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Personal knowledge management as a family function

Zarządzanie wiedzą osobistą jako funkcja rodziny

Abstract

Introduction. The article is an attempt to look at the issue of personal knowledge management from the perspective of the family function and the educational processes taking place within it. Political, social, and economic changes in the second half of the 20th century have emphasised the role of knowledge in the personal and professional development of individuals. As a result, knowledge was recognised as the most valuable capital, leading to economic growth and thus allowing for quickly meeting new challenges. Currently, the issue of knowledge and processes related to its acquisition and processing is still relevant. The condition for the development of knowledge, ensuring its high quality and relevance is the dissemination of an attitude of caring for knowledge not only among adults, but also among learning children and adolescents. The task of educational institutions is to support clients in taking responsibility for their own (personal) knowledge, which is particularly emphasised by the concept of personal knowledge management.

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Aim. The aim of the article is to provide a detailed analysis of selected aspects of the concept of personal knowledge, and the process of managing, it in the context of educational processes taking place within the family, as well as contemporary family functions.
Methods and materials. The article is a review, and the subject of the analysis were studies (conceptual works and research reports) on contemporary concepts of knowledge and its processing within the implementation of knowledge management. Particular attention was paid to the concepts of personal knowledge and its possible presence in educational processes taking place in the family.
Results. The results of the analyses show that in the context of the implementation of the family function, personal knowledge management is more than just learning or even self-education. Personal knowledge management (PKM) includes the processes of acquiring, organising, analysing, and using information that has an impact on everyday life. In the context of children, these skills develop naturally through interactions with the environment, especially with family members. Children's learning to manage personal knowledge in the space of family life is a key element in shaping their future organisational, communication, and social skills. This process not only affects cognitive development but also interpersonal relations and the ability to adapt to changing life conditions. People who learn to manage their knowledge early cope better in situations requiring information analysis and decision-making. By imitating their parents, children acquire basic strategies, such as planning, organising time, or managing tasks. In the context of the identified low interest of teachers in students' personal knowledge, the role of the family in this area seems invaluable.

***Keywords*:** knowledge, personal knowledge, personal knowledge management, family, family functions.

Abstrakt
Wprowadzenie. Artykuł jest próbą spojrzenia na problematykę zarządzania wiedzą osobistą z perspektywy funkcji rodziny i procesów edukacyjnych w niej zachodzących. Przemiany polityczne, społeczne i gospodarcze drugiej połowy XX wieku podkreśliły rolę wiedzy w rozwoju osobistym i zawodowym jednostek. W konsekwencji uznano ją za najcenniejszy kapitał prowadzący do wzrostu gospodarczego, a tym samym pozwalający na szybkie sprostanie nowym wyzwaniom. Obecnie problematyka wiedzy i procesów związanych z jej pozyskiwaniem i przetwarzaniem zachowuje wciąż aktualność. Warunkiem rozwoju wiedzy oraz zapewnienia jej wysokiej jakości i aktualności jest upowszechnienie postawy dbałości o nią nie tylko wśród dorosłych, lecz także wśród uczących się dzieci i młodzieży. Zadaniem instytucji edukacyjnych staje się wspieranie klientów w przejmowaniu odpowiedzialności za własną (osobistą) wiedzę, co szczególnie podkreśla koncepcja zarządzania wiedzą osobistą.

