



LIFELONG LEARNING FOR LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

Edited by
Ewa Solarczyk-Ambrozik

WYDAWNICTWO NAUKOWE UAM

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR LABOUR
MARKET NEEDS**

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY PRESS

PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY SERIES NR 241

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NAUKOWE

POZNAŃ 2016

ABSTRACT. Solarczyk-Ambrozik Ewa (ed.), *Lifelong learning for labour market needs* [Kształcenie ustawiczne dla potrzeb rynku pracy]. Poznań 2016. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. Psychology and Pedagogy Series Nr 241. Pp. 228. ISBN 978-83-232-3084-7. ISSN 0083-4254. Texts in English.

The volume discusses lifelong learning in view of contemporary challenges, in particular those encountered on the ever-changing labour market. Owing to their diverse theoretical and methodological approaches, the volume's authors have been able to depict lifelong learning as an educational concept and a policy area on the one hand and a variable social practice embedded in a broad spectrum of issues related to employment, work quality, work efficiency and learning within organisations on the other. Learning is also presented as a unique phenomenon described as a way of life and a lifestyle and defined by the constant need to improve one's professional and other competences. The best way to modify lifelong learning to address today's challenges in the rapidly changing educational environment is to align it with the labour market. Note, however, that lifelong learning strategies go beyond the purely economic perspective and the focus on adult education. They place much emphasis on active citizenship, social inclusion and personal improvement, all of which reflect the "social existence" of a given educational concept.

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Recenzent/Reviewer: prof. dr hab. Roman Leppert

Publication financed by the Dean of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań and the Faculty of Education Studies at AMU

Published on the basis of an authorised copy

© Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, Adam Mickiewicz University Press, Poznań 2016

Projekt okładki/Cover design and a photo on the cover: K. & S. Szurpit

Redaktor techniczny/Technical editing: Dorota Borowiak

Formatowanie komputerowe/Digital formatting: Krystyna Jasińska

ISBN 978-83-232-3084-7

ISSN 0083-4254

WYDAWNICTWO NAUKOWE UNIwersytetu IM. ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W POZNANIU
61-701 POZNAŃ, UL. FREDRY 10
www.press.amu.edu.pl

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Dział sprzedaży: tel. 61 829 46 40, e-mail: press@amu.edu.pl

Wydanie I. Ark. wyd. 14,0. Ark. druk. 14,25

DRUK I OPRAWA: EXPOL, WŁOCŁAWEK, UL. BRZESKA 4

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Lifelong learning for labour market needs

The volume discusses lifelong learning in view of contemporary challenges, in particular those encountered on the ever-changing labour market. Owing to their diverse theoretical and methodological approaches, the volume's authors have been able to depict lifelong learning as an educational concept and a policy area on the one hand and a variable social practice embedded in a broad spectrum of issues related to employment, work quality, work efficiency and learning within organisations on the other. Learning is also presented as a unique phenomenon described as a way of life and a lifestyle and defined by the constant need to improve one's professional and other competences. The best way to modify lifelong learning to address today's challenges in the rapidly changing educational environment is to align it with the labour market. Note, however, that lifelong learning strategies go beyond the purely economic perspective and the focus on adult education. They place much emphasis on active citizenship, social inclusion and personal improvement, all of which reflect the "social existence" of a given educational concept.


The socio-economic background which propels the evolution of lifelong learning is itself changing in the direction of smart growth and knowledge-based economy. Such changes affect lifelong learning both as a concept and an educational practice. It is the intention of the volume's authors to present these phenomena. The volume has been structured to reflect the issues it discusses. It covers the theoretical views that are key to its subject matter. In their analyses, the authors refer to educational policy defined and implemented at various levels, describe unemployment in educational terms, highlight job counselling as a major tool for supporting educational and professional decisions and focus on developing a theoretical foundation for particular practical solutions. Considerable space has also been given to the needs of and changes on today's labour market perceived as an environment

in which educational activities are undertaken. The authors thoroughly explore the relationship between extra-academic professional education and the labour market, the provision of market-demand-driven qualifications, and the recognition of education as a way to bridge gaps between social needs and economic expectations. Also discussed are such aspects of labour-market-oriented education as manager training, postgraduate MBA studies, volunteering with a view to career planning and the improvement of competencies crucial on the labour market, as well as labour market-oriented academic entrepreneurship as a way to orient oneself towards the labour market by focusing on the acquisition and further development of specific competencies. Other areas of focus include workers aged over fifty, whose discussion centres on labour-market mechanisms, as well as the views of young Poles on job flexibility seen as both an opportunity and a threat.

As an appealing educational idea, continuing education is being constantly updated in its rapidly changing environment to keep up with new trends in the transition process. In discussing such trends, the authors refer to new organisational challenges faced in the coaching culture, learning organisations adopting the role of employers, practical models for teaching academic entrepreneurship in view of the competencies of university students and graduates and labour market demands, and, finally, cyborgisation presented from selected viewpoints within selected educational frameworks. The range of concerns having to do with continuing education and labour market demands extends also to online teacher training and training for the European network of Public Employment Services.

The volume is part of a series of publications on the theory and educational practice of lifelong learning. As in the previous volumes, we have strived to capture the entire complexity and diversity of the subject matter and account for the multitude of discourses related to lifelong learning. Last but not least, in the hopes of inspiring further research in the area, we encourage the reader to analyse the issues presented and make continued inquiries.

Ewa Solarczyk-Ambrozik



**LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES
AND THE JOB MARKET –
SELECTED THEORETICAL
CONTEXTS**

EWA SOLARCZYK-AMBROZIK

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Labour market orientation in lifelong learning strategies

Whether viewed as an educational concept, an educational policy or a highly diverse social practice, lifelong learning operates in a broad context of issues ranging from employment to work efficiency, quality of work, sustained development, unemployment, social exclusion, active citizenship to learning in organisations. Lifelong learning plays a key role in debates on education and economics and affects culture, lifestyles and neoliberal reforms of the welfare state. In political terms, lifelong learning debates extend beyond the needs of the labour market, employment, competition and technological advances in production. Once formulated, lifelong learning policies interact with a broader context of the particular social order in which they exist, defined with reference to globalisation, knowledge-based economy, information society, opportunities for life improvement and social exclusion. Social debates and academic papers alike highlight the fundamental significance of lifelong learning for competitiveness, employability, social integration, support for proactive behaviours, and, most importantly, support for personal growth. In this context, the question arises of responsibility for finding a reasonable place on the job market in the competitive world of the global economy which requires individuals to contribute unique educational experience, actively seek to replace the professional skills which are no longer relevant with upgraded equivalents and acquire the social skills needed to function efficiently not only on the job market but also in all other aspects of today's world.

The concept of continuing education dates back to the 1920s¹. Currently, the main contributions to defining lifelong learning come in the form of re-

¹ J. Field, *Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Orders*, Trentham Books, Stoke on Trent 2000.

search as well as social practice papers and publications produced by UNESCO and OECD, with the European Union playing a central role in promoting the concept. The most significant contributions include the reports: *Learning to be* of 1972², *No Limits to Learning* of 1979³, and *Learning, the Treasure Within* published in the 1996 Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century⁴. The Delors report has been commonly received as a transition from the concept of “lifelong education”, which was central to the Faure report, to “lifelong learning”⁵. The change was not only semantic but, first and foremost, a sign of progress in the field⁶. That 1996 was proclaimed the “European Year of Lifelong Learning” demonstrated just how important continuing education has become. This recognition was reflected in the activities of numerous European research organisations and associations having influence over adult education in Europe⁷. In discussing the steady rise in the popularity of lifelong learning, which in itself constitutes a unique example of a political consensus of unprecedented proportions⁸ and, as noted by P. Alheit, a response to the demand for “an innovative tool for managing one’s life”⁹ at a time when the risks of choosing specific paths of education have become particularly high¹⁰, note should be taken of the role in the overall European discourse on lifelong learning played by adult education conferences.

The view of lifelong learning which has emerged in Europe in the 1990s and which associated the concept with the need for acquiring new skills to achieve flexibility in coping with today’s world, especially in highly changeable labour markets, as well as the new emphasis on learners and their responsibility for choosing appropriate educational tracks, as opposed to the prior focus on the structures and institutions built to support lifelong

² E. Faure, *Uczyć się aby być*, Warszawa 1975.

³ J. Botkin, M. Elmandjra, M. Malitza, *Uczyć się bez granic. Jak zawrzeć “lukę ludzką”*, Raport Klubu Rzymskiego, Warszawa 1982.

⁴ *Learning, the Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, UNESCO 1996.

⁵ J. Delors, *Edukacja. Jest w niej ukryty skarb*, Stowarzyszenie Oświatowców Polskich, Warszawa 1998.

⁶ *Living and learning for a viable future: the power of adult learning*, UNESCO CONFINTEA VI, Polish National Commission for UNESCO, Radom 2010.

⁷ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Uczenie się przez całe życie jako rzeczywistość edukacyjna. Dyskurs całonocnego uczenia się w tle zmian społeczno-ekonomicznych*, (in:) *Całonocne uczenie się jako wyzwanie dla teorii i praktyki edukacyjnej*, Poznań 2013.

⁸ P. Alheit, *Podejście biograficzne do całonocnego uczenia się*, „Teraźniejszość. Człowiek. Edukacja” 2011, 3 (55), p. 12.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w perspektywie globalnej i lokalnej. Między wymogami rynku a indywidualnymi strategiami edukacyjnymi*, Poznań 2009.

learning, have been clearly reflected in the conclusions and findings of CONFINTEA V¹¹ which were subsequently translated into the educational policies and practices adopted in specific fields¹². The subsequent UNESCO conference CONFINTEA VI¹³ showed that lifelong learning, which is a philosophy, a conceptual base and an organisational principle of education that relies on global, emancipator, humanistic and democratic values as well as a vision of knowledge society, is critical for success in solving global and educational problems. The conference proceedings underlined that, as an integrated framework for all forms of education, lifelong learning is far from new. Rather, "its recent arrival as part of political discourse" has resulted from economic and cultural globalisation, the simultaneous domination and crisis of the world economy, social modernisation and transition to a knowledge society. The conference stressed the need for developing concepts for the primary notions which define the scope of discourses. To that aim, references need to be made to specific educational philosophies, cognitive theories and learning strategies as the notion itself brings with it specific policies and specific strategies required for their implementation in diverse regional and national circumstances. The conclusions suggest that the European view of the nature and ways of implementing the concept of lifelong learning is more uniform than that presented by the conference in reference to a broader global scale.

As can be seen from the strategic documents which have been examined at greater length in another article¹⁴, the European Union's educational policies focus primarily on promoting the kind of lifelong learning that is geared towards becoming more competitive and employable, achieving social integration, becoming socially proactive and personal improvement. The documents shape as well as reflect a new educational reality. All non-strategic commitments resulting from having established the European area of lifelong learning, including the European Qualifications Framework, have been described in dozens of documents adopted by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission¹⁵.

According to the Council of the European Union, even at times of financial crunch, investment in such economic-growth-inducing areas as training and education is essential for economic growth and competitiveness. The competences and skills that are acquired should reflect the changing life-long-learning-related needs of the economy and the labour market.

¹¹ *The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning and The Agenda for the Future*, (in:) *Final Report. Fifth International Adult Education Conference*, UNESCO CONFINTEA V, Hamburg 1997.

¹² E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Uczenie się przez całe życie...*, op. cit.

¹³ *Living and learning for a viable future...*, op. cit.

¹⁴ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Uczenie się przez całe życie...*, op. cit.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

As noted by the authors of Project Europe 2030 – Challenges and Opportunities, in order to steer clear of the traps embedded into the Lisbon Strategy, the European Union must properly modify its structures and management resources. The problem with the Lisbon Strategy is that it has never fulfilled its promises of making Europe more competitive. This failure can be attributed to inefficient implementation mechanisms and procedures oriented at spending money on processes alone rather than on the attainment of tangible results¹⁶. As shown by the Strategy's authors, what citizens of Europe need in order to retain social cohesion through 2030 is a competitive, sustainable and socially-oriented market economy. As postulated in the project, since the human factor is pivotal for strategic success, member states, with the help of the private sector, "must", as the document itself puts it, invest in research and development and reform all aspects of education, including vocational training.

A clear trend is emerging in the methods used to activate individuals. As has been stressed, the key strategic instrument for the social advancement of citizens and for progress in the development of European society is to better utilise the available talent. One of the preconditions for success in creating a knowledge society is high quality education at all levels. Strong emphasis has been placed on the need for a systemic approach to providing citizens of Europe with opportunities to improve their skills and creating a social, economic and regulatory environment that fosters research, creativity and innovation.

An analysis of the strategic documents produced in the field of lifelong learning carried out from the viewpoint of change dynamics shows that in the context of Europe 2020 and Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training through 2020¹⁷ and in light of mutual assessments of empirical material, public debates and reports, the European Union Council noted in its conclusions of 26 November 2012 on education and training in Europe 2020 – the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs, that the Council's country-specific recommendations of July 2012 focus specifically on promoting access to good-quality preschool and school education, reducing the number of early school leavers, facilitating the transition of young people from education and training to the labour market, improving educational outcomes and the relevance of skills to labour market needs, reinforcing vocational education and training with a focus on work-based training and apprenticeships, modernizing higher education and improving

¹⁶ www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms/upload/pl_web.pdb, p. 20.

¹⁷ Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020") (Official Journal EU C 119 of 28 May 2009).

access to education for disadvantaged groups. The recommendations reflect the EU's views on education and specifically its aims, quality and offering, and clearly identify the most essential issues at play.

As stated in the *Education at a Glance 2012 Report*¹⁸, the global educational and economic landscapes are changing rapidly, driven largely by the rise of knowledge-based economies. Such developments create a number of challenges to the citizens who face the need to manage their qualifications by engaging in lifelong education as well as to countries which need to support them in various ways.

