychofizycznych. Edukacją w tym zakresie mogą/powinni zająć się przede wszystkim przedstawiciele instytucji oświatowych (którzy również wychowują młodych ludzi przez pracę i do niej), a formy wsparcia dla rodziców/opiekunów w tym zakresie niekoniecznie muszą mieć charakter spotkań formalnych, mogą to być też pogadanki przy okazji indywidualnych kontaktów bądź informacje zamieszczone na stronach internetowych instytucji.

Słowa kluczowe: rodzina, rodzina wiejska, wychowanie przez pracę, generacje baby boomers, X, Y, Z, osoby aktywne zawodowo.

Introduction

The family is the basic and most important cell of social life, the foundation of the development of society and the environment in which young people grow up (Głódź, 2021, p. 334). It is the key environment in which upbringing takes place because of the constant contact between the parents and the child, the emotional bond, the knowledge of the child’s abilities, needs and desires, and the desire to prepare the child adequately for life. As the child grows up, family members are supported in this regard both by the various institutions in which the child is placed, e.g., nursery, school, children’s and youth organisations and by members of the environment with whom the child comes into contact, e.g. peer group, neighbours, family friends, etc. The use of the phrase “supported” is deliberate, as it is the family that bears the main burden of responsibility related to preparing the child to function in society, including education through work.

The main reason for taking up the topic of upbringing through work in rural families was the fact that issues related to the preparation of the child for future professional work by family members (and especially rural families) are relatively rarely addressed by researchers. If this theme is already analysed, it is rather in terms of the preparation of young people for educational and professional decisions or the influence of upbringing in the family on further professional careers. As Zdzisław Wołk (2017, p. 142) rightly notes, “the elimination of the topic of the family home in preparation for work from the area of undertaken research may be due to its location on the borderline of work pedagogy and social pedagogy.” Therefore, the main aim of this study is to present, based on the collected research material, the self-service activities and household activities carried out by active labour market participants during pre-vocational, pro-vocational and vocational education, to indicate the differences occurring in this area between representatives of different generations, as well as to determine the influence of upbringing through work on the educational and professional choices made.

Theoretical assumptions

Considering the actual state in terms of defining the family from pedagogical positions, one can speak of:

- a direction that takes into account the point of view of social pedagogy, according to which the family is most often defined as: nurturing environment, one of the important environmental circles, natural environment, natural nurturing environment, family environment – this type of definition is among the most numerous; environment is the basic category here;
- a direction that takes into account the point of view of social pedagogy, according to which the family is most often defined as: a group or educational institution, a natural group, a primary group, an informal group; the group is the basic category here;
- a direction that takes into account the point of view of educational theory, which defines the family most often as a nurturing or socialising factor; the praxeological educational efficiency of the family is therefore emphasised;
- a direction that takes into account the viewpoint of Christian philosophy, according to which the family is defined as “an extended and deepened marital community” (Janke, 1997, p. 171); the fundamental category here is community.

For the purposes of this study, the third direction presented was adopted, which pays attention to the nurturing or socio-educational factor and the educational effectiveness of families – in the case of the consideration given to rural families, which have been significantly transformed in many respects over the years.

The family environment has a huge impact on what kind of person a child will be in the future – how independent he or she will be, what will be his or her attitude toward the world and other people, but also to himself or herself, how he or she will cope with various situations, including professional ones (Plewka, 2016, pp. 141–142). In order to achieve the best possible educational results, the modern parent (caregiver) faces many tasks, including:

- accepting the world as it is and the content of the present,
- the realisation that one is not the only educator or legislator of one’s own children (the rules and norms on which modern man bases his behaviour have lost their clarity and transparency),
- the introduction of the principle of co-responsibility, particularly with regard to the choices made by the child (the parent does not bear total, unlimited responsibility for the child’s behaviour) (Nowak-Dziemianowicz, 2003, pp. 227, 228, 230–231).

Taking the issues presented into account in the educational process can yield positive results, as it will be adapted to the times in which it takes place while taking into account the subjectivity of the young person in terms of making independent decisions, which is particularly important in the case of education through work and, subsequently, in educational and professional decisions.