Cel. Celem artykułu jest szczegółowa analiza wybranych aspektów koncepcji wiedzy osobistej i zarządzania nią w kontekście procesów edukacyjnych zachodzących w rodzinie oraz współczesnych funkcji rodziny.
Metody i materiały. Artykuł ma charakter przeglądowy, a przedmiotem analiz były opracowania (prace koncepcyjne i raporty z badań) dotyczące współczesnych koncepcji wiedzy i procesów jej przetwarzania w ramach zarządzania wiedzą. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na koncepcje wiedzy osobistej i jej możliwą obecność w procesach edukacyjnych zachodzących w rodzinie.
Wyniki. Wyniki analiz pokazują, że w kontekście funkcji rodziny zarządzanie wiedzą osobistą to coś więcej niż tylko inaczej nazwane uczenie się czy nawet samokształcenie. Zarządzanie wiedzą osobistą (ang. personal knowledge management, PKM) obejmuje procesy pozyskiwania, organizowania, analizowania oraz wykorzystywania informacji, które mają wpływ na codzienne życie. W przypadku dzieci umiejętności te rozwijają się w sposób naturalny poprzez interakcję z otoczeniem, w szczególności z członkami rodziny. Uczenie się przez dzieci zarządzania wiedzą osobistą w życiu rodzinnym jest kluczowym elementem kształtowania ich przyszłych umiejętności organizacyjnych, komunikacyjnych i społecznych. Proces ten wpływa nie tylko na rozwój poznawczy, lecz także na relacje międzyludzkie oraz na umiejętność adaptacji do zmieniających się warunków życiowych. Osoby, które wcześnie uczą się zarządzać swoją wiedzą, lepiej radzą sobie w sytuacjach wymagających analizy informacji i podejmowania decyzji. Poprzez naśladowanie rodziców dzieci przyswajają podstawowe strategie, takie jak planowanie, organizowanie czasu czy zarządzanie zadaniami. W kontekście stwierdzonego, niskiego zainteresowania nauczycieli wiedzą osobistą uczniów rola rodziny w tym zakresie wydaje się nie do przecenienia.

***Słowa kluczowe*:** wiedza, wiedza osobista, zarządzanie wiedzą osobistą, rodzina, funkcje rodziny.

Introduction

The second half of the 20th century saw radical political, social and economic changes in Europe. Globalisation and its manifestations in cultural and political life as well as in the economic field are considered to be their main driving force (*Key Competencies...,* 2002). Scientific and technological advances, particularly evident in the fields of information technology and communication, have contributed to the development of international cooperation and integration. Based on these experiences, knowledge has been recognised as the most valuable capital leading to economic growth and thus enabling the rapid meeting of new challenges. The dissemination and development

of knowledge in all its forms was recognised as an essential condition for economic prosperity and social development. Its role in the personal and professional development of the individual was also appreciated. It has been noted that acquiring knowledge and skills and transforming them into valuable competencies stimulates economic and technical progress and provides personal satisfaction with the results of human endeavours (Schmitt, 2016; Cheong, Tsui, 2011)

From this perspective, the issue of knowledge and the processes related to its acquisition and processing are still relevant. The condition for effective functioning in a changing reality, rational use of both own resources and the environment is becoming access to information and knowledge. Contemporary concepts of knowledge draw attention to its rapid growth and the consequent need to analyse, evaluate and organise it. An indispensable condition for the development of knowledge, ensuring its high quality and timeliness, is the dissemination of an attitude of care for it, not only among young learners, but above all among adults. It is becoming the task of educational institutions to support clients in taking responsibility for their own knowledge. Furthermore, the importance and role of knowledge in shaping the well-being of individuals, organisations and entire societies is also growing. Indeed, knowledge is becoming a valuable resource (capital) subject to a process of management. A continuation of this position is the contemporary concept of knowledge management (Nonaka, Konno, 1998) and a more recent proposal – personal knowledge management

However, there seems to be a lack of reflection on these issues in pedagogical reflection in relation to the contemporary family, which, after all, is also affected by these global transformations. For this reason, in my text, I would like to draw attention to the management of personal knowledge as an important function of the family. However, before presenting personal knowledge as part of the educational processes taking place in the family, I will start by outlining the concept of knowledge itself, its explicit and implicit dimensions and its processes.

The contemporary concept of knowledge

While philosophical reflection on the nature of knowledge dates back to the origins of Western epistemology, the approach to knowledge as manageable capital does not emerge until the 20th century and reflects the profound and multi-directional changes associated with the transition from the industrial to the post-industrial era.