The Report also confirms that even during periods of global recession, attaining higher education and ensuring that the education one receives reflects job market demands will help one avoid unemployment and retain one's job. Such findings show that the demand for highly skilled workers equipped to live up to the needs of the knowledge-based economy has grown in OECD countries even despite the global recession. The Report has found that private and public returns on education go beyond economics and include a longer life expectancy, pro-social behaviour and active citizenship.

The above data underpin Europe's educational landscape shaped by EU policies. The data have substantial impact on such policies at global and lower levels, as shown in strategic reports and documents. The above documents describe the profile of the citizens of Europe as being creative, innovative and who learn in various settings throughout their lives, participate in intercultural dialogue, realise their potentials, acquire and use specific skills and remain active. The documents also paint the picture of a new educational landscape and rapidly changing challenges resulting from social and economic realities and technological progress which drive the need for change, making it necessary to e.g. ensure better social cohesion and extend support in such new areas as intelligent growth and the Europe of Innovation.

By examining strategic documents, reports, conference materials and publications describing theoretical incentives for lifelong learning, it has been possible to keep track of trends, paradigm changes and shifts in emphasis from teaching to adult learning and from continuing education to adult education and ultimately to lifelong learning. The study has offered insights into on-going discourses in various ideological orientations which have moved from general slogans which depicted learning as a key that opens the doors to the 21st century and suggested that the "pillars of education" are all about "knowing", "acting", "coexisting", and "being" towards

¹⁸ www.oecd-library.org.

more detailed guidelines and recommendations to be followed by member states that employed a whole new rhetoric. In its policy statements, the Council of Europe called upon the member states to develop and implement (such reforms as will meet the challenges faced in training and education); plan (effective investments in education and training); strive (to improve growth); ensure (good quality education), improve (the cooperation of work); and promote (flexible paths from vocational to higher education).

The main trend which reflects the emergence of the concept of lifelong learning and its responsiveness to the demands of educational realities is its labour-market orientation designed to make lifelong learning reflect labour market demands. The basic presumption is that lifelong learning will improve citizens' employability, ensure their success in their professional careers, ease their transfers across sectors and states, improve their mobility and help them transition from employment to learning or from learning to employment at any point in their lives.

Note whether viewed as an educational idea or an educational strategy, lifelong learning is clearly associated with the pursuit of its primary goal, which is to achieve social cohesion. This goal is linked closely with learning, education and training as a relatively new category. In lifelong learning strategies, a strong trend can be seen of integrating such learning with employment and social integration policies. Lifelong learning policies are firmly coupled with the European Union's social policies on the quality of life and the principles underpinning the European Communities, as stated expressly in various legislative acts. Much emphasis has been placed on strategies of facilitating access to lifelong learning, especially to the disadvantaged, and poverty eradication.

A new educational reality is beginning to emerge. On the one hand, the reality is characterised by emphasis on individualised education paths selected to fit the kinds of educational lifestyles that are becoming prevalent in today's world. The new reality requires people to mobilise all of their resources to further their education and earn successive certificates and qualifications. It reflects the paradigm shift described earlier. On the other hand, continuous emphasis has been placed on perfecting institutions of education and creating a framework for lifelong learning and for improving and acquiring new skills needed to operate in contemporary world that is dominated by technological advances. As mentioned earlier, emphasis is additionally placed on individualisation which is a general trend that also applies to educational processes. As a consequence, the system of lifelong learning recognises and validates the skills acquired outside of formal education. The system also entails greater personal responsibility for selecting one's path of education. However, as I attempted to demonstrate in my dis-

cussion of the European Union's educational policies, the trend calls for increasing openness and for boosting the significance of educational systems. To that end, the European Union has established the European Qualifications Framework and national qualifications structures designed to ensure that formal systems of education are more responsive to job market demands expressed in terms of the needs for specific skills rather than specific professions¹⁹. Against this background, lifelong learning has been evolving to offer a perspective that can be defined with reference to intelligent growth and a knowledge-based economy. The adoption of a vision of a learning society has implications for the concept of lifelong learning as well as educational practice.

Lifelong learning programmes go beyond the purely economic perspective and adult learning. They clearly emphasise active citizenship, social inclusion and individual personal fulfilment which reflects the views on "social life" expressed in specific educational ideas.

Despite the normative approach, the phenomenon of lifelong learning eludes unambiguous assessment. Such learning may be seen as the purpose of education, a process, a product of education, a moral obligation, an area of social and cultural reality that is subject to empiricism or, to use a term coined by Edwards, "troubled conceptual space"²⁰.

The idea of lifelong learning, as put forward mainly in the strategic documents of UNESCO, OECD and the European Union, is expressed as a phenomenon that is necessary and desirable. As I have attempted to demonstrate, the idea's deep-rootedness in debates on adult, vocational and higher education provides a theoretical framework for general as well as detailed considerations. What is essential and typical for the transitions in question is that the idea appears also in debates that are not directly concerned with education and that focus on such social issues as unemployment, social exclusion, environmental protection, public health and active citizenship. It plays a key role in economic debates on the labour market, quality, efficiency, sustainable development and learning in organisations.

A study of the conclusions presented in strategic European Union documents shows that employability can be greatly improved by adopting qualifications systems based on learning outcomes and by increasingly validating skills and competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings.

¹⁹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Official Journal EU C111 of 6 May 2008).

²⁰ R. Edwards, *Lifelong learning, lifelong learning, lifelong learning: a recurrent education?* (in: *Lifelong learning: Education Across the Lifespan*, eds. J. Field, M. Leicester, Routledge Farmer, London 2003).

This ties directly to the aforementioned paradigm shift in lifelong learning and the shift in emphasis towards learning outside of educational institutions and constitutes an effort to implement the general reflections on the lifelong learning idea.

The above analysis raises questions as to the way in which the concept of lifelong learning shapes our views on social realities and how social, cultural and economic environments create the demand for learning, defining it as a chance to operate efficiently in a changeable world of [un]equal opportunities. Or perhaps, as presented in various strategic documents, lifelong learning is a panacea to such social problems as unemployment, social marginalisation and social inequality created in the face of new global challenges or a response to new labour market demands which constitutes an opportunity to recover from the economic crisis.

The political context described in terms of knowledge-based economy, life opportunities, social exclusion, unemployment and participation in education in ways that vary depending on educational attainment, is so broad that, as some scholars have demonstrated²¹, it eludes handling by means of unconventional educational policy tools. As a consequence, the need arises for new research categories and, as a consequence, for thinking in broader strategic terms and moving beyond educational policies. In line with these precepts, I will reflect on the place of the job market in lifelong learning policy with reference to job market demands, also on the national level, and to the relevant strategies.

It is essential to refer, in this context, to one of the fundamental documents concerning the topic at hand, i.e. the July 8, 2003 "Strategy for the development of continuing education through 2010" adopted by the Council of Ministers. The Strategy presumes that a knowledge society can only be built if the significance of lifelong learning receives sufficient recognition. The document also notes that the concept has been "commonly recommended in recent years"²². Note also that the Strategy begins by defining the key terms and referring to the prior conclusions of the Nairobi Conference of 1976 and the lifelong-learning concepts it developed as well as the conclusions of the 1996 OECD Conference in Paris. The UNESCO concept, to which the document in question refers, significantly presents continuing education as a set of educational processes that are formal, informal or incidental and that, regardless of their content, scope and the methods they employ, enable their participants to supplement their education pursued in and outside of

²¹ C. Griffin, *From education policy to lifelong learning strategies*, (in:) *The Age of Learning. Education and the Knowledge Society*, ed. P. Jarvis, Kogan Page, London 2001.

²² Strategy for the Development of Continuing Education Through 2010 adopted by the Council of Ministers, www.162000_15420_2_strategia_rozw_ksz_ustaw_do2010_r_, p.1.

schools allowing adults to acquire skills and knowledge, improve their professional qualifications, acquire new professions and modify their approaches. As for the implementation of the findings presented in the OECD document, the authors of the "Strategy for the development of continuing education through 2010" note the need for preparing children for continuing education and encouraging them to engage in it. The concept calls for measures focused on ensuring proper opportunities for all adults who needs to replace the existing or acquire new qualifications, whether or not they are employed.

The Strategy to be implemented through 2010 was hoped to ensure chances for individual improvement to all citizens by securing broad access to continuing education, improving its quality and furthering activeness to better the participants' chances of success in the labour market. Note that the strategy focused on issues related to the labour market. It also specified the responsibilities of national and local administration, scientific and educational institutions and social partners such as employer organisations, business and trade union boards, foundations and associations. By fulfilling such responsibilities, Poland embraced the European dimension of lifelong learning in the short as well as the long term. The project also became a basis for the development of ministerial programmes of continuing education. It relied on assessments of socio-economic and political processes as provided in such governmental strategy documents as the National Development Plan 2004-2006 and other medium- and long-term government documents, including the National Strategy for Jobs and Human Resource Development 2000-2006. The objectives and nature of the Strategy were affected by demographic processes, the situation in the labour market, the system of education, scientific and technological progress affecting the working environment and the nature of work, integration and globalisation as well as increased educational aspirations among members of the general public. This strategic objective was pursued on the basis of selected priority measures corresponding to the European area of lifelong learning, such as increased access to continuing education, improvements in its quality, cooperation and partnership, increased spending on human resources, the development of IT resources for continuing education, the development of advisory services and increased awareness of the importance of continuing education with particular emphasis on the tasks to be performed within the framework of individual priorities and on appointing the responsible institutions.

An analysis of the actions proposed in the Strategy will enable one to understand the evolution of views on continuing education. During the drafting of the Strategy, continuing education was referred to in such documents as the National Development Plan for 2004-2006, the Sectoral Opera-

tional Programme Human Resource Development (Priority 2 – Development of a Knowledge society); other Sectoral Operational Programs, the education-related part of the Integrated Operational Programme Regional Development, the National Strategy for Jobs and Human Resource Development 2000-2006 and the Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Precepts.

Each of the above documents ranked continuing education as a top priority objective and a precondition for constructing a knowledge society. Therefore, as shown in the Strategy, the lifelong learning policy “should meet the needs not only of young people but also of adults who need to learn and retrain at various stages of their lives”²³.

In my commentary on the above documents, I would like to additionally refer to the conclusions presented in the 2003 Blue Papers – Continuing Education in Poland. Benefits and Barriers to Development, No. 8 of the Polish Lisbon Strategy Forum²⁴ with a mission to create an independent platform for a public debate on state policy within the framework of public-private partnerships among the civic, governmental and business sectors and to ensure that Poland’s social and economic policy is public, coherent, continuous and growth-oriented.

The document reflects the approach towards lifelong learning adopted at a specific stage of Poland’s social and economic development. Note the continued and consistent use in documents from that period of the term “continuing education” which emphasises the institutional aspects of education despite references to “the incidental process of acquiring information through day-to-day experience and specifically of learning from other people, through work, from printed materials, from the Internet, etc.”²⁵

In its introduction, the document examines the idea of continuing education as presented in the Lisbon Strategy. It is only natural that in reference to the Strategy, the document points to the significance of and need for pursuing continuing education against the background of the changes adopted in the Lisbon Strategy. Nevertheless, the main focus of the Blue Paper is on the national dimension of continuing education. The most important barrier to its development is Poles’ unawareness of the need to raise their qualifications, insufficient IT development compared to other countries, unavailability of proper information on continuous learning and training opportunities which provide the most sought-after skills and knowledge, institutions of education and the quality of the services on offer as well as insufficient access to vocational counselling. The document stresses the urgency of remov-

²³ Ibidem, p. 23.

²⁴ A. Matysiak, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w Polsce. Korzyści i bariery rozwoju*, Niebieskie Księgi, nr 8, Polskie Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej, Gdańsk 2003.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 11.

ing such barriers. It underlines the significance of local governments, institutions of higher education, employers and citizens themselves while highlighting the role of the state which is not in a position to assume all responsibility for the qualifications of the labour force. The role of the state is reduced to that of supporting the least qualified individuals, persons at risk of losing their jobs and persons who are already unemployed, in their educational pursuits²⁶. Note that the Polish Lisbon Strategy Forum highlights the need for a continuing education system that will further the country's social and economic development.

Essential guidelines which clarify the views on the need to continue learning throughout one's life have been provided in the draft document "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" drawn up by the Interministerial Team for Lifelong Learning, including the National Qualifications Framework (February 4, 2011, Warsaw)²⁷. The document's title offers a preview into the educational landscape described within. "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" sets objectives and measures for lifelong learning, incorporates the commitments that arise from having established the European area of lifelong learning, including the European Qualifications Framework and any factors specific for our region as enumerated in the diagnosis on which the strategy has been built. As noted in "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning", measures aimed at furthering lifelong learning will be incorporated into all sectoral development strategies aimed at contributing to the completion of the objectives laid down in the medium- and long-term development strategy. As has been noted by its authors, "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" sets out to attain economic and social development on the basis of knowledge. This premise is in fact central also to the EU strategies mentioned earlier. Such strategies recognise that learning in various forms and places with a view to developing competencies and qualifications lies at the foundation of economic growth and the development of civic society.

The transformations taking place in society and the economy, increased learner and worker mobility and demographic trends underpinning the ageing of populations make it necessary to revamp the existing educational and professional career pathways based on a model which called for a period of intense schooling in one's youth leading to the acquisition of formal professional qualifications followed by holding, for as long as possible, a job that matches one's education. As noted in the document, the need to revamp the professional career model applies to all stages of life from early preschool to

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Międzyresortowy Zespół do spraw uczenia się przez całe życie, w tym Krajowych Ram Kwalifikacji, *Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie*, projekt 2011-02-04, bip.men.gov.pl/image/stories.

formal schooling to vocational career to senior citizen learning. For that reason, "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" underlines the need for the continuous improvement of key professional competencies to be able to meet the demands of occupational reorientation, even in later stages of one's labour market participation. The document also suggests that the school should no longer be viewed as the sole provider of formal learning to adults as it is complemented by the working environment and society at large, including businesses, public institutions and civic organisations. Considering this evolution of views on the need for lifelong learning, it should be stressed that "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" also refers to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning as equivalent forms of learning and acquiring qualifications.