Education through work, which is the main focus of this paper, is a category that is an acknowledgement of the strong link between work pedagogy and educational theory. Generally speaking, upbringing theory is a pedagogical discipline concerned with the aims of upbringing and the means and ways of realising these aims, which means that it centres around the issue of different aspects of human upbringing. Labour pedagogy, on the other hand, is mainly interested in the theory of professional upbringing and the theory of upbringing through work (Mandrzejewska-Smól, 2008, p. 172). The place and role of work in upbringing can be understood in two ways: 1) as a way, a method of upbringing, and 2) as one of the goals and results of upbringing. Such an understanding of it is reflected in the adopted formulation: upbringing for work and through work (Sąsiadek, 2010).

The issue of upbringing through work is topical in every period of a person's life and is therefore considered at different stages of development. A properly organised process of upbringing through work begins already in the family, then continues in the pre-school period and at all stages of school education (both general and vocational), in care and educational institutions, in youth organisations, as well as in the period of a person's professional activity (Mandrzejewska-Smól, 2008, p. 173).

Upbringing through work, as well as human professional development, is the guiding idea of work pedagogy (Wiatrowski, 2000, p. 49). Taking into account the complexity of this issue and the research plan, the focus was on two key stages in which the activity of the family within the framework of upbringing through work is particularly noticeable, namely the stage of pre-vocational education, i.e. a specific process of upbringing through work and to work, including orientation and vocational guidance (Bogaj, 2007, p. 67), and the stage of pro-vocational education, in which, in addition to upbringing through work, we are dealing with general technical education (Wiatrowski, 2000, p. 49). In addition, the third period, i.e. vocational education, is also included, as at this stage a young person often continues to reside in the family home (possibly also temporarily in a boarding school, dormitory or hostel), where he or she fulfils various roles and responsibilities. Table 1 presents the stages of education and upbringing that will be analysed in the research study.

Table 1

Individual's line of professional development (selected stages)

Stages of development	Periods of development	Years of life	Characteristics of pedagogical action	Results in the context of work
Pre-professional	kindergarten	4–7	education through work in the family and in the kindergarten	learning about human labour, shaping attitudes to work
	early childhood	7–10	education through work, vocational preorientation	
	compulsory schooling* (lower secondary school or classes IV–VIII of the primary school)	10–16 (in the case of grammar schools), 10–15 (for primary schools)	education through work, general technical education, vocational orientation	understanding the nature of human labour, choice of profession and school
Pro-professional	continuation of compulsory schooling* (upper secondary, specialised)	16–19 (in the case of lower secondary school graduates), 15–19 (for primary school leavers)	education through work, general technical education, pro-vocational training	recognition of the general characteristics of professional work, development of general employee characteristics
Professional	vocational preparation at post-secondary/post-primary level*	16–18 (20) (post-high school) 15–18 (20) (post-basic)	Broad-profile vocational training	Level I professional qualification in the rank of profession
	vocational preparation at post-secondary level	19–21		Secondary vocational qualification level
	higher vocational education	19 (20)–24 (25)	specialist vocational training	Level III higher professional qualification

* The educational reforms introduced over the years have resulted in (depending on their date of birth) pupils attending different types of comprehensive schools, so the age of pupils in the different periods of compulsory education and vocational preparation has changed.

Source: Author's own study based on: Wiatrowski, 2000, pp. 49–50.

In summary, it can be seen that upbringing through work makes it possible to confront one's dreams of a future professional role with the realities of life and one's personality traits already at an early age. At a later stage of development, the young person becomes increasingly aware of the processes of different work, his or her possibilities and the limitations associated with them. This self-awareness is the basis for the choice of appropriate education and, later, profession, which consequently leads to thoughtful professional development, including adequate planning and implementation of a career tailored to one's own capabilities and realistic aspirations (Sztaba, 2013).

Given the involvement of active labour market participants in the research process, the next issue that needs to be clarified is who can be included in this group. The economically active population, which in Poland in the second quarter of 2023 accounted for 58.2% of the population (Szymański, 2023), includes the summed stock of employed and unemployed people (Zieliński, 2017, p. 15). However, one cannot stop at this information because, given the changes in civilisation, active participants in the labour market, i.e., according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), people aged 15–89 considered to be employed or unemployed (*Pojęcia stosowane w statystyce publicznej* [Concepts used in official statistics], 2023), are very diverse both inter- and intra-generationally. Currently, there are representatives of several generations among the economically active. The most common generations are baby boomers (BB), X, Y, Z, and occasionally people from the *mature* generation also appear (see: Klementowska, Flaszynska, 2018, pp. 52–64). How, then, was the upbringing by work of active labour market participants living in pre-vocational, pro-vocational, vocational education in rural areas, and did it influence their further educational and professional choices? The answer to this question will appear later in the paper.