To date, it is difficult to identify one generally accepted definition of knowledge in management theory. Its importance in the economy was first pointed out by Peter Drucker (1999), who defined it as "[...] the effective use of information in action" (p. 13). Many definitions similarly emphasise the practical dimension of knowledge and its

use in problem-solving and decision-making. This is how Wayne Applehans, Alden Globe and Greg Laugero, among others, understand knowledge – for them, knowledge is information applied to solve a problem (Applehans, Globe, Laugero, 1999). Similarly, knowledge is defined by Gilbert Probst, Steffen Raub and Kai Romhardt (2004). According to these authors, it is "[...] the body of knowledge and skills used by individuals to solve problems" (p. 35). Part of the definition focuses on the concept of information. According to Kenneth Laudon and William H. Starback, knowledge can be understood as "[...] an organised resource of useful information" (Jemielniak, Kozminski, 2008, p. 8). This resource is situated in a specific context, and in addition to information, it holds experiences and general rules that allow for its interpretation. Susan Elliott (1996) equates knowledge with information having value. Many approaches mark the role of context, such as Amrit Tiwana's (2003) definition, who understands knowledge "[...] as a fluid mixture of contextual experiences, values, information and skills that form a framework for evaluating, understanding and assimilating new experiences and information" (p. 60).

A certain synthesis of these elements is made by Bogdan Stefanowicz (2011), who expresses the concept of knowledge in the formula: Knowledge = information + experience + context. The author emphasises the utilitarian character of knowledge defined in this way and the contribution of the human factor in the process of its interpretation. This formula can be developed to state that knowledge is a collection of certain information that is considered through the prism of experience and within a certain context. In some approaches, it is possible to see a merging of the field of knowledge and practice, expressed in the process of decision-making and problem-solving. There is no shortage of definitions that reduce knowledge to a canonical set of facts and rational principles.

Similarly, Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (2000) do the same, basing their model of organisational knowledge production on the traditional definition of knowledge as a confirmed belief. In contrast to the Western epistemological tradition, which focuses on the aspect of confirmation, thus the categorical and static nature of knowledge, these researchers emphasise the second part of the definition – belief. They regard knowledge as "[...] a dynamic and deeply humanistic process of verifying the veracity of personal perceptions" (pp. 80–81). Confirmation, then, is not seen as a one-off act accomplished by logical proof. Rather, it can be interpreted as a certain continuous activity of the human being, as a result of which he or she revises his or her own perceptions of reality.

In terms of I. Nonaki and H. Takeuchi (2000), knowledge is founded on human beliefs and expectations, and includes the attitudes, perspectives and intentions of the individual. Understood in this way, knowledge is very much related to the human factor – it depends on subjective factors such as beliefs and values. The researchers very clearly emphasise this aspect as central to their model of knowledge processing:

"Underlying the theory of organisational knowledge creation is the active, subjective nature of knowledge, embodied in beliefs and expectations that are deeply rooted in individual value systems" (p. 81). The researchers also draw attention to the link between knowledge and action. As in some of the Western definitions cited, knowledge becomes meaningful in the performance of certain activities and can be applied to problem-solving and decision-making.

The relationship between knowledge and information is often difficult to sort out because of the widespread interchangeable use of these terms in colloquial speech. The concept cited earlier by B. Stefanowicz (2011) assumes that information enters the structure of knowledge as its essential element. Marcin Kłak (2010) writes: "Knowledge is information embedded in the right context that enables the enterprise and its employees to operate effectively and efficiently" (p. 18).

The above propositions point to a strong connection between knowledge and information, sometimes even equating knowledge with usable information. The aforementioned I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi (2000) define the relationship of these concepts in the following words: "[...] information provides a new point of view in interpreting events, uncovers previously unseen meanings, sheds light on unexpected relationships. It is therefore an indispensable instrument for the discovery and construction of knowledge" (p. 81). In the above view, it can be seen that information is only a necessary tool for knowledge creation. Japanese researchers also point out some important differences: knowledge, unlike information, is about beliefs and expectations and is always about action (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 2000).

In other words, information can be understood as a stream of messages, while knowledge is the imagery produced from it, located in the realm of beliefs and expectations (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 2000). This view is also advocated by the American philosopher and epistemologist Fred Dretske (1983). He defines knowledge as a belief caused by or maintained by information. Information, therefore, clearly interacts with knowledge; it can initiate knowledge, confirm beliefs or revise them.