Another significant factor for the development of a global lifelong learning policy recognised in "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" is the establishment of the European area of lifelong learning, including the European Qualifications Framework. Of particular importance for the authors of "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" are the European rules that underpin such lifelong learning policies as the lifewide learning which involves appreciating various forms of learning beyond the formal, the presumption that the need for learning applies to everyone, including people not directly targeted by traditional educational policies; the recognition that lifelong learning requires a partnership of multiple parties; recognition of qualifications regardless of the place, manner and time in and at which they were acquired, which in fact is one of the guiding principles behind European collaboration on qualifications (EQF) which describe and compare qualifications based on learning outcomes regardless of the place and manner at and in which they were acquired; facilitating access to new career paths; putting people in the centre of lifelong learning policies meaning it is the learner rather than the system or the institution that becomes the main point of reference for such policies; the recognition that the effectiveness of such policies may not be assessed on the basis of the indicators that concern systems alone but rather, and predominantly so, based on indicators focused on learners' accomplishments. Another principle is that of effective investment in learning. This principle calls for the relevant policy to stress the needs of the learner rather than those of educational and training institutions and agencies²⁸.

As demonstrated by the analysis of the said conclusions, one of the key instruments whose application to the said principles has been recommended by the European Parliament and the Council is the European Qualifications Framework.

²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 4-5.

A study of changes in lifelong learning policies, which reflect as well as create a specific educational reality, has shown that the prime objective should be to ensure that any qualifications that are awarded are clear and comparable across various sectors and member states of the European Union.

In Poland, the guidelines have prompted the decision to develop and implement National Qualifications Frameworks. As has been stressed by the authors of "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning", Poland has not comprehensively and consistently defined its lifelong learning policy. Its strategic document recognises the country's acceptance of the European Union document establishing the European area of lifelong learning, including the EQF, and puts forward a policy of promoting and supporting good quality learning at any age, in various forms and at various places, recognizing learning outcomes in qualifications systems and putting the learner first. The policy's effectiveness is measured in terms of the competencies and qualifications of individuals regardless of the manner in which they were achieved.

According to the said strategic document, the policy is pursued on the basis of partnerships between the central and local governments, employers, businesses and individual citizens. The document points out that lifelong learning differs significantly from continuing education which in Poland has been defined exclusively with reference to educational and labour market institutions and adult learning. On the contrary, lifelong learning, which constitutes a shift in the approach to education, applies to people of all ages.

A pivotal feature underpinning the significance of lifelong learning in Poland is the horizontal nature of efforts to boost the competences and qualifications of individuals and the fact that such efforts are of importance to all development strategies. This approach is reflected in the presumptions adopted by the Council of Ministers in the "Planned Enhancements to the Development Strategy" originally published on November 24, 2009 and subsequently reviewed on March 10, 2010, April 30, 2011 and July 12, 2012.

Adopted by the September 10, 2013²⁹ decision of the government, the strategy reflects an evolution of views on lifelong learning. Such views are expressed in terms of a broad-based approach to lifelong learning, an appreciation for learning at every stage of one's life, the recognition that learning applies to all people regardless of economic, social and territorial divisions, including persons who have not thus far been covered by traditional education and training policies, an open approach to qualifications, a learning-outcome-based approach, the development of partnerships for lifelong learning, and putting individuals first in lifelong learning policies.

²⁹ *Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie*, załącznik do uchwały nr 160/2013 Rady Ministrów z dnia 10.09.2013.

The issues of lifelong learning having to do with improvements in competencies and qualifications fit into a broader strategic framework adopted for the implementation of Poland's Long-Term National Growth Strategy 2030. Such issues additionally reflect the aforementioned strategic document of the European Union: "Europe 2020", as well as all integrated development strategies and especially the Human Capital Development Strategy and the Social Capital Development Strategy³⁰.

While of importance for other objectives, the labour-market orientation is particularly significant for operational purposes, i.e. for education and training adjusted to meeting the demands of sustainable economy, changeable labour markets, society, working environments and social engagements aimed at promoting lifelong learning, all of which are equivalent to the objectives of ensuring individual creativity and innovation, creating a transparent and coherent national qualifications system and securing diverse and generally accessible early-care and educational opportunities.

By identifying its specific objectives, "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" demonstrates that vocational education and training must prepare the student well for securing and changing employment in the future. This can be achieved by inspiring occupational ambitions and offering opportunities to fulfil them by, inter alia, closely coordinating the systems of vocational and higher education, recruiting practitioners with experience in the economy and civic society to contribute to education in schools and universities, popularizing internships and apprenticeships, promoting the teaching of practical skills and self-reliance, holding vocational training courses leading to qualifications at various levels and developing a system of educational and vocational counselling. The Strategy reasserts that while the place of employment and social involvement offers significant learning opportunities, such opportunities remain insufficiently utilised. To remedy the problem, the Strategy calls for identifying, assessing and recognizing lifelong learning outcomes more effectively. To that end, it is essential to validate any prior vocational, social and personal experience that individuals may have acquired.

"The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" is considered to be an additional strategic document enshrining Poland's commitments towards the European Union with respect to establishing the European area of lifelong learning and specifically the European Qualifications Framework. "The Prospect of Lifelong Learning" fits into the changing trends in the educational landscape taking place in a broader European dimension.

As shown above, next to global trends defining the nature and quality of continuing education with respect to developing a learning society and

³⁰ Ibidem.

a knowledge-based economy, significance can also be attributed to the educational policies formulated at European, regional and national level. The related changes, challenges and opportunities as well as barriers and limitations are addressed by including individual strategies that are oriented at entering, remaining on and navigating the labour market.

Changes in the field can be described in terms of, *inter alia*, flexibility and entrepreneurship, both of which are central to today's understanding of work. The concepts refer to the ideal of individuals who are enterprising, take responsibility for their career choices, plan them as one would one's own business, and fully utilise their resources, as presented in a virtual curriculum vitae, and whose strengths and bargaining positions vary depending on whether they are perceived to be at the "core" or in the "peripheries" of the labour market³¹. In organisations, learning is critical for many actions, mainly those of importance for one's ability to remain in employment. Employers (learning-oriented organisations) offer the most appealing competence improvement opportunities to their key employees. The majority of educational programmes are designed for managerial staff, full-time workers and employees holding advanced professional qualifications. This approach further exacerbates the marginalisation of persons who have already been pushed out of the mainstream due to their limited education or insufficient competencies. Such changes in recruitment policies reduce their chances of benefiting from educational opportunities. Qualifications impact individuals' abilities to remain in employment. Less qualified workers typically learn during their off time at their own expense. As noted by Ryfkin (2001), global market forces polarise populations dividing them into professional elites and growing numbers of the unemployed whose low qualifications increasingly prevent them from succeeding in the labour market. General changes in the working environment weaken the link between such an environment and the system of vocational education, which is essential for individuals finding their place in society. As a consequence, many acquired qualifications lose significance whereas work is increasingly organised around changing tasks rather than individual activities. As a result of greater employee turnover and individual contract negotiations in a changeable labour market, employees find it harder to form vocational corporations. As a consequence, work becomes less significant as a key determinant of individual identity. Behind the general trend of employee turnover lie the individual strategies employed by the workers which are reflected in their career path models³². As noted by M.L. Savickas, in order to remain

³¹ M. Marody, M. Lewicki, *Przemiany ideologii pracy* (in:) *Kultura i gospodarka*, eds. J. Kochanowicz, M. Marody, Warszawa 2010, p. 126.

³² M. Marody, *Jednostka po nowoczesności. Perspektywa socjologiczna*, Warszawa 2014, p. 135.

employable, today's workers must focus on personal improvement and retaining their competences so as to make best use of their current employment and secure their future jobs. To this end, they need to improve their abilities to manage their own careers and, specifically, become aware of their strengths and any transferrable competencies. The notion of career path is replacing that of career and is becoming the dominant metaphor³³.

In view of the above, lifelong learning offers a new perspective on how to plan one's career. One part of career choices is to ascertain one's identity in society. Viewed as a process, career planning allows one to continually reassess where one stands and where one is headed as well as how to pursue lifelong learning. It is worthwhile noting that the value of an individual's entrepreneurial spirit, risk taking and competitiveness is brought to the forefront most distinctly in a hegemonic discourse on lifelong learning. This has considerable implications for the educational pursuits of individuals and plays a role in the social exclusion of others affecting people's career paths. Thus, lifelong learning becomes a new prospect in career development whereas individual job-market-oriented strategies are subject to the specific opportunities that depend on the environment at large, follow the dynamics of broader processes and are influenced by the broadly-based educational policy, non-linear progress, multiplied perspectives and role models. The challenge lies in the resulting complexity and the changes which conceal opportunities. In the changing world, individual adaptive abilities grow increasingly important. One needs to find one's footing in transition when confronted with uncertainty. Careful and cautious planning in a predictable environment has been replaced by what is referred to as "emergence" – the emergence of opportunities and difficulties. The choice of careers and specific career paths and the adoption of specific strategies may be enriched by unforeseen events and experience³⁴. Career planning guidelines offer guidance on ways of facing new unforeseen challenges, take risks, embrace new solutions and search for new models³⁵.

Along with social and economic change and individualisation, which places the responsibility for one's career path on the hands of the concerned individual, people need knowledge to be able to plan their lives and shape their professional identities. By investing in their identities, they are in a better position to solve the problems resulting from transitions in the work

³³ M.L. Savickas, *Renovating the psychology of careers for the twenty-first century*, (in:) *The Future of Career*, eds. A. Collin, R.A. Young, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000.

³⁴ J.D. Krumboltz, *The happenstance learning theory*, "Journal of Career Assessment", May, 17, 2009.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

environment or to embrace new professions, employers or professional roles. The overall process-based nature of career planning in the face of changing labour markets and employment opportunities coupled with the need to select offerings from a range of educational opportunities within and outside of an institutionalised system of education, requires a number of diverse competencies which can generally be described as the abilities to plan one's life. This process may be viewed in multiple dimensions. One possible perspective, i.e. that of the individual, focuses on preventing social exclusion and exclusion from the labour market, professional success and social effectiveness. The factors that come into play in the broader contexts are the ability to operate in the labour market, the quality of life in a given community, social cohesion and relationships between the system of education and the labour market. The ability to manage one's career with respect to lifelong learning and changes taking place in the broader social, economic, cultural and political environment may take the shape of an individual job-market-oriented strategy. The educational paths of adults across vocational and social structures in a learning society are increasingly subject to rapidly changing market requirements, changes in work and culture as well as the strong trend of world societies becoming more individualised. People deprived of adequate competencies and financial as well as cultural capital, people barred from access to information and lacking the marketability, are increasingly marginalised and end up unemployed, unable to articulate their interests, functionally illiterate and more³⁶. One of the greatest challenges of our civilisation is the need to develop and pursue individual job-market-oriented strategies that reflect individual development paths and life plans as well as their personality, situational and institutional benchmarks. A strong correlation can be observed between such strategies and the course of a person's life. By examining them closely, general conclusions can be drawn regarding the social background and the social relationships in which an individual participates and to which it is subject, the impact of significant people, the influence of collective standards and pressures from occupational communities. Of great significance here, as underlined by Znaniecki, are mutual relationships between collective life mechanisms and the fates of individuals which, in reference to the issues at hand, offer insights into changes in career path models seen in the context of individual job-market-oriented lifelong-learning strategies as well as broader cultural, economic and political factors. As a consequence of such processes, individuals have greater responsibility for planning and managing their careers. They need to be proactive, flexible in responding to change and employable. They also

³⁶ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Kształcenie ustawiczne...*, op. cit.

need to employ intelligent individual improvement strategies that fit into the broader strategies set out in the educational policies formulated at European level as well as individual regions and local communities.

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ZDZISŁAW WOŁK

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Education in life strategies of the long-term unemployed

Introduction

Since the end of the last century the power of life-long education has begun to appear clearly as the way of overcoming complex life and professional problems of people of all ages who are at any stage of life.¹ The idea of the knowledge-based society has stressed the importance of the access to knowledge as a criterion for the progress of countries, societies and individuals.² People who do not participate in education become threatened by marginalization and social exclusion. Knowledge has also become the capital protected by its holders. Therefore it has often had an influence on social stratification. People who consider the importance of knowledge also understand the key role of life-long education which is the path to the current knowledge. Such knowledge is necessary for the proper management of one's professional career. Life-long education creates opportunities to acquire competencies useful for solving one's both life and professional problems. Although it does not guarantee the success in the future, it makes such a success more probable.

The European Union which aspires to the creation of the knowledge-based society makes considerable efforts for the implementation of life-long education. Poland having a strong tradition of life-long education is one of the leading European countries. However we still face many unresolved problems related to this field of educational activities. The unemployed, particularly the long-term ones are the group of people who may significantly

¹ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w perspektywie globalnej i lokalnej. Między wymogami rynku a indywidualnymi strategiami edukacyjnymi*, Poznań 2004, s. 7.

² B. Wawrzyniak, *Druza transformacja w Polsce. Budowanie gospodarki opartej na wiedzy*, [w:] *Gospodarka oparta na wiedzy. Perspektywy Banku Światowego*, Warszawa 2003, pod red. A. Kuklińskiego, s. 91.

benefit from life-long education. Thanks to returning to the path of education they have an opportunity to verify, change or update their educational experiences. However, it appears that not all of them have such a chance and not all of them notice it. Also not all of them put education as an important point in their life strategies.

Unemployment is a phenomenon which is strictly associated with the economy of capitalism. The subject of unemployment has been widely elaborated mainly because it is one of the most negative consequences of the market economy³. It causes a number of problems for lives of unemployed people, their families and for all societies. Although numerous attempts to solve this problem are made, it is still difficult to find a final solution.