Methodological assumptions and analysis of research results

The survey was conducted in July and August 2023. Its main objective was to find out the opinions of active participants in the labour market on their self-service activities and household chores during pre-vocational, pro-vocational and vocational education, to indicate the differences between representatives of different generations in this respect and to determine the influence of upbringing through work on their educational and professional choices. Due to the large age range of the research participants and the passage of time, no distinction was made between the various stages of professional development, as this could cause difficulties in assigning domestic activities to the age range specified in the literature. The subject of the research was therefore centred around the problem: how were the active

participants in the labour market during their pre-vocational, pro-vocational, and vocational training implemented by family members to perform self-service activities and household chores, and did this influence their further educational and occupational choices?

Due to the subject matter undertaken and the need to analyse the individual experiences of the respondents, the research used the individual case method and the interview technique according to the disposition to talk (see: Pilch, Bauman, 2010). A prerequisite for the selection of the research sample was the age of the research participants and their professional status, as the focus was on economically active people. In addition, the rural place of residence of the respondents during the pre-vocational and pro-vocational training period was important. In the case of the period related to vocational education (secondary/secondary school, tertiary), in turn, attention was paid to the place of residence of the research participants during their education (family home, boarding school, dormitory, hostel, other place), as this was also considered to influence the number and nature of responsibilities held by young people.

As of 1 January 2023, there were 43,160 villages in Poland and 1,052 in Lubuskie Voivodeship, the study area (*Liczba miejscowości wiejskich* [Number of rural...], 2023). The rural population on 31 December 2022 in Poland was 15,276,400 (*Ludność* [Population]..., 2023), while in Lubuskie Voivodeship it was 350,300. It should be noted here that the number of people living in towns and cities in Lubuskie Voivodeship is systematically decreasing and in 2022 it was 629,700 people (decreased by 1% compared to the previous year) (*Sytuacja demograficzna* [Demographic situation]..., 2023, pp. 24–25).

The research was conducted in households of 10 respondents, who in their childhood and youth lived in villages in Lubuskie Voivodeship, at a distance of at least 20 km from the nearest city (it was important due to often occurring differences related to e.g. infrastructure, way of satisfying needs or household duties in villages located in suburban areas and those located at a considerable distance from a city). Due to the fact that among active participants of the labour market there are currently representatives of various generations (mainly BB, X, Y, Z), it was decided to include representatives of each generation in the research, however, due to civilisational, technological, economic and educational (including education through work) changes taking place over the years, the information obtained from representatives of particular generations will not be compared. The characteristics of the research participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Characteristics of respondents

Name of respondent	Age of respondent	Residence of respondents during education in secondary schools/ secondary schools/ higher*	Education of the respondent	Respondent’s occupation
The baby boomers generation				
Anna	59 years	family home	general secondary education	seller
Tadeusz	60 years	family home	basic vocational	janitor
Generation X				
Agnieszka	46 years	family home	basic vocational	salesperson (self-employed)
Catherine	46 years	boarding school, dormitory	higher	teacher
Mariusz	48 years	family home	basic	farmer (own farm)
Generation Y				
Andrew	31 years	family home	basic vocational	loader
Alicia	33 years	family home	general secondary education	production worker
Simon	34 years	family home, hostel	higher	warehouseman
Generation Z				
Victoria	24 years	family home	general secondary education	beautician (self-employed)
Kacper	26 years	family home	secondary vocational	procurement officer

* Family home, boarding school, dormitory, hostel, or other place of residence.

Source: Author’s own study.

The information presented in Table 2 shows that at the pre-vocational and vocational education stage, all respondents lived in the family home in the countryside, while at the vocational education stage, after primary/high school, one person lived in a boarding house, and at the university stage, two people lived in a boarding house in a district/village town¹. The participants in the study had tertiary education (two people), secondary education (four people), essentially vocational education (three people) and primary education (one person). At the time of the survey, all respondents had employment, of which two people were self-employed and one person had a farm.