Explicit and tacit knowledge

It is impossible to analyse personal knowledge without recalling, even in the most modest terms, the basic assumptions about explicit and tacit knowledge. The term tacit knowledge of science was introduced by I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi (2000). Their work is considered a benchmark in addressing this issue in management science. They developed Michael Polanyi's concept, broadened the interpretation beyond the purely philosophical area and turned their attention to knowledge conversion processes. They emphasise that knowledge can be expressed and disseminated relatively eas-

ily in the form of, for example, scientific formulas, codified rules and procedures. This knowledge usually corresponds to the colloquial understanding of knowledge, especially in the wider Western culture. Explicit knowledge is also sometimes referred to as objective or formal knowledge. It is knowledge that is externalised, systematised, capable of being encoded through language and thus relatively easy to communicate. Ultimately, it can be stated that "[...] explicit knowledge is that which is formalised, contains clear facts and can be communicated to others without much difficulty through words, text, numbers, signs, drawings or symbols" (Karaś, Piasecka-Głuszak, 2013, p. 48).

When it comes to explicit and tacit knowledge, I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi characterise them in opposition to each other but point out that they are complementary to each other and interact with each other. While Western researchers pay special attention to explicit knowledge, the Japanese approach focuses on tacit knowledge. They define tacit knowledge as being deeply rooted in commitment, action and specific context, which seems to be useful for the issue of the family addressed in this article. According to them, it is rooted in the individual's experience, emotions, values and beliefs, which to a large extent have their origin in the family. It can be said that "[...] tacit knowledge is an extra-linguistic, non-numerical form of knowledge that is highly personal and context-dependent and deeply rooted in individual experiences, beliefs, values and emotions" (Nonaka, Konno, 1998, p. 42). It is also worth noting that tacit knowledge consists, as it were, of two dimensions – cognitive and technical. The first refers to so-called mental models. In the most general terms, these are images of reality "[...] representing objects, an idea of their properties and relations between them" (Nonaka, Konno, 1998, p. 43).

Knowledge processing

From the perspective of pedagogical reflection, the processes of knowledge processing – i.e., knowledge conversion – carried out by knowledge holders in four stages seem particularly relevant. The first of these is socialisation**.** This term does not correspond precisely to the concept of socialisation in sociological or pedagogical terms. In management science, this term is used to describe the process of sharing experiences (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 2000). The key activities in socialisation understood in this way are observation, imitation and exercise. As a result of these activities, co-perceptual knowledge is created. The individual creates new mental models and masters new skills. At this stage, experiencing experiences and building initial, intuitive conjectures on their basis play a special role.

The next stage of conversion is externalisation, which is crucial for the elaboration of innovations. In the course of it, one tries to work out descriptions and interpretations of acquired, specific experiences, hunches and intuitions. According to I. Nonaki and H. Takeuchi (2000), externalisation is "[...] a complex process of knowledge creation in which tacit knowledge is made available in the form of metaphors, analogies, concepts, hypotheses or models" (p. 88). Dialogue plays a key role in this process.

A prerequisite for the efficient communication and sharing of new knowledge is to express it in a precise language devoid of metaphors. This happens through a combination process of transforming explicit knowledge into another communicable form of explicit knowledge, structured and classified.

In the final stage of conversion – internalisation – there is internalisation of knowledge by new individuals through action learning. These individuals develop their own mental models, new routines and activity patterns, leading to automation and routinisation in the application of this knowledge in practice (Nonaka, Toyama, 2003). The above conversion processes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Selected aspects of knowledge conversion

The knowledge conversion aspect	Type of knowledge conversion			
	Socialisation	Externalisation	Combination	Internalisation
Conversion of knowledge	Hidden knowledge ↓ Hidden knowledge	Hidden knowledge ↓ Open knowledge	Open knowledge ↓ Open knowledge	Open knowledge ↓ Hidden knowledge
Change type of knowledge	W. personal ↓ W. personal	W. personal ↓ W. organisational	W. organisational ↓ W. organisational	W. organisational ↓ W. personal
Nature of final knowledge	Compassionate	Episodic	Structured	Operational
Nature of the space	Space of trust	A space for dialogue	Formal communication space	Active learning space

Source: Author's own study.

As can be seen in the table above, personal knowledge emerges in most conversion processes. It seems, therefore, that adopting a knowledge processing perspective, with a particular focus on aspects related to the management of personal knowledge, opens up interesting possibilities for analysing the educational processes taking place in the family.