The outlook in this respect is pessimistic because the market economy does not require employing all job seekers. What is more, in the future such demands will be even smaller. However life-long education may promote professional activation of unemployed people thanks to developed good practices and forms of work. This is the only way to mobilize vital and professional activity of people who have chosen passivity as the dominant way of spending their time. The content of their day is idleness, as in the case of the inhabitants of Marienthal – the town which died off because of the unemployment.⁴

Passivity of the long-term unemployed is their characteristic. It can result from their lack of aspirations, resignation, disappointment, bad experiences, laziness or other subjective or objective reasons. Education plays various roles in lives of the long-term unemployed. It depends on the priorities and life orientation they have chosen.

Long-term unemployment and its consequences

Despite the long time we have been changing our economy into a market economy, the remains of the past times still have a heavy influence on Polish social and economic reality. In this case the mentality of the people who grew up in the previous, different from the current, conditions, has a lot of importance. Moreover, such people met different requirements than now. It applies particularly to those cases where the changes do not create different attitudes and activity. It mainly happens in provincial and rural societies. The inheritance of a lack of aspirations, helplessness and dependence on so-

³ J. Rifkin, *Koniec pracy. Schyłek siły roboczej na świecie i początek ery postronkowej*, przeł. E. Kania, Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, Wrocław 2001, s. 280.

⁴ M. Jahoda, P.F. Lazarsfeld, H. Meisel, *Bezrobotni Marienthalu*, przeł. R. Marszałek, Warszawa 2007, s. 141.

cial assistance are the most noticeable in those societies. Such situations are the most common among the long-term unemployed. They often come from environments that do not have any tradition of making efforts to change the current situation. Even if such efforts are sometimes made, they usually fail which finally leads to a deeper frustration and then to a stagnation and passivity.⁵

Unemployment can be analyzed both as a socio-economic phenomenon and as the situation experienced by an individual⁶. The first attitude shows the complexity of the unemployment while the second one shows the individual determinants of unemployment faced by a person.

The period of being out of work makes the situation of unemployed people different in a significant way. "People who have no job for more than one year are different from people "temporarily" unemployed. First, there is a kind of professionalization of the status of unemployed people, i.e. unemployment becomes their way of life. Secondly, activation of the long-term unemployed is much more difficult"⁷. Anyone who has experienced a lack of contact with any professional work for a period longer than one year usually reduces their work competencies so much that it is very unlikely that they will reach full ability to work. Such a process is more probable because professional passivity usually causes one's lack of educational activity. Unfortunately, the longer the period of no contact with work is, the higher is the risk that it will last longer and longer. It may not change for many years leading to the occurrence of various forms of social pathology. Along with extending the period of unemployment, professional skills and motivation become weaker and are dominated by some negative factors which are stronger and stronger. They can be both objective and subjective⁸. Of course, the contribution of each of them is individual, just as their strength and influence.

Long-term unemployment is the most dangerous for a person who experience such a difficult situation that is why it requires some activity from the unemployed themselves and as well as from the society and the State. For years there have been some groups of people who are in danger of becoming unemployed more than the others. They are older people, young

⁵ Z. Wołk, *Całocyciowe poradnictwo zawodowe dla służb zatrudnienia*, Uniwersytet Zielonogórski, Zielona Góra 2010, s. 144.

⁶ D. N. Ashton, *Unemployment Under Capitalism. The Sociology British and American Labour Markets*, Greenwood Press, London 1986, p. 32.

⁷ M. Kabaj, G. Koptas, *Bezrobocie długookresowe. Przyczyny, skutki i środki przeciwdziałania*, Studia i Materiały, Zeszyt 2 (402), Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 1995, p. 23.

⁸ R. Layard, S. Nickell, R. Jackman, *Unemployment: Macroeconomic Performance and the Labour Market*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1991, p. 238.

people, women, residents of villages and small towns, people with low level of education and people who have professions that are not required by the current labor market⁹.

Characteristics of people who experience long-term unemployment

Unemployed people are a social category so they have a common feature which is the lack of work in spite of their will of finding and performing it. The complexity of the social consequences of unemployment is connected with a significant reduction of the social and cultural activity, weaker social contacts among the members of a community and lower interest in social affairs¹⁰. Problems of social passivity pill up along with longer and longer period of unemployment and they mainly relate to the passive approach to education¹¹. Experiencing the lack of work modifies the behaviors of people and their self-esteem, as well as it affects their estimation of their own professional skills. In fact, the unemployed often carry out their individual resourcefulness strategies, which sometimes do not mean looking for a typical job. Such strategies are usually limited to solving some existential problems. However, all those who do not work, regardless of whether it is a consequence of a job loss, or a complete lack of it in one's biography, suffer from vast mental and social consequences.

Life conditions of an unemployed person get worse and worse along with extending the time of unemployment. Experiencing unemployment has its characteristic phases. It starts from the shock as the first reaction to the loss of job. Then the person feels the optimism and hopes to find new opportunities. Finally depression and pessimism appear which are the result of the permanent lack of employment. It is usually followed by the full adaptation to the situation and getting used to it¹².

The consequences of experiencing unemployment are usually very extensive. They commonly leave a long lasting mark on the personality of an

⁹ Rzyżko długotrwałego bezrobocia w Polsce. Diagnoza i metody zapobiegania. Raport z prac badawczo-rozwojowych, pod red. A. Bronk, Z. Wiśniewskiego i M. Wojdyło-Preisner, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej oraz Centrum Rozwoju Zasobów Ludzkich, Warszawa 2014, p. 95.

¹⁰ C.J. Auster, D. Auster, *Factors Influencing Women's Choice of Nontraditional Careers: The Role of Family, Peers and Counselors*, "The Vocational Guidance Quarterly", 1981, no. 29, p. 256.

¹¹ J.M. Jahoda, P.F. Lazarsfeld, H. Meisel, *Bezrobotni Marienthalu*, przeł. R. Marszałek, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2007.

¹² A. Giddens, *Socjologia*, przeł. A. Sulżycka, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 432.

individual. Moreover, it always leaves a gap in the professional biography which has an influence on difficulties in restoring one's status as a professionally active person.

The loss of work is a traumatic experience for most of people. It means it is very highly stressful. The main consequence in micro-economy is worsening of the economic position of the unemployed and their families. It especially reflects on the loss or reduction of the current living standard¹³. Long-lasting reduction or total loss of earnings lead to essential changes in the way of running a household which often means drastic limitations in meeting basic needs¹⁴. The other forms of solving the economic situation of a household or postponing it allow the unemployed and their families to cope ad hoc with existential problems. However, the most often negative consequence for the unemployed is a wrong estimation of their own financial situation followed by lack of taking any activity that could reduce the real problems. As a result, there is no determination in searching for work and even strong resistance to any change of the situation which "in fact isn't so tragic".

In addition to the deterioration of the living standard, sometimes pushing the family into poverty, there are some other serious consequences. The most often of them are reduction in cultural and leisure time activity, reduction in educational aspirations and desires of both an unemployed person and their family members.

It is also connected with changing life plans associated with numerous resignations, reductions in unemployed themselves experience anxiety about the future. They also neglect their health, look pessimistic at the future and have reduced their self-esteem.

There are numerous individual consequences of experiencing the lack of work. They depend on personal characteristics of an unemployed person, their system of values, the time of being out of work, previous professional experience, as well as both the professional and non-professional support. The subjective consequences are the most dangerous. Moreover, they are a source of further problems which lead to the occurrence of syndromes typical for individual situation of the unemployed. They are also important in the perspective of educational activity of the long-term unemployed. The composition of these negative consequences may vary but in each case we can notice some following patterns:

¹³ E. Kwiatkowski, *Bezrobocie. Podstawy teoretyczne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 82-89.

¹⁴ A. Chudzicka-Czupała, *Bezrobocie. Różne oblicza wsparcia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2004, p. 89.

1. Reduction in the level of self-esteem. It is the most severe and widespread response of a person associated with the loss of work or the failure in finding it. As the time of being unemployed becomes longer and longer and because of some following failures the self-esteem gets lower and lower. The situation leads to a loss of faith in one's own abilities. Self-esteem affects the hierarchy of life goals and the convictions that participation in educational activities can fulfill those goals¹⁵.
2. Reduction in social contacts is a consequence of negative evaluation of one's own position as well as one's self-esteem. The unemployed also experience some kind of shame and embarrassment about their situation, fear of compassion from others and sometimes envy of those who have successful professional lives. Education is usually associated with the need to participate in situations when someone who is unemployed may feel worse and even feel at risk of making a fool of themselves.
3. Reduction in cognitive activity is related to one's general passivity. It turns out that every activity of a person is reduced along with the lack of professional activity. The curiosity about the world essential for taking any activity is significantly reduced. The unemployed are focused on current existential affairs. The group of the long-term unemployed is dominated by people who are less educated and who have slight and usually negative educational experience. They have a strong belief in the uselessness of their participation in any educational activity.
4. Passivity and apathy resulting from the lack of faith in any possibilities of improving one's situation. The unemployed feel reluctance to work or make any efforts. There are behaviors such as resistance when the offers of any activation appear from the outside world. It leads to one's lack of commitment, becoming socially excluded and self-marginalized¹⁶. Education is not attractive because it requires a person's own commitment and efforts. At the same time it does not guarantee success on the labor market. Educational passivity is reinforced by negative experiences from earlier times and quite common negative opinions on the educational offer for the unemployed.
5. The experience acquired during an individual's life biography has an influence on the future, on the ways a person solves their problems that may appear through their lives. It sometimes determines making later decisions. It happens that such an experience decides about a person's system of values and causes the verification of the life plans. Negative

¹⁵ A. Strużyna, *Utrata pracy – jej znaczenie dla wyboru drogi edukacyjnej*, [w] „Edukacja Dorosłych”, Drogi edukacyjne i ich biograficzny wymiar, pod red. E. Dubas i O. Czerniawskiej, tom 27, Warszawa 2002, p. 212.

¹⁶ Z. Wołk, *Osoba długotrwale bezrobotna jako klient oporujący*, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej. Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 2009, p. 32-33.

experiences create some kind of resistance and reluctance to become active while positive ones help in making challenges. Work experience can be analyzed and interpreted from various perspectives which proves its complexity as a factor stimulating both professional and individual development. There is an opinion that professional development is in 70% determined by the experience while in 20% by the information and guidance and only in 10% by training. "The nature of the work experience involves not only professional but also other aspects of life not connected with one's professional career"¹⁷. The experience of the unemployed refers to their previous professional experience gained from their work, experiences in searching for a job as well as experiences while they were unemployed. They are all of major importance for an unemployed person's approach to work counseling.

6. Failures are "assigned" to the unemployed. The loss of work and its lack are the hallmarks of failure. Lack of success in school, irrelevant choices related to the chosen educational paths, inefficiency in searching for a job - are another failures. The unemployed often experience failure in their private lives. Defeats can sometimes inspire a significant effort, but more often a set of failures creates resistance to making any efforts. People then feel lack of faith in their own strength and capabilities.
7. Deficiencies in education. Their importance is very significant. The higher is the level of education, the greater are the possibilities of movement between different areas of professional activity. The level of competences is connected with the level of education. General dispositions which make an individual more active get wider while the level of education is higher. Today it has become quite noticeable. Preparation to work becomes, in fact, less and less preparation to performing a particular profession but more often it means acquiring personal qualities making it possible to undertake any specific professional tasks. It should happen after a short training and preparation for a particular job position in a particular workplace. Educated people have a greater willingness to participate at various forms of training.

Lack of work leads to the demotion of the personal characteristics of unemployed people. It also has a series of negative effects on professional competences of a person. The longer a worker remains without contact with their work, the lower is their professional usefulness and the possibility of obtaining a job. An employee's features which can be reduced while being unemployed include: professional competence, professional experience,

¹⁷ M. Suchar, *Kariera i rozwój zawodowy*, Ośrodek Doradztwa i Doskonalenia Kadr, Sp. z o.o., Gdańsk 2003, p. 16.

updated qualifications, vocational stabilization, proficiency in performing one's work, team work, collaboration, sense of responsibility, self control, courage in decision making, professional creativity, innovation. All of them can be maintained and developed through participation in various forms of education. However, educational activity is usually blocked by lack of motivation and readiness to take any efforts.

Long-term unemployment creates a "spiral of decline"¹⁸. It is a set of negative events and conditions which follow each other. They stimulate and strengthen each other making it very difficult for an individual to escape from the unemployment.

"The situation of unemployment creates certain kinds of feelings: sadness, dissatisfaction, rebellion, social injustice, marginalization, etc. Those feelings may encourage the unemployed to looking for a job more actively and support activation. As time goes by, atrophy (loss) of those feelings can be observed. Social atrophy does not block completely, the possibility of activation, but it significantly reduces and hinders it. That is why we should strive to prevention of long-term unemployment, especially when it lasts longer than 24 months. Then the scale of difficulty to become active gets higher and higher¹⁹. Activation of the long-term unemployed is complicated and requires a lot of effort. A broad spectrum of issues concerning the long-term unemployed creates various forms of resistance directed against changing the current situation and against making any efforts to do such a change. It also applies to education, which is stigmatized as a form of assistance. This way, the unemployed become opponents of education.

However, there are also occasions when being out of work is a consequence of an unemployed person's decision and is the result of their preferences. It usually happens accidentally but it may also be associated with performing one's own model of biography. Then such a person refuses to be employed and does not want to accept any forms of assistance.

Educational activity in the life strategies of the long-term unemployed

The activity of an unemployed person is connected with their personal involvement in solving their professional problems. The activity can be placed on the scale from full determination to passivity. While an unemployed person is not active they do not take any educational activity. But while such

¹⁸ *Zwalczanie długotrwałego bezrobocia w Europie*, [b.d.a], Fundacja im. Friedricha Eberta, Warszawa 1992, p. 16.