The first issue analysed concerned the implementation of self-service activities by adult family members for children and adolescents. Among the activities analysed were: eating, dressing, personal hygiene and cleaning one's own belongings (e.g. clothes, toys, one's room). In addition, due to the location of kindergartens or schools (often outside the place of residence), attention was paid to independence in terms of reaching educational institutions. The statements of all respondents show that self-service activities, e.g. dressing and personal hygiene, were not a problem for them. They were introduced to them by their parents, grandparents and older siblings, mainly in the pre-school and early school years by means of explanations, presentations and certain tasks that were assigned to them, such as dressing themselves, tying their shoelaces, brushing their teeth, combing their hair, etc. When it came to meal preparation, on the other hand, a difference emerged between representatives of the older generations and the younger research participants. Respondents from generations BB and X definitely prepared meals for themselves earlier, e.g. sandwiches for breakfast or dinner (between 5th and 8th grade of primary school), than those from generations Y and Z (four people indicated secondary school, only one cited middle school). Here are sample answers:

My parents worked hard, so from an early age we had to look after ourselves. I had four older sisters and when I was in primary school, in the younger grades, they prepared my meals, mainly breakfast and dinner. Often they also took turns cooking lunches, but as I got older, I think it was 7th grade, I had to make my own sandwiches (BB generation).

¹ As a result of the administrative reform introduced on January 1, 1999, a three-tier administrative (territorial) division of Poland (voivodeships, counties, communes) took place. At that time, some voivodship towns were converted into county towns (*Podział administracyjny Polski* [Administrative division of Poland], 2023).

I come from a large family and I was the eldest of my siblings, so when I was probably somewhere in the 5th grade of primary school, I had to make sandwiches for school not only for myself but also for my younger brother, because my mother had to feed the animals at that time. We had a farm, so there were times when I was already cooking lunches on my days off from school while my mum was working in the field or garden, and I had to look after my younger brother and sister (Generation X).

In primary and lower secondary school, it was always my mother who prepared sandwiches for breakfast at home and for school, and in secondary school it varied, sometimes my mother and sometimes myself – it depended on what time I got up in the morning. As for lunches, my grandmother cooked and served me, and my mother made dinners (Generation Y).

Up to the end of middle school, my mum made sandwiches for me and left them in the fridge, but then it happened that in vocational school I had to make my own, and sometimes I went to school hungry because I got up too late for the bus and usually didn't have time to eat in the morning. It was good that we had a shop near the school, so I always bought something on the way. The rest of my meals were already prepared by my mother or grandmother (generation Z).

Self-service activities also included cleaning their belongings and their room (if the respondents had one). It turned out that from an early age (pre-school and early primary school), in the case of representatives of all generations, parents or grandparents often ordered their children to tidy up their belongings, mainly toys, which was sometimes met with considerable resistance from the youngest family members. Only four people had their own room, the rest of the study participants shared it with their siblings. On-call time and frequent conflicts related to tidying up this room were mentioned:

We took turns cleaning the room every week, but often my mother had to step in because there were constant arguments anyway. Sometimes my sister would accidentally throw away or rearrange some of my things and it was already war.

Room cleaning duties, but in the boarding house, were also mentioned by one respondent:

In the boarding house, we had a so-called “cleaning day” once a week, and then we all cleaned our room, and then the housemaster checked the tidiness. In addi-

tion, we also had cleaning duties in the common bathrooms and corridor – each room was cleaned in a different week – and that was the worst because the conditions of these bathrooms were not the best, so it was difficult to clean properly, and the inspection was very detailed, so sometimes we had to improve things.