Personal knowledge and family learning processes

This brings us to the concept of personal knowledge, which is located in the mind and skills of a particular individual (Materska, 2006). Such knowledge may not be documented in any way, it contains both elements of explicit knowledge and a very significant contribution of tacit knowledge. It can arise as a result of unique experiences and individual exploration.

A variety of manifestations of educational processes can be recognised at the different stages of knowledge conversion. Some of these occur spontaneously as a result of spontaneous interactions; others are the result of consciously adopted educational goals. An analysis of both intentional and unintentional learning situations can help to identify key educational needs and aspects that, by identifying and addressing them, will support knowledge conversion at each stage.

In addition to knowledge acquisition, locating and evaluating knowledge sources, the various processes and directions of knowledge conversion, updating, organising, sharing and exchanging knowledge become equally important in this perspective (Probst, Raub, & Romhardt, 2004). This, in turn, requires the training of new, broader competencies to ultimately be able to independently and successfully implement the process of personal knowledge management. It will not be insignificant to build up the conviction to take responsibility for one's own knowledge, its development and organisation. Let the fact that personal knowledge management is more than just learning or self-learning be evidenced by examples of the skills that are necessary for a smooth implementation of this process, among which the following are usually mentioned: learning management (how and when the individual learns, how he or she organises the time and space in which he or she learns), information acquisition management (how he or she values sources and obtains information), information integration management (how he or she classifies, organises and groups information), social contact management (how he or she communicates, visualises and also protects his or her own information), application management (how he or she selects and uses information in practice) (Verma, 2009).

Can the family provide the space for such activities, for training (even very preliminary) in taking responsibility for one's own knowledge and gradually becoming proficient in consciously managing it? Undoubtedly, this can be a challenge (if not a barrier) for parents or other adult family members, accustomed to directing the learning of the younger ones rather than supporting their own learning. Equally problematic – due to standard adult competencies – seems to be inspiring learners to reflect on their knowledge. A third barrier, perhaps the most difficult to overcome, may be the need to value learners' own experiences as a source of knowledge and thus a valuable matter in the learning process for the achievement of broad educational goals.

Many concepts and classifications of family functions are present in contemporary scientific literature. Among them, it is possible to distinguish those that are most often the object of analysis and studies.

> Among these typologies, the basic functions of the family, such as procreative and sexual, caring, nurturing, socialising, and psycho-hygienic (emotional-expressive), are most often repeated. Other classifications have adopted different names to describe family functions, but all of the family functions mentioned in the various classifications reflect the sense of the tasks ascribed to the family. The diversity of views on the functions of the family and the difficulty in creating one invariable classification are since the family functions on a variety of levels, as well as due to changes in functions throughout history. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the functions of the family are not something fixed (Dubis, 2018, p. 421).

On the contrary, both the individual functions and the model of family life are subject to change. It is emphasised that

> [...] the functioning and quality of the family's educational environment is strongly influenced by the social and globalisation transformations (including the mediatisation of social/family reality) taking place in the contemporary world. The family is "immersed" in them, participates in them and, based on them, creates its own micro-world. In other words, it is in the family that the influences of the outside world are focused as in a lens (Matyjas, 2020, p. 91).

The social transformations and globalisation, although undoubtedly impacting on the family, the effects of these impacts are not always as great as is commonly described (Levy, Kellerhals, & Widmer, 2002). Therefore, instead of talking about a new, modernist family model, these authors, while appreciating the scale of the changes taking place in the modern family, suggest that we should rather talk about the modernisation of the classical model.

However, we treat the transformation of family life or family models, there must undoubtedly be educational functions, and among these, educational functions in the broadest sense. Let the need for a broad view of the aims of education in the family be demonstrated by an exemplary set of the following aims:

- analysing and evaluating one's own knowledge and, as a result, identifying gaps in it;
- identifying ways of acquiring knowledge and assessing the value of different sources of knowledge;

- choosing the right way to acquire knowledge;
- reflection on personal knowledge;
- organising and structuring their knowledge;
- reflecting on how knowledge can be applied now and in the future;
- evaluation of the expected effects of the application of knowledge;
- Improving assertiveness in knowledge sharing.