¹⁹ M. Kabaj, *Strategie i programy przeciwdziałania bezrobociu w Unii Europejskiej i w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe „Scholar”, Warszawa 2004, p. 171.

a person is very active we can notice their taking attempts to seek ways of resolving the problem. Then any assistance is focused on relevance of the choices made. Individuals' own activity results, to some extent, from the interest in work. People who are long-term unemployed are usually very little interested in work. It happens due to a process of weakening of motivation as well as growing resistance. Extension of the period of being unemployed and taking another attempts to find a job, which are usually a failure, lead to resignation, withdrawal and weaker interest in work and everything that is connected with it. As a result there is a kind of resistance which can also become the cause of giving up one's interest in work as well as in conditions and circumstances of taking it. These phenomena reinforce and boost each other. People who are long-term unemployed carry out their own life strategies which are the directions for their activity and choices. They depend on a person's locus of control – whether it is internal or external²⁰ and how their plans of lives are carried out.

The following typology is an attempt to sort and show some life strategies common for long-term unemployed people:

1. Orientation on oneself. Unemployed people are focused on themselves. This strategy is characterized by focusing attention on searching for opportunities for personal fulfillment in life and at work. The problem of work and profession is perceived through self satisfaction and an individual's own comfort. A person following this strategy is often interested in the opportunities of their professional development while planning the professional future. Such a person isn't sometimes interested in tasks related to a particular job and the requirements of the employer. This strategy is represented by more educated people who take into account the significant role of education in achieving their objectives. Those people are willing to engage in educational activities and even pay some costs because they agree with the fact that education is essential in the process of getting a satisfactory job. Besides, they usually have some achievements that they can base on.
2. Orientation on professional work. Unemployed people are focused on professional work. A person realizing it is interested in knowledge concerning the work and its particular elements, activities. Professional satisfaction is connected with quality of work. For that reason such a person is eager to obtain information about working conditions, possibilities of their own professional development. Personal well-being is associated with professional success, that is why the un-

²⁰ M.L. Kohn, C. Schooler, *Praca a osobowość. Studium współzależności*, przeł. B.W. Mach, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1986.

employed person is interested in details of the possible job. Such a person is usually a professional though this is not always the type of workaholic. In every case, work for this type of strategy is an important part of life.

3. Orientation on private life. Unemployed people are focused on their own affairs which are private and not connected with professional work. Work and potential professional obligations are treated instrumentally. For this type of person work is only a way of improving the economic standard. It is not connected with a permanent job and profession. Such a person looks for their self-realization in other areas of activity. Work is not their passion. Unemployment for people in this group is not a tragedy, but sometimes it is even a desirable solution. Additionally, social benefits make such people disincentive, stop them from any professional activity and even contribute to the creation of resistance to any change into the state of undesirable need for employment.
4. Orientation on surviving. This strategy is characterized by resignation and passivity. The aspirations are limited to satisfying basic current needs primarily with the help of social assistance. Such help is not an alternative to an independent looking for a job but it is only used to fulfill current needs of the household. People in this group are usually passive, they avoid daily tasks even those which used to be done while working. They also do not take any action to obtain a job. They do not take care for their own personal development which also applies to any educational efforts. The health of such a person and their family members is out of any activity. They have plenty of time which is not arranged. The lack of permanent job and poverty is compensated with using drugs and alcohol. The professional competences and skills are significantly reduced.

The longer a person is unemployed the more clearly we can observe changes in their life strategies. In the initial period of being unemployed two first strategies mentioned above are dominative. But when the period of being unemployed is longer a person usually goes to the next two strategies. The strategy of "surviving" is sometimes an initial strategy though it is more common after longer time of being unemployed. The people who follow this strategy present the highest level of resistance to any change of their status and their position as an unemployed person, which paradoxically seems to them to be the most comfortable and safest. Such people also present the highest level of resistance to any form of education because they are no longer used to it so they cut it off from their activities. Their families also present such an attitude which often results in poor education of their children.

Summary

In our social reality we meet unique people and their individual biographies. It also applies to the unemployed who although have to face the same problem of lack of work, they find various solutions regarding their further life paths. Education included in their life strategies may bring extensive benefits – social and cognitive activity and verification of their self-esteem. It can also support social integration and, above all, the acquisition of some competencies being helpful in getting out of the unemployment. The strategies which were mentioned above are different because of the attitude towards work and one's own life. The strategy which may be bothering is the one "to survive". It makes the passivity to be deeper and leads to dependence on social support. Such people begin to treat themselves like objects. This is the consequence of giving up aspirations and identifying with the role of someone who doesn't mind any job. Unfortunately "life out of work" for such people does not mean a vast but a very narrow, reduced to existence field of activity.

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Career Counselling in the Polish Education System: Evolution of Theoretical Assumptions and Organizational Solutions

Career counselling is perceived as one of important tools to support educational and professional decisions. It is also often indicated as an element of the system of appropriate allocation of graduates in the labour market. It can be assumed that this perspective is becoming more significant and popular. In both journalist texts and expert reports, the significance of adjusting an educational offer to needs and dynamics of changes in the labour market is emphasised. Underlying this thinking is conviction that one of important school tasks is such a preparation of graduates that their competence corresponds to needs and expectations of employers. In terms of such a key point of view, the aim of career counselling in schools is to allocate graduates to schools of higher education and to prepare them to efficient functioning in situations related to the search for work. Such an understanding of a role and position of career counselling in the education system is common. However, in terms of a pedagogical point of view, it should be considered as too narrow.

The objective of this article is to analyse trends of changes in perceiving the role of career counselling in the education system and solutions in this respect. Trends of changes in thinking about career counselling in the Polish education system will be presented in terms of several selected perspectives. First, reforms in education law will be referred to and then, the most important changes in organizational solutions, aims of career and educational counselling, educational content selection and the role of a career counsellor in the system will be presented.

Changes in education law seem to be crucial. The last reform of April 30, 2013¹ is oriented at incorporating counselling content and activities into the

¹ The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of April 30, 2013 on the Principles of Providing and Organizing Psychological and Guidance Help in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Institutions (Journal of Laws from 2013, item 532)

educational and teaching programme conducted in schools. This is a considerable change which also generates many practical changes. For many years, career counselling was perceived in the Polish education system as an additional expert service. Currently, legislators try to integrate counselling objectives with other objectives realized in school. Underlying this reform is conviction that well-conducted counselling is a process, and not an action, and a student should have constant and regular access to counselling support throughout school education.

Changes in law stimulate organizational changes. Career counselling has been always considered as an element of the educational offer. Nevertheless, there have been various proposals in this respect. After analysing organizational solutions concerning counselling support for a Polish student, three fundamental stages can be indicated. The first one is a period when career counselling is conducted in psychological and pedagogical services. Within the activities of these institutions, career counselling is mainly understood as diagnosing professional predisposition and interests. This offer was not available or addressed to all students. Counselling was conducted for those students who requested it. It was mainly individual counselling. The second stage was to introduce career counselling to schools. This change stemmed from assumptions of the school system in Poland. In 1999, a new type of school was introduced, namely a junior secondary school. This stage of education is a period of making decisions whether a student learns a trade or continues general education. It is a stage when career counselling plays a significant part. Thus, it was suggested that counselling tasks were no longer carried out in special services, but at school. It was a new task for schools. In order to carry it out, two organizational solutions were most often selected. The first one was the School Career Centres. They were places where a student could get individual consultations or advice as well as use professional informational material. A career counsellor employed in the School Career Centres also conducted group classes for all students of a given school. There were most often centres funded from grants and, unfortunately, after the period of funding they often ceased to function. The second solution was to employ a career counsellor in school or to propose that one of school employees acquires new qualifications in career counselling. Such a solution increased availability of counselling services, however, it also had weaknesses. The most important one was the lack of idea how career counselling should be incorporated into the educational offer for all students. It can be claimed that very often at this stage, career counselling was an attempt to transfer activities carried out in services to schools. Since school employees did not always have sufficient competence, counselling was not conducted truly professionally. Thus, at that time, the interest in

postgraduate studies giving qualifications in career counselling increased. The aforementioned Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 2013 introduced new solutions into the discussed issue. Above all, counselling began to have educational and career qualities. Fundamental tasks were assigned to a class tutor. A career counsellor, a psychologist and school guidance counsellor were to help, counsel and consult. It was a significant change. The legislators made an assumption that class tutors know their students best and that is they who should be in constant and regular contact with them. They can organize, conduct and monitor the process of educational and professional career planning in a broad sense. They are most likely to notice possible students' problems or shortcomings and support them in their development. If they observe such a need, they can refer a student to a specialist who will give support oriented at student's individual and specific needs. A drawback of this solution is that the quality of career counselling carried out for a given group mainly depends on competence and commitment of teachers as well as solutions adopted in a school.

Every school draws up its own programme of educational and career counselling. It should involve aims of counselling activities and organizational solutions. Individual schools adopt different solutions. The issues addressed in a secondary junior school can be divided into three groups: self-knowledge, knowledge of occupations and the labour market, and the decision-making process. These issues are realized linearly or modularly. In terms of a linear system, during first year, there are topics connected with self-knowledge, second-year students discuss occupations and the labour market and during third year, the focus is on work with a student on making decisions. Such a solution, however, has its limitations. It does not take account of dynamics of student development in the period of adolescence. The modular system seems to be more beneficial as it involves discussing these three issues at all levels of education. In the next years, these issues are extended and supplemented. In vocational schools, however, the issue-oriented system of content is more useful. From a wide range of topics, a teacher chooses ones that, in his opinion, are the most relevant to a profession or industry students want to work in. These topics concern such issues as: types of professional careers, student's individual resources, proactive attitudes towards the educational and professional future, planning and decision-making, competence and qualifications, self-presentation, application documents, job interview, prevention of migration failures, work ethics, networking, labour law, self-employment, enterprise and team work.² It is

² M. Rosalska, A. Wawrzonek, *Między szkołą a rynkiem pracy. Doradztwo zawodowe w szkołach zawodowych [Between School and the Labour Market. Career Counselling in Vocational Schools]*, Warsaw 2012, p. 47-49.

important since schools have an influence on which programme they want to conduct and how. There is no one universal programme for all schools at a given educational level.

Changes in organization of educational and career counselling in schools are also determined by evolution in defining fundamental counselling objectives carried out in the education system. From traditional perspective, career counselling was perceived as an activity which was to help a student to choose a profession in accordance with his professional predisposition and interests. Activities in psychological and guidance services were oriented at such goals. The choice of a profession or school was treated as a single action. Currently, such thinking about counselling is definitely too limited and insufficient. At present, educational and career counselling conducted in Polish schools is considered as a help to students in finding their way in a broad educational and professional offer. It definitely expands prospects of formulating counselling objectives.

Goals connected with educational and career counselling in schools can be analysed in terms of three aspects: education, student's situational problems and the labour market expectations.³ The educational aspect is related to activities aimed at development and enhancement of student's resources which can be assumed to determine educational and professional success in a broad sense. Therefore, typical tasks connected with educational and career counselling are formulated for each educational level. The educational aspect focuses mainly on tasks resulting from dynamics of development in a broad sense. It is assumed that at a given educational level students should solve tasks common to them.

However, it happens that a counsellor works with students on solving untypical problems stemming from their specific situation. There can be problems arising from the background they live in, being a consequence of random incidents or resulting from their specific resources, shortcomings or experience. This constitutes the second aspect of counselling goals, that is situational problems. Situational problems which a career counsellor may face when working in the education system can be categorized into several groups. The first group includes problems arising from a student's situation at home. They most often concern two issues. The first constitutes too high or too low parents' aspiration. The second broad topic is the financial situation. The financial capability of a family is very often a decisive factor in the process of making decisions about a further educational path. Additionally, life background is also important. This aspect is especially essential in edu-

³ M. Rosalska, *Perspektywy projektowania celów doradztwa zawodowego w systemie edukacyjnym* [Perspectives in creating objectives of career counselling in the educational system], *Studia Edukacyjne* nr 24/2013.

ationally marginalized backgrounds where the network of schools and educational institutions is very poor and access to them is limited. This generates such an attitude towards educational choices where students should select from an offer available locally and not search for offers relevant to their plans, goals and aspiration. The second group concerns school. These issues are most often connected with school failures. Special counselling support is required in the event of a failed *matura* exam, a failed exam confirming professional qualifications or poor results of the junior secondary school exam. Then, a counsellor should activate thinking in terms of development options and possibilities. Problems resulting from individual constraints may also arise from the health condition. There is a group of students with special educational needs in every school. For them, there is tailor-made counselling which is adequate to their actual capabilities. The last group includes problems related to functioning on the labour market. In this respect, a counsellor can help with the process of searching for a traineeship and preparing application documents.

The third aspect of formulating goals in educational and career counselling involves challenges of the modern labour market. They are one of the most crucial points of reference to devising counselling goals. They enable determining ways of working with students in order to increase their chances of being employed. This perspective is very common as it enables applying verifiable effectiveness rates of counselling services. As part of it, it is assumed that the desired effect of counselling in the education system is adequate allocation of graduates in the labour market or at the next level of formal education. An important goal is also to improve planning skills and proactive attitudes towards one's own professional future. It means that school career counselling should be devised in such a way that it promotes, to a considerable degree, thinking in terms of employability.⁴ Working with students from this point of view, their attitudes towards the professional future can be developed concentrating on responsible work on such qualities, competence, qualifications and skills which are perceived in the labour market as essential, useful or, even sometimes, necessary.

A vital issue related to the aspect of the labour market is to develop self-reflection when building one's own professional capital. It is a category integrating resources of human, social and decisional capital.⁵ The authors of

⁴ A. Bańka, *Kapitał kariery – uwarunkowania, rozwój i adaptacja do zmian organizacyjnych oraz strukturalnych rynku pracy* [Career Capital – Factors, Development and Adaptation to Organizational and Structural Changes of the Labour Market], in: *Współczesna psychologia pracy i organizacji* [Modern Industrial and Organizational Psychology], Z. Ratajczak, A. Bańka, E. Turska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2006, p. 74.