Another important issue was how the respondents reached kindergartens and schools. It turned out that as many as seven respondents lived in small towns and therefore had to commute to both kindergartens and schools located in the commune village and then in district or provincial towns (these were all representatives of generations BB and X and two persons from generation Y). They travelled to kindergartens and primary and lower secondary schools by school buses (one person from generation Y was transported to kindergarten by his or her parents, as they worked in the locality), while they travelled to upper secondary schools by provincial/county buses or private minibuses (one person lived in a boarding school). Two people who studied in the county town lived in a hostel. The respondents' statements indicated that they found commuting difficult in the early years of their education (pre-school and early primary school periods), as they had to learn punctuality – quoting “the bus won't wait” – and the rules of the ride (“the back seat was reserved for the older 7th and 8th graders”). After that, however, it was not a problem. Stress appeared at the secondary school stage, as most of the respondents travelled with a so-called “transfer” and had to master the timetable in order to catch the right bus and get to school on time – it was definitely easier for the representatives of the younger generations, as they got the necessary information in real-time from the Internet. Commuting to school meant that they had to get up early, which was most problematic for secondary school students, quote: “I used to get up at 4.30 or 5.00 a.m. and come back after 5.00 p.m., so I was often already so tired that I didn't have the strength to study” (generation Y); “Commuting was a massacre on the one hand, especially in winter, but on the other hand I met a lot of nice people from other schools who commuted by the same bus, we went out to discos and with one we were even a couple for a short time” (generation X). At this point it is worth pointing out (which was also pointed out by the respondents) that during the education of generations BB, X and the older representatives of generation Y, buses ran very frequently and there was no problem to get to the nearest cities at different times of the day. As time went on and the rural population became more motorised, many bus services were removed because they were not cost-effective, so the younger representatives of Generation Y and all of Generation Z were of the opinion that they were often forced to wait after school for up to several hours for the bus home, which for some was “a waste of time,” while for others it was “an opportunity to walk around the shops or sit with friends in some café and chat.”

Another important issue concerned household responsibilities. In view of the age of the research participants and the changes that have taken place over the years in terms of the functioning of the family, the fulfilment of particular tasks, the ways in which needs are met, expectations of children and young people and within the framework of parenting in the broadest sense, it was decided to present the household duties of the respondents, taking into account the breakdown by generation (Table 3).

Table 3
Respondents’ household duties

The baby boomers generation	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cleaning at home and with grandparents, – washing, – keeping an eye on younger siblings, – cooking, – helping in the garden and in the field (harvesting, digging), – assistance with animals (rabbits, chickens, pigs, cows), – cleaning work around the house, – shopping, – burning in tiled cookers, – throwing wood into the shed, – digging up the garden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – house cleaning, – washing and ironing, – keeping an eye on younger siblings, – cooking, – weeding in the garden, – helping in the fields (digging), – assistance with animal care (including feeding, herding), – sweeping the yard and street, – shopping, – picking up brothers and sisters from kindergarten, – helping grandparents (cleaning, shopping), – throwing coal into the cellar, – helping mother in the shop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – grass cutting, – shopping, – house cleaning, – cooking, – watering the flowers, – feeding and walking the dog, – feeding the cat, – car washing, – washing, – ironing, – taking out the rubbish, – washing and wiping dishes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – emptying the dishwasher, – shopping, – cleaning at home, – grass cutting, – cooking, – weeding the garden, – washing, – taking out the rubbish.

Source: Author’s own study.

The transformations taking place in the Polish countryside over many years (especially the political transformation, which led to the liquidation of the State Agricultural Farms and many individual farms) also affected the scope of responsibilities of children and youth from rural areas. The data presented in Table 3 show the difference between the household activities of older (generations BB and X) and younger (generations Y and Z) research participants.

The domestic duties of the children and young people of the baby boomers and Generation X focused not only on chores in the family home (e.g. cleaning, cooking, laundry), but also on outside chores, both near the house, e.g. throwing wood into the shed or coal into the cellar, digging up the garden, and at a considerable distance, e.g. fieldwork – activities that are difficult to perform. Added to this was the need to take care of livestock, e.g., cows or pigs, which often required courage and strength. Attention is also drawn to caring activities for younger siblings and grandparents, which was lacking among the younger research participants. The duties of persons from generations Y and Z, on the other hand, usually focused on work at home and in the immediate environment and included basic tasks such as cleaning, laundry, cooking, mowing the lawn or emptying the dishwasher. Representatives of the group in question were obliged to take care of animals, but these were typically pets, e.g. dogs or cats, so the range of duties was not very wide. As mentioned earlier, among the tasks of the younger respondents, caring activities for other family members, which occurred among the elderly, did not appear.