Undoubtedly, the implementation of the above objectives would have a significant impact on the quality of acquired knowledge and would contribute to a more efficient management of personal knowledge in adult life, both in professional and private situations.

It is not insignificant that knowledge generated and transmitted within the family has a significant impact on family functioning. "Intergenerational relationships based on knowledge sharing strengthen family bonds and allow for better understanding between generations" (Bengtson, 2001, p. 11). Families that effectively manage knowledge transmission are more likely to avoid intergenerational conflicts. Knowledge transmission intergenerational knowledge transmission reduces the risk of conflict by increasing mutual understanding and acceptance. This can range from simple activities, such as cooking or cleaning, to more complex ones, such as managing household finances. The transfer of this knowledge usually takes place informally, through observation and participation in everyday activities. The main mechanism for this is what is known as intergenerational learning, described as "[...] a natural relationship occurring in the home between parents and children. It can also be seen as a two-way process in which children pass on new skills to older generations" (Muszyński, 2014, p. 13). Dialogue is key here.

> In particular, intergenerational learning through dialogue is realised through the exchange of information, knowledge, the search for answers to the questions posed, without attempting to overvalue the opinions or beliefs of one of the parties. It is characterised by a full and reciprocal opening up, and thus by the influence of one party on the other. Interaction by providing arguments rather than strenuously persuading arguments (Kalużny, 2014, p. 52).

At the same time, such a family learning process fosters an attitude of respect for the other person and his or her views.

Summary

Modernity, characterised by the ever-increasing pace of change in every area of life, requires everyone to acquire the ability to "[...] acquire up-to-date and relevant information instead of archaic, redundant information that quickly becomes obsolete in a world of immediately available knowledge" (Trapp, 2023, p. 68). This requires the continuous improvement of procedures for identifying gaps in one's knowledge, updating it, assessing the quality and reliability of its sources, as well as applying it to practice and evaluating the effects of such applications. This is how one of the eight key competencies can be understood, i.e., the learning competence understood as "[...] the ability to self-reflect, manage time and information effectively, work constructively with others and manage one's own learning" (Recommendation..., 2018, p. C189/10). The recommendations further draw attention to

> [...] knowing one's own preferred learning strategies, one's needs for competence development and the different ways to develop competence and seek learning opportunities. [...] This includes the ability to learn and work in groups and individually, as well as to organise one's learning, persevere in learning, evaluate it and share it (Recommendation..., 2018, p. C189/10).

In doing so, `it is important to bear in mind the specificity of the child's personal knowledge, which should be understood as

> [...] a component of his or her learning potential, which is individual, temporal, socio-culturally conditioned and which can change according to learning practices not only in school but also outside school. The child's personal knowledge becomes particularly important when it is linked to such learning predispositions, identified by Guy Claxton and constituting the child's learning potential, as so-called reciprocity and entrepreneurship. The essence of the first concept is expressed in the ability to "give and receive knowledge" while cooperating, respecting and accepting other points of view (Kochanowska, 2019, p. 143).

The cited author's research clearly shows that the school underestimates the potential of pupils' personal knowledge, which is perceived as highly subjective and inadequately reflecting reality, thus neglected in the educational process. "Meanwhile, the educational activities of the school should be aimed at providing students with a coherent picture of the world and preparing them for life outside school by transferring knowledge in such a way that it can be integrated with their everyday experiences" (Kochanowska, 2019, p. 144).

In this situation, it seems that it is the family, which provides a safe space for development, that is the perfect place rich in opportunities for the child to experience acceptance of his or her personal knowledge and thus to be encouraged to reflect on his or her knowledge and to acquire skills for its future management. The day-to-day concerns, responsibilities and needs of family life can provide natural challenges to foster the gradual assumption of responsibility for one's knowledge.

At the same time, parents, aware of these challenges, can be a source of pressure to force a positive change in the school so that it becomes a space for accepting students' personal knowledge, reflecting on it and forming skills for its future management. Collaboration between family and school in this respect could become one more level of building subjectivity in the relationship between the two communities, especially as the inspirational role of the school to activate parents is usually highlighted in this context (Szempruch, 2009). In this case, the initiative would be on the side of the family.

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