⁵ A. Hargreaves, M. Fullan, *Professional Capital. Transforming Teaching in Every School*, Teachers College Press, New York 2012, p. 88.

this concept, Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan indicate the necessity of highlighting the difference in interpreting the concept of human capital in economics and education. While in terms of economics it is seen as "economically valuable knowledge and skills that could be developed in people - especially through education and training"⁶, in terms of teaching, human capital refers more to knowledge and skills which enable participating, contributing and learning. These are abilities related to the future in such a manner that they enable optimally using opportunities which are present here and now. It is a very important reason to set counselling goals. At early stages of education, a student should have an opportunity to experience situations connected with analysing, arguing, comparing and ascribing meanings. These are skills that allow taking decisions based on well-thought-out reasons at different stages of not only a professional career, but also life. Apart from human and social capital, the quoted authors also present the third element of professional capital, that is decisional capital. It is defined as "the ability to make discretionary judgements"⁷. The capital, understood in such a way, is related to such categories as inner-containment, proactivity, self-reflection and independent thinking. Decisional capital refers to both thinking and acting. It enables becoming independent from group thinking and the way of interpreting the world imposed by the media, social groups and even school. It makes it possible to take decisions aimed at achieving individual goals and values and assess one's own real resources and capabilities in terms of planned intentions. It enables becoming independent from school rankings, forecasts concerning surplus and deficit professions and other forecast related to the labour market. This data is still taken into consideration but as one of many premises influencing developing individual biographies.

Summing up the topic of career counselling objectives, it should be emphasised that they mainly arise from social and economic changes happening in Poland. This mindset is also related to the need to connect adequately education with requirements of the Polish and European labour market and promote vocational education.⁸ A difficult situation of graduates and a high rate of labour migration among the young Poles increase the necessity of such organization of counselling support that it can become one of basic mechanism for preventing educational failures, failures in the labour market, migration failures and, in a long term, social exclusion. A crucial factor

⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷ Ibid., p. 93.

⁸ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Nowe trendy w teoriach rozwoju karier – implikacje dla poradnictwa kariery* [New Trends in Career Development Theories – Implications for Career Counselling], *Studia Edukacyjne* no 35/2015.

of change is also a reform of vocational education.⁹ Making paths of vocational education more flexible and isolating qualifications of a given profession require new competence in developing individual professional careers. In addition to knowledge of a new vocational education system, students should also develop in school skills connected with searching for information and competence in creating their individual solutions. It also means the need for building an attitude of accepting the idea of lifelong learning. At the stage of formal education, students should already become aware of the necessity of constant development, including professional development.

Thinking about the labour market and the professional future may evoke various emotions. The way of perceiving one's own capabilities and resources in terms of professional challenges also determines attitudes and motivates or discourages from acting. Conviction concerning a career and processes happening in the labour market is moulded by parents as well as in the course of school socialization. The fundamental role in this process is played by class tutors and teachers. Thus, preparing teachers for conducting tasks of educational and career counselling seems to be especially essential. It is the last issue which should be highlighted when analysing trends of changes in perceiving the role of educational and career counselling in the Polish education system. As it was already emphasized, perceiving the role and tasks of a counsellor has evolved from attributing them expert and diagnostic tasks into interpreting their role as a facilitator of the process of thinking about developing individual educational and professional paths. In the currently proposed solutions, it is a teacher and a class tutor who play the most significant role in the process of designing careers. Teachers as counsellors stop to be experts and specialists. They become people who accompany, support and inspire. They do not give simple solutions and final decisions. A class tutor as a person who knows their students and their needs, aspiration or dreams, but also real capabilities, can individualize counselling influence in terms of particular biographies of people they work with. Having the best interests of a student in mind, they can use all available support resources and sources during the counselling process. A class tutor is also a facilitator who makes searching for information, taking decisions and challenges, and confronting aspiration with capabilities easier. Their crucial task is also to reduce the level of fear of new challenges as well as arrange and organize various situations which support students' development and facilitate taking decisions about their educational and professional future.

⁹ The Regulation of the Minister of the National Education of December 23, 2011 on Classification of Occupations (Journal of Laws from January 3, 2012, item 7).

The significance of hard, expert counselling competence of teachers should be also emphasised. It is vital that they have valid and correct knowledge of counselling methodology and diagnostics, the labour market, application procedures, unemployment and the methods of searching for information. If teachers are to help students to understand dynamics of the labour market and factors determining a career, they have to present an appropriate level of knowledge themselves. It is a great challenge for teachers. Educational and career counselling is one of elements of the teaching programme conducted in schools. It should be taken into account that class tutors as teachers of subjects most often do not have professional qualifications in designing careers. They can acquire competence in this respect on courses, training and workshop. Nevertheless, it is the head teacher who decides to what extent they will enable their employees to supplement these skills. It is essential since there is a risk in counselling that insufficiently prepared teachers will present their own beliefs as facts and mould inadequate attitude towards issues concerning developing careers. A class tutor as an interpreter should rather help to distinguish between important and less important information as well as show how to find oneself among the mass of information.

The idea to incorporate counselling into the teaching process seems to be very positive. However, Polish schools are at the beginning of implementing such a solution. It already becomes noticeable which issues will determine success of these theoretical assumptions. The greatest challenge is to prepare teachers to conduct educational and career counselling, enhance their competence and motivate them to undertake new activities. The next task is to devise methodological material, find supporters and build educational partnerships which will support achieving these goals. To sum up the deliberations, two main changes in thinking about the role of educational and career counselling in the education system can be observed. The first change concerns transition from perceiving counselling in a limited way, in terms a feature and factor, to thinking about the whole process of developing educational and professional careers. Simultaneously, it is transition from considering counselling as a one-time expert service, to seeing it as an integral part of the comprehensive teaching process. The second change concerns transition from thinking in terms of prevention of unemployment and failures in the labour market to creating proactive attitudes and developing students' individual and social resources in such a manner that they can plan and take conscious and rational decisions. Such an approach gives an opportunity to enhance transferable skills as well as to develop awareness that designing both professional and educational careers is a lifelong process.

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**JOB MARKET REQUIREMENTS
VERSUS EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY**

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Labour market – a challenge for extracurricular vocational education

Introduction

The fact that education, especially vocational both in the school form as well as extracurricular, and economy exist in a mutually coupled form raises no doubts today. It is difficult to imagine the functioning of economy of a given country or individual organizations without appropriately high qualifications and competencies of employees. Particularly prominent is the relation *labour market – extracurricular vocational education*. This question is extensive and includes a number of issues relating to, among others, adapting the qualifications to the needs of the labour market, keeping up with the changes, fighting unemployment, fighting against marginalization and exclusion. Discussing all of these issues is not possible because of a limited volume of this paper, so I shall focus primarily on the issues relating to the first two areas.

The segmentation of the labour market

The first problem that requires further reflection and a wider discussion is to clearly define which labour market needs should primarily be taken into account in the process of extracurricular vocational education.

The globalization processes, economic and social transformations, visible chaos of professional pathways and careers resulted in a situation where it is rather necessary now to talk about many labour markets. These changes are part of the established in the 60s of the twentieth century *theory of labour*

market segmentation, within which *the concepts of dual labour market*¹ were born. Labour market segmentation divided the market in many planes and areas. Among a number of criteria for this division one may point out the geographic criterion, demographic, psycho-social or economic. In addition, the specificity of modern economy forces such strategies that affect the shape of the labour market. Modern organizational structures of companies cause the education obtained in youth not to be enough in order to be qualified a dozen or so years later. Therefore, one of the major problems is the fact that "individuals are less and less tied to one profession and one place; they become modern nomads whose life accomplishments depend on their ability to adapt to ever new conditions, in which they inevitably find themselves from time to time."² In addition, the specificity of the labour market associated with new technologies and globalizing economy causes progressive polarization of jobs. Two non-overlapping groups of jobs get created. The first group includes jobs that require extensive knowledge, skills and specific competencies. Workers in this group are very well-educated people, experts in their fields, innovative, creative and desirable on the labour market. In the second group there are workers who are not required to be highly skilled because their work is simple and reproducible, where discipline is mostly appreciated. "In this way a phenomenon of work duality appears, which is the result of demand polarization of 'high' and 'low' skills, while a decrease of the required level of 'low' skills occurs as a result of implementation of the work results of these 'high' skills³. As a consequence, the labour market can be divided into two main segments: the *primary market* and the *secondary market*.

Within the first there is the so-called higher labour market, where jobs requiring employees to have higher education, attractive jobs for professionals and people with high qualifications are offered. Among the features of this segment one can mention work stability, the possibility to enforce employees' rights, professional advancement and skills improvement opportunities, as well as requirements for employees. These jobs offer high income, prestige, recognition and respect in society.

The second segment, the so-called lower labour market, offers unattractive jobs, where those with lower education find employment. The secondary market is the market of poorly paid work that does not require a solid

¹ The first mention of the concept of segmentation can be found in the work of Stuart Mill and John Eliot Cairnes. The evolution of segmentation theory is discussed in detail by E. Kryńska, *Labour market segmentation. Theoretical basis and statistical analysis*, Łódź 1996.

² J. Szacki, *History of sociological thought*, Warsaw 2006, p. 917.

³ K.B. Matusiak, J. Kuciński, A. Gryzik (ed.), *Foresight of personnel in modern economy*, Warsaw 2009, pp.

preparation, often performed in difficult conditions. In addition, there appear trends on the labour market which indicate not only the dehumanization of relations between employers and employees, but also within groups of employees, and the phenomenon of employing workers below their professional qualifications. The secondary market is characterized by high fluctuations; workplaces are often liquidated by employers or are abandoned by the workers themselves.

The intensity of these phenomena is strongly determined by changes in the management structure. "Today, the labour market duality becomes a reality perceived by analysts and market participants. The labour market has to adapt to the knowledge-based economy, in which the highest value of the company are educated, innovative, creative employees. In the theory of dual labour market these are employees of the primary market, well-educated and sure of their value. In spite of this, they improve their education more often than others."⁴

In the context of dual labour market considerations regarding the flexibility of the market are carried out. In Poland the flexibility is considered as a remedy for high unemployment and labour market problems arising from the cyclical nature of economic trends⁵. Expectations towards the flexibility of the primary market employees concern mainly the essence of work: the need to continually search for new areas of knowledge, going beyond the accepted framework. Therefore, they have to flexibly use all available resources of knowledge and even create new disciplines, which at the time respond to the needs of reality. (...) Flexibility is also required from employees of the secondary market. However, in this case it means the use of flexible forms of employment and work organization, but in a unilateral way – by the employer. The purpose of using non-standard forms of contract is mainly to decrease labour costs. In this respect, flexibility relates only to the demand for work⁶. Thus, the flexibility of the secondary labour market employees consists in a continuous fluidity and instability. Employees during their professional life will change their jobs many times and often it will mean not only the necessity to change the workplace but also profession. This results in the need for lifelong learning. In contrast to the primary market employees interdisciplinary knowledge is not required. Training of the secondary market employees is limited mainly to shaping the ability to adapt to constantly changing working conditions, mobility, as well as coping with stress and uncertainty. Experts of the labour market emphasize in fact

⁴ *Foresight of personnel...*, op. cit., p. 59.

⁵ M. Boni, M. Góra, K. Frieske (ed.), *Flexible labour market in Poland. How to meet this challenge?* Warsaw 2004, Issue 73/2004.

⁶ *Foresight ...*, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

that employees of the secondary market will not only be forced to frequent changes in employment but also to adapt to the situation of unemployment⁷.

Therefore, it must be held that both the primary market employees and the secondary ones will have to attend education regularly. Extracurricular education is not to be underestimated here. Short monothematic forms are an essential way to keep up with changing professional requirements. In case of the primary market it is necessary, first of all, in order to maintain the professional position. For individuals employed in the secondary market it is worth implementing training programs for employees who want to move into more specialized and prestigious professions. Employers should also be encouraged to create career paths, as A. Giddens puts it, from 'BigMac' tasks to other professions, so that they create opportunities for more stable and valued workplaces for people working in these professions.⁸

Writing about labour markets one cannot forget about the phenomenon that is visible in all areas of our lives, namely the *change*. It is currently one of the most often used terms which attempts to describe, characterise, analyse, or explain a number of phenomena taking place in the modern world. Relating this concept to changes in the labour market and the need to keep up with them the special role of extracurricular vocational education in the process should be noted.

Writing about the changes in the area of labour market one can refer to Z. Bauman, who uses the terms "liquid life" and "liquid modernity". In his view, the society of "liquid modernity" is a society in which the operating conditions are changed before the modes of action manage to solidify in the ordinary and routine formulas.⁹ This is particularly visible in professional work. To keep pace with these changes extracurricular education seems to be indispensable.

Extracurricular education as a way to keep up with the requirements of the labour market

A way to keep up with the changes in professional work is the participation of establishments in the education of employees. One should talk about the educational role of workplaces. It can be assumed that the optimum model of a workplace in the time of changes is a *learning organization*. Since the emergence of the concept of a learning organization, workplaces have become learning and teaching environments, basic educational envi-

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ A. Giddens, *Europe in the global era*, Warsaw 2009, p. 112.

⁹ Z. Bauman, *Liquid life*, Kraków 2007, p. 5.

ronments for adults because they offer education developing not only professional qualifications but also social competencies of employees. Education according to E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik¹⁰ becomes the driving force of many activities in the workplace, providing largely for the individual capacity to stay on the market as well as the competitiveness and innovativeness of the company. Therefore, being aware of the need to develop workplaces in the direction of a learning organization, one needs to express concerns whether, and if so, when Polish workplaces will become learning organizations? These concerns were also confirmed in research by R. Tomaszewska-Lipiec¹¹ conducted in workplaces in Bydgoszcz, which shows that education implemented in the workplace to a limited extent takes account of the concept of a learning organization. The role of extracurricular vocational education in the development of workplaces towards this particular organization is not to be underestimated.