The last issue raised during the research concerned the influence of upbringing through work in the family on educational and professional decisions. The statements of nine respondents (of all generations) show that activities performed in the family home did not directly influence their choices of school, profession or occupation, but contributed to the development of certain competences that are important and desirable, from the point of view of employers, such as punctuality, ability to plan tasks, sense of duty and responsibility, communication skills, ability to work in a group, empathy. Only one respondent, from generation X, stated that working on his parents' farm and the responsibilities associated with it contributed to his becoming a farmer (in effect, he inherited the farm from his parents):

For as long as I can remember, I have worked on the farm. I have two sisters, so I was always the one who had to do the hardest work. They went to vocational school and then moved away from home. I initially went to a vocational school too, but I didn't finish it. I'm self-taught, I learned everything from my father.

Although upbringing through work did not directly influence the further choices of the research participants, the fact that it contributed to the development of soft

competences, which are so much in demand on the labour market today, makes this process increasingly important. Nowadays, in addition to qualifications, which can in principle be acquired at the stage of early, middle or even late adulthood, more and more importance is being attached to social competences, which are most often shaped at a young age (and therefore difficult to change or modify at a certain stage of life) by the environment closest to the child – and that environment is the family.

Completion

The research material collected and analysed made it possible to realise the objective set at the outset and to answer the research problem posed. The information obtained shows that each participant in the study experienced parenting through work in the family home. The people responsible for preparing children and young people, initially for the implementation of self-service activities and later for varied household duties, were parents, grandparents and also older siblings. Respondents from generations BB and X emphasised that they had a specifically defined scope of their responsibilities, as they often shared them with their siblings so that a “schedule of tasks to be done” had to be established in advance. Generation Y and Z people, on the other hand, were more likely to point out that their responsibilities varied and were not fixed or systematic – rather, they depended on the current, often changing needs in the family. It was also the case that although they had previously been expected to do something, they were, to quote:

My mum did a lot of things for me, for example when I said I had to study or do my homework. Sometimes it wasn't quite true with the studying, I just didn't want to do anything at home.

With me, it was often the case that my parents would set some chores when they were having a so-called “worse day” or after some conflicts with me, and when it came to doing them, they still did them themselves because they said they would do better or that I would take care of my studies.

Due to various life circumstances connected with the passage of time, economic or technological changes, as well as transformations of the Polish countryside, the tasks entrusted to young people varied and were adjusted to current needs but did not directly influence educational and professional decisions taken by them in the future (although they influenced the formation of soft competences). In ad-

dition, based on the statements of respondents, it may be assumed that parents of representatives of older generations (BB, X) were more demanding and consistent in terms of upbringing through work than parents of younger generations (Y, Z), which undoubtedly results from current upbringing trends that oscillate around “protecting” children from difficult and demanding tasks or from excessive responsibility. In addition, there is little talk of work-based parenting – one gets the impression that it is not a “fashionable” topic, in fact it is overlooked both in families and in educational institutions. Today’s parents often shift the responsibility in this area to school staff, while they themselves over-protect their children, in effect excluding them from most housework in favour of additional education, such as private tutoring. Of course, education nowadays plays a very important role in the labour market, but it should not be forgotten that certain personal qualities, which are formed precisely in the course of household chores during this early period of a person’s life, are essential and influence the further educational and professional fate of young people.

To sum up, attention should be paid to the necessity of educating parents/guardians of children (not only from rural areas) with regard to early and fairly systematic preparation of them for performing self-service activities and household duties, which will be adapted to their psychophysical capabilities. Ideally, education in this field should be provided by persons with the appropriate pedagogical background, i.e., representatives of the educational institutions (who, while performing educational tasks, also educate young people through work) which the child attends, e.g., kindergarten teachers, tutors, subject teachers, school counsellors, vocational counsellors from general and vocational schools, employees of psychological-educational counselling centres or representatives of children’s and youth organisations. Ways of informing parents/guardians about the necessity of education through work (and its exemplary forms) at different stages of children’s development do not necessarily have to be in the form of formal, specially organised meetings, they can also be talks during individual contacts or information posted on the websites of institutions (see: Szaśiadek, 2010). The involvement of many people in this field can ensure that in the future, the labour market will be filled with people with the right competences, for whom the other person, as well as work, is of value, and whose job requirements or salary will be adapted to the nature of the activities they perform, which they will be able to assess accordingly.

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