In the workplace as a learning organization it is the employees who will play a key role in its development. As Ch. Handy explains: "The twilight of production with a high degree of workload meant that on the market there appeared organizations which derive added value from the knowledge and creative potential and not from muscle strength."¹² Therefore, the main source of wealth of the current civilization is undoubtedly knowledge that resides in people. We speak about human capital as a resource number one of the economy and a key element and the future organization. Assuming that human capital is formed by continuous investment it can be stated that its acquisition, enrichment, updating, has become today not only a privilege, but a necessity. In this regard extracurricular education should prove invaluable.

Education of employees, referred to as human resources, is extremely important from the point of view of both an organization as well as an individual. In a nutshell, progress and development of employees' aims, on the one hand, at the success of an organization, on the other hand, it allows the realization of their own ambitions and abilities. To quote M. Armstrong improvement of human resources can provide the following benefits:

- It signals to employees that the company treats them seriously;
- Motivates employees – through additional salary – to deepen their knowledge and use new skills;

¹⁰ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Adult education in a changing reality – between modernity and postmodernism*, [in:] "Chowanna" *Between the past and the future of adult education*, ed. A. Stopińska-Pająk, vol. 2 (25), Katowice 2005, p. 59.

¹¹ R. Tomaszewska-Lipiec, *Education in the workplace in the perspective of the learning organization*, Bydgoszcz 2012.

¹² Ch. Handy, *The age of unreason*, Warsaw 1998, p. 41.

- Increases the commitment and dedication of employees as during the training they are presented with values pursued by the organization;
- Enhances the identification with the workplace;
- Improves communication with the personnel;
- It contributes to a fuller realization of human needs and desires – to select an employee to participate in a course is to appreciate his good work;
- Enriches the work – training and all forms of professional development give people the opportunity to make more and more demanding challenges;
- It helps to understand why the changes are necessary, helps people to cope with new situations¹³.

Among the many parameters which guarantee the effectiveness of employees' development the following seem necessary:

- Keeping the principle of regularity and planning in the approach to training;
- Maintaining the principle of continuous development;
- Creating and maintaining the principle of a 'learning organization';
- Maintaining the principle of efficiency of development and training;
- Taking into account employees in development and the course of their careers¹⁴.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized once again that an organization in the global knowledge-based economy can remain on the market only through adaptation and development of its activities in conjunction with knowledge and therefore also education, mainly extracurricular, of employees.

The processes of changes in the economy should be considered multi-dimensionally. It is mainly about the layer of changes at the structural level, organizational and managerial, level of financial transformations or personal level. In each of these layers there is a continual evaluation process, with which new needs and requirements appear. Hence, it can be concluded that extracurricular education can be attributed a number of functions, the implementation of which will allow its participants to fit the changing reality more efficiently and less painfully. This can indicate the following functions:

- adaptive – which allows one to understand the nature of reality and changes occurring in it and to function in a changing environment more efficiently and more consciously,

¹³ M. Armstrong, *Human Resource Management. Strategies and actions*, Kraków 1996, p. 187.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 188.

- compensating-educational – which allows one to improve in knowledge and professional and social skills,
- improving – which allows for the development of higher levels of ability-cognitive sphere and thus opens up new perspectives and possibilities,
- general development – which allows one to move to higher levels of consciousness, perception of the essence of universal human problems.

It is worth adding at this point that in today's economy it is difficult to discern a single, universally applicable paradigm of development. It is rather characterized by *multipath*. Hence, it is not realistic to anticipate what kind of knowledge, skills, and qualifications will be useful, even in the near future. Therefore, extracurricular education should be sensitive to any impulses not only from the labour market and economic community but also from the field of social life.

Considering extracurricular vocational education in the context of the needs of the labour market it is worth mentioning that employers are aware that the employee will need education in terms of the so-called 'hard competencies' needed for the job. Regardless of the type of position held interpersonal skills and self-organizing competencies also count very much. However, they are more difficult to master and require more time. The authors of the report *Future work skills 2020*¹⁵ identified six fields – drivers of change that will have the greatest impact on the shape of the labour market: increasing life expectancy; increasing use of machines performing repetitive routine tasks; the world going towards a system that can be programmed; environment of new media of communication; growing importance of large structured organizations and progressive globalization. On this basis they also identified ten most sought after competencies that employees need in order to find themselves on the labour market in the future. These include:

1. The ability to extract hidden meanings, deeper meaning – this ability will gain in value when simple repetitive processes can be performed by machines.
2. Social intelligence – the ability to communicate with others on an emotional level.
3. Narrative thinking and adaptability – the ability to think and find solutions that are not subject to strict, specific rules; response to unusual situations or creating something that requires creativity, which machines cannot do.

¹⁵ See A. Davies, D. Fidler, M. Gorbis, *Future Work Skills 2020*, Institute for the Future for University of Phoenix Research Institute, Phoenix 2011, http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/front/docs/sponsored/phoenix/future_work_skills_2020.pdf.

4. Multicultural competencies – the ability to operate in different environments, enabling employees of tomorrow to cooperate with persons significantly different from them.
5. Analytical thinking – the ability to join large amounts of data into abstract concepts and understanding of evidence based on data. Employees knowledgeable about statistical or quantitative analysis will be sought after as the number of available data continues to grow.
6. Proficiency in the use of new media – the ability to understand and read not only paper texts but also various forms of video or images information. The ability to analyse and interpret them will be important.
7. Transdisciplinarity – the ability to understand concepts covering different disciplines. The ideal will be employees who will have expert knowledge in a particular area, complemented with general knowledge from other areas, required to solve a complex problem.
8. Project approach – the ability to develop tasks and work processes in order to realize objectives.
9. Knowledge management – the ability to filter information. The task of the future employee will be to separate important information from the ‘noise’, select the content relevant from the point of view of his work.
10. Virtual collaboration – the ability to act, engage in work as a member of a virtual team. Already today we have the possibility to create teams regardless of the physical presence of their members and in the future this possibility will be further developed. However, such cooperation requires different skills and competencies than cooperation in the real world¹⁶.

Exemplified competencies needed on the labour market, which the modern employee must develop and the need for continuous improvement of ‘hard competencies’ clearly indicate the need to participate in education, not only vocational but also general. It must be held that extracurricular education is the most useful in this respect as a way to support their shaping and development.

Therefore, a question arises what measures are undertaken in this regard? Without going into a detailed analysis it is possible to present some data from research conducted in 2012 as part of the third round of the Study of Human Capital. The obtained data show that for almost all 2011 and early 2012 a total of 36% of Poles aged 18-59/64 (almost 9 million people) raised their competencies in some form:

¹⁶ A. Davies, D. Fidler, M. Gorbis, *Future Work Skills 2020...* op. cit., after: A. Solak, *Competency expectations of employers in Poland*, <http://www.rynekpracy.pl/artukul.php/wpis.732>, published on: 13.11.2013.

- 20% (4.8 million) of Poles participated in courses, training courses, workshops, lectures, seminars, conferences, practices, professional internships or postgraduate studies,
- 5% (1.2 million) participated only in the mandatory health, safety and fire protection courses,
- 15% (3.6 million) raised their competencies at non-compulsory courses and training,
- 16% (4 million) studied independently using: support of family members; the help of friends, co-workers; books, professional magazines; computer programs and the internet; programs broadcast by television and radio; museums, exhibitions, galleries and science centers,
- 15% (3.7 million) of respondents participated in formal education in high school or college,
- 4.4% of Poles aged 25-64 participated in formal or non-formal education (courses, training) within the last four weeks prior to the visit of the interviewer,
- 4.8 million customers used training sector services, of which 3.6 million participated in other courses than the health, safety and fire protection. Among them, there were 2.8 million workers, 290 thousand unemployed, 530 thousand economically inactive,
- the vast majority of Poles, more than 64%, did not increase their competencies in the past year in any way
- analyses show that 37% of Poles have never participated in courses, training courses, workshops, practices or other forms of non-formal education¹⁷.

Complementing the above it is worth signalling that:

- Workers in professional jobs and higher-level managers, as well as groups of technicians and associate professionals raised their competencies most frequently. In case of courses and training the most common form, in which employees participated, were compulsory courses (health and safety, fire protection or others), which were attended by 13% of all workers (1.9 million). Courses in the workplace other than health, safety and fire protection included 9% of all workers (1.3 million employees).
- Among those who were trained in the courses and training other than the health, safety and fire protection, 30% devoted less than 30 hours to this activity and 20% from 21 to 50 hours. 44% of all courses and training other than the health, safety and fire protection took place on-

¹⁷ A. Szczucka, K. Turek, B. Worek, *Lifelong learning*, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, Warsaw 2012, p. 9. On the basis of research conducted in 2012 as part of the third round of the Study of Human Capital.

ly during working hours, while one quarter took place beyond working hours.

- In 2011 more than 70% of employers financed or co-financed actions aimed at developing skills and/or qualifications of their employees.
- Remained invariable general trends, which indicate that: The larger the company or institution, the more frequently it undertakes activities towards the development of competencies and qualifications of employees: in micro entities at least one such action was declared by 70% of employers, in small business entities 10 percentage points more and in case of medium and large employers 93% and 95% respectively. The tendency towards more frequent educational activity among larger businesses is maintained regardless of the type of business activity.
- There is a relationship between the development of a company (enterprise) and the development of staff competencies: The stronger the development was, the more frequently we deal with an entity involved in education: in stagnation companies the percentage was 58%, in companies with poor development 71%, in developing 78 % and among the fast expanding as much as 87%. This tendency continues regardless of the size of the company.
- In general, the results indicate that the candidate for an employee in micro, small or medium size entity had comparable opportunities for participation in training subsidized by the employer – at the level of 28% - 30%. The chances were slightly lower in case of the largest enterprises - 25%. Although the biggest employers trained more frequently than others (95%) and the absolute number of workers trained by them was the greatest it still concerned a small percentage of employees. In case of smaller companies, which trained their employees, the relationship was negative, i.e. with a decrease of the number of staff, the percentage of trained employees increased. In case of micro-entities the percentage was 41%. Assuming that we compare only entities that trained in a given year, the chances were highest for micro-enterprises (41%). A larger proportion of trained workers in the total employment was also declared by strongly developing enterprises (37% compared to 17% in stagnation companies). There is a visible tendency that the stronger the growth of a company, the greater number of employees were included in the training.
- In the case of training courses the dominant strategy was to use the services of an external company, which prepared and implemented the training (in-house or outside). Less than one in seven employers used a different strategy, which is to raise the competencies of em-

ployees only by using the company's human resources. The remaining percentage - 37% - used a mixed strategy, namely they benefited from external training as well as organized their own within the company/institution.

- Employers positively evaluate the effects of training: three out of four would choose mostly the same that they used; 14% would rather search a different offer; and only one in eight of the employers did not see improvement in the efficiency of workers after training, so they would try to find a different way to invest their funds. Training of employees in companies/institutions is mostly financed entirely by the employer. Such a strategy is dominant regardless of the size of the entity, however, the smaller the company, the more often it relies on this strategy. As many as 95% of entities that trained employees in 2011 engaged their own resources.
- Every 7 employer benefited from the possibility of funding activities for the development of employees with public funds e.g. from the ESF. Much more frequently the beneficiaries of these funds were larger entities - more than 35%. The amount of money spent on training, expressed in PLN, differed depending on the size of the entity: micro-entities in most cases (42%) spent no more than 1000 PLN in 2011 and only one in ten exceeded 5000 PLN. In small companies expenses were over 1000 PLN but not more than 5000 PLN (57%). 8% of employers in this group exceeded the threshold of 10,000 PLN; among medium and large companies (50+ category) 58% did not exceed the amount of 10,000 PLN. On the other hand, one in four employers in this group declared its own costs at over 25,000 PLN.¹⁸

As the above data demonstrate, the actions of employers in the field of workers' education confirm a growing understanding of the importance of qualifications and competencies of staff for the development and success of the company. The changing demands of jobs or the wider labour market result in the need for educational activation of employees. Extracurricular education, as has already been emphasised, is not to be underestimated.

Facilitating the acquisition and improvement of competencies by companies applies to persons already in employment. One cannot forget about the unemployed and those at risk of losing their jobs. Their return to the labour market by obtaining vocational training in accordance with the requirements of this market is supported mainly by employment offices. However, this is yet another problem, which should be given separate consideration.

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 9-18.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is worth putting forward at least two theses:

Thesis 1: Extracurricular education can be considered as an important factor in equalizing people's chances of access to all kinds of goods that the socio-economic reality has to offer. It is particularly important in reducing the negative effects of postmodern forms and structures of management, perception of the role of man in work processes. It also can refer to the fact that modernity, including mainly new technologies, redefined the work process and the importance of employees in the process. Continually transforming positions of the occupational structure, growing requirements of learned skills, both general and specific, contribute to the segregation of the labour force according to the criterion of education, which in itself contains segregating factor. Z. Bauman describing the phenomena associated with these issues highlights the aspect of "redundancy" and "inadequacy" of people in today's manufacturing processes.¹⁹

In the context of these and similar social problems extracurricular education can become a bridge between social needs and economic expectations. Its multiplicity of forms, organizational structures, flexibility, usually the near-term perspective, make it possible to react quickly to changing requirements of various stakeholders, which in turn gives a chance for a safer location of hopes for obtaining better competencies, higher qualifications, better opportunities for the development of individual ambitions and potentiality.

In summary, new economic or manufacturing systems in themselves do not need and should not pose a threat to workers, provided, however, that they will be able to acquire new skills. Individuals or groups unable to acquire new skills are at risk of exclusion from labour and degradation as employees.

Thesis 2: One can only hope to solve social problems through various forms of extracurricular education in the situation of its high quality and relevance. Therefore, the accreditation process of this kind of educational institutions seems important as well as applying a kind of substantive-educational monitoring. The belief that the market mechanism itself will exclude institutions that do not meet the requirements from the educational market seems quite questionable at present. Market activities, contrary to appearances, are not mobile enough to immediately respond to any attempted manipulation or quality defects. Certification of extracurricular education institutions seems to be necessary the more so as it can, at least to some extent, protect its participants from the loss of faith and hope in the possibility

¹⁹ Z. Bauman, *Postmodernity and its discontents*, Warsaw 2013, p. 287.

of improving their own destiny. This is all the more justified, since in many cases the unemployed benefit from the extracurricular forms of education, they remain in a difficult life-professional situation and at risk of exclusion from the mainstream of socio-economic development. Their level of self-esteem is already seriously disturbed and in the case of exposure to subsequent failures resulting from the lack of expected effects of participation in educational processes, it can exacerbate anxiety processes, build attitudes of withdrawal, further expose a sense of 'self' to fragility. This may lead to a distortion of a self-image, one's own abilities and chances. Such people become less resistant to any adversity or negative social evaluation. Therefore, as R. Wilkinson and K. Pickett put it, they must reassure themselves using self-promotional strategies.²⁰

In conclusion one should ask a question whether it is worth carrying out broader inquiries about extracurricular vocational education, whether it is not enough to bring the discussion only to technical issues, in which the systemic-structural solutions as well as efficiency and effectiveness of extracurricular education institutions are considered paramount. It is possible, however, according to Z. Bauman, to adopt a humanistic perspective and identify extracurricular education with different types of activity of man living in the conditions of "variable civilization".²¹

Synthetically speaking, changes in the adult education, including extracurricular, can be reduced to three leading:

- Firstly, it is about a continuous, unlimited and lifelong development of individuals. It involves multiple issues of human aspirations, ambitions, crossing the achieved level of development and set boundaries, bringing new challenges and trials, the choice of primary life values, acceptance of one or another meaning of existence.
- The second area relates to a widely understood social space in which man must constantly find their place, prepare to play newer and newer social and professional roles, accept or deny progressive social changes.
- The third area has its own material, economic dimension. D. Demetrio among the objectives of adult education mentions promoting entrepreneurship and improving the efficiency of economy. Materiality in this sense is not only an economic success but also "a set of human relationships, which are affected by both the requirement to learn a better, more effective communication as well as the need to cope with the constantly changing socio-professional tasks."²²

²⁰ R. Wilkinson, K. Pickett, *The spirit of equality*, Warsaw 2011, p. 61.

²¹ See among others M. Baumann, *Liquid...*, op. cit.

²² D. Demetrio, *Adult education*, [in:] B. Śliwerski (ed.), *Pedagogy*, Volume 3, Gdańsk 2006, p. 216.

Such an approach allows one to associate the area of adult education, including extracurricular, with philosophical doctrines.

Extracurricular vocational education is an important area of lifelong learning, which should be regarded as an inherent good and not just as a means to achieve higher social status and greater material success. The essence of lifelong learning is associated with the concept of man as a learning being, who is an entity with an ability to make educational choices, taking into account one's aspirations, abilities and needs. In these choices one should take into account both the development of one's own professionalism enabling to obtain and maintain employment as well as the area of non-professional life.

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Managerial Education and the Labour Market in Poland

Introduction

The economic, social and political transformations taking place in today's world make education ever more significant. This role is described and highlighted in a range of reports (cf. Delors, 1998) and research papers (cf. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, 2004; Suchocka, 2007; Sztanderska, Wojciechowski, 2008). The resulting pressures consist not only in the compelling need to pursue education and continually supplement one's knowledge, competencies and qualifications. Of even greater importance is the broad significance of science and education for the evolution of modern-day societies. Trends in such evolution are fashioned in part by leaders and managers who, as described by Peter F. Drucker (1992), the most renowned theoretician of management of our time, manage others or make decisions of critical importance for their organizations. Therefore, if administrators (or *zarządcy* in the original Polish), as Kazimierz Doktór (1998) prefers to refer to managers, in business as well as non-business organizations, play such a pivotal role in present-day societies, it is just as crucial to ensure they are properly educated.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the central significance of managerial positions in today's economic and social systems and underscore the central role of managerial education in such systems. The author views educational, business, non-business and labour market structures as mutually interconnected. He examines the relationships among them and the ways in which they influence one another.

The analysis is focused on managerial education. The labour market, whose discussion was heralded in the article's title, is conditioned largely by the quality of business management and administration programmes. For the purposes of this article, the discussion of the labour market has been lim-

ited to direct observation. Rather than analysing the specific features of the labour market, the author refers to such distinguishing characteristics thereof as the relative availability and, even more importantly, the monopoly held over the top executive positions available on such market. This approach has been inspired by Max Weber's theory of appropriation of managerial positions.

Manager education in Poland. State of education as reported by the State Accreditation Committee

In examining the state of managerial education in Poland, it is certainly worthwhile to refer to the audit report provided by the body appointed to assess the quality of education at institutions of higher learning. The report summarising the activities of the State Accreditation Committee (SAC) during the 2001-2007 period (eight years on, the SAC is still to submit a comparable update) reads: "We have worked arduously over the past six years holding 130 meetings at which the Committee's Bureau adopted more than 2000 resolutions assessing the quality of education and issued in excess of 1800 applications for permits to offer specific programmes of studies. Our mandatory assessments applied to all public and non-public institutions offering undergraduate and graduate programmes. Out of the total number of 118 majors, 100 received at least one evaluation in the majority of Polish institutions of higher education" (SAC, 2007: 7). Even in its mere introduction, the SAC has conveyed just how busy it has been in recent years. Needless to say, this does not necessarily mean it has been equally fair and accurate in its judgements. Since the author does not have access to more detailed data, it is difficult to arrive at far-reaching conclusions regarding the Committee's performance.

I will limit myself to the data supplied by the SAC to describe the status of education in economics and management & marketing (currently management) programmes which are the ones most oriented at educating managers. Whereas the specific managerial specializations offered within the framework of other majors such as sociology, education and political science are also designed to "deliver" managerial expertise to the manager labour market, in view of the extent of the phenomenon and, even more importantly, the SAC's failure to separate out the relevant data in its report, I will focus on the above programmes as offered by Poland's public and non-public institutions of higher learning.

In the SAC report (2007: 61) providing a summary evaluation of the quality of education in economics programmes, Danuta Strahl notes that the

Committee evaluated 111 of the total of 113 organizations which offer such programmes. 57 of them were public and 54 - non-public. The combined number of students enrolled in economics programmes, which is 104,119, accounts for 5.4% of the country's overall student population (58,174 of whom attend public and 45,954 non-public universities). The table below summarizes the statistics of such evaluations.

Table 1. *Evaluations of Economics programmes by the State Accreditation Committee*

	Total	Excellent	Favourable	Conditional	Unfavourable	Withheld
Public institutions of education	65	1	34	25	3	2
Non-public institutions of education	59	0	36	20	1	2
Total	124	1	70	45	4	4

Source: SAC, 2007: 61

As can be seen clearly, unfavourable assessments account for an only small proportion of the total evaluations (3.2%). Nevertheless, the fact that such assessments concern the majority of the country's public institutions of higher education inspires reflection. What is certainly upsetting is the number of conditional evaluations which suggest that more than 36% of the audited organizations suffer from flaws of one kind or another. Danuta Strahl classifies these into the categories of teaching faculty, curricula and the teaching process, graduation papers and final examinations, scientific research, course design and learning facilities (SAC, 2007: 62-65).

The above assessment areas have been identified correctly as having tangible impact on the process of education and its quality. The specific grounds provided for having issued conditional evaluations have also shed a great deal of light on the organizational flaws of the assessed institutions. In the field of teaching faculty and the makeup of majors on offer, the evaluators have noted a mismatch between the specializations of the faculty members required to meet the minimum staff resources and the thematic scopes of economics programmes. The Committee members have also highlighted "inadequate makeups of teaching staff specializations and a tendency of all faculty members to specialize in a single field" (SAC, 2007: 62). This essential finding goes to the root causes of the issue as it is hard to imagine that any specific majors may acquire the desired competencies without the involvement of professors equipped with adequate specialized skills and knowledge. This fundamental problem has led to some of the for-

mal deficiencies noted by the Committee and having to do with the teaching staff's failure to meet the minimum staff resources requirement laid down for specific majors and hold diplomas which demonstrate that their qualifications are not only relevant but also guarantee substantial improvements in the competence levels of graduates.

What kind of education? What qualifications?

The above suggests a more general conclusion regarding the future real-life performance of graduating managers which is that some such managers leave their schools with mediocre education frequently based on concepts that do not fit the profile of today's economics. This makes it all the more important to acquire the missing competencies on the job. However, since the working environment is rife with managers having received similar education and since interacting specialists and business organizations do not always show interest in the professional growth of their employees, such deficiencies are bound to weigh heavily on economic performance. This observation evidences the pivotal role of higher education in modern societies and economies. It also suggests that lifelong learning is critical for shaping the personalities and identities of individuals. In the author's view, a certain starting "capital" in the form of real or merely formal qualifications is critical for an individuals' position in the organizational structures of enterprises and, by the same token, for their ultimate status in society.

In addition to the shortcomings of the teaching staff, the Committee's experts have also identified a number of other deficiencies in the fields of curricula and the teaching process. They placed particular emphasis on failures of evening and weekend programmes to meet teaching standards. Examples include incomplete coverage of curricula resulting from insufficient teaching hours and the removal from curricula of such fundamental courses as macro- and micro-economics (SAC, 2007: 62). Furthermore, the Committee noted that a number of projects and in-class activities assigned to students lack the follow-up needed to check their outcomes. Finally, they pointed out that the specializations of the teachers assigned to specific courses did not match the course profiles, that individual teachers taught too many thematically diverse courses and that "the students were given too few opportunities to actively employ their skills and knowledge" (SAC, 2007: 63).

The shortcomings identified by the State Accreditation Committee demonstrate that the qualifications of a certain proportion of students graduating from economics programmes are merely formal credentials. Such

graduates earn their degrees without acquiring any competencies. I will therefore posit again that in view of the above evidence, it would be a mistake to consider every process of education as progress. I am confident that poorly designed education taught by inadequate research and teaching faculty may result in lowering the overall level of qualifications and, even more importantly, produce graduates who have regressed in their personal development. Students are made to believe that institutions of higher education are no place for matter-of-factly debates, scholarly disputes and for making one's point but rather organizations meant to distribute academic degrees which put tuition above the quality of the knowledge they impart and – to refer to Plato's classification – promote producers without a profession whom they churn out one year after another.

The above does not exhaust the faults which the State Accreditation Committee discovered in universities offering economics programmes. The audit reports refer to irregularities with respect to graduation papers and examinations. As noted by Danuta Strahl (SAC, 2007: 63-64), the theses written in many institutions are of little relevance for economics: "The topics markedly gravitate towards agriculture – this applies to non-economics public institutions and non-public organizations whose faculty specialized in agriculture and other fields (sample thesis titles include "The value of the semen of Polish Landrace boars from various breeders", "Research on earthworm populations at selected sites" and "Changes in vitamin C content during apple ripening and storage"). The Committee also emphasised that "the quality of the theses was unsatisfactory: the research problems and objectives were vaguely formulated, the phenomena discussed were not evaluated and/or described, the authors failed to apply economic methods of analysis and refer to proper literature, citing an only small number of literature sources" (SAC, 2007: 64).

Admittedly, such audit findings will not only give trepidations to the teachers who uphold proper quality teaching standards in economics programmes thus offering an added value to their students but will also elicit reflection on the state of the labour market and the quality of management in Polish businesses. As it turns out, undergraduate or graduate degrees in economics carry little weight not only because of the poor quality of education that underpins them but also because the actual education received bears little relevance for what multi-year programmes of studies can reasonably be expected to deliver. The situation is comparable to that of a vegetable stand owner at a local produce market trying to pass potatoes off as oranges (cf. also Kozyr-Kowalski, 2005). In other words, it appears that the problem faced by today's university education and, indirectly, by the labour market is not only the lacking optimization of the education system and the

market but also the complete inconsistency between the diplomas and the actual qualifications of the graduates. The situation is by all means alarming. Their sheer scale (as measured in terms of scholarisation ratios and the overall student enrolment in the system) results in extensive impact on the labour market and, needless to say, the system of education itself. Especially that such circumstances are unlikely to be new. The one thing that is certain is that institutions of education have long suffered from overcrowding.

In addition to their findings, the auditors offered recommendations for other spheres of operation of universities and for the management of their majors. Among others, the State Accreditation Committee emphasized that thesis reviews are often limited to a single sentence, too many seminar and practical course groups are being established, "library holdings are alarmingly meagre", the available building space is of very poor quality and that the classrooms are poorly equipped (SAC, 2007: 64-65). The Committee was particularly appalled by one of the institutions which was found to have "significantly departed from teaching standards by e.g. reducing the hours of required courses by 30%, shedding much of the course content that is called for in general standards, enrolling 95% of its students in evening or weekend courses, offering instruction without such teaching materials as the student needed to acquire proper skills, and dispensing with any mid-term forms of student performance evaluation. The Committee has also found that examinations were held without ensuring the minimum of objectivity as large student groups were crowded into compact spaces and given identical questions. Cases were also recorded of examinations being held off institution premises without the oversight of the responsible teacher and without identity checks by the person in charge" (SAC, 2007: 65). Needless to say, the SAC's evaluation of this particular institution was unfavourable. Yet, the case is not isolated and rather can be considered to be symptomatic of very profound anomalies which plague the entire system.

The situation in management and marketing programmes (currently labelled as management) is somewhat different. The total number of institutions offering such programmes across the country is 171. The State Accreditation Committee audited 154 of them by 2006, 53 of which were public and 101 non-public organizations. The institutions enrolled 205,739 students who jointly account for 10.7% of Poland's total student population. 104,562 of them attended public and 101,177 non-public institutions (SAC, 2007: 192). Their evaluation statistics are summarized in the table below.

As shown above, contrary to what has been seen in economics programmes, management programmes received more unfavourable evaluations (9.5%), 6.5% of which went to non-public and 3% to public institutions. Conditional assessments accounted for the slightly lower proportion of

30.8%. Shortcomings of one kind or another were found in 19.5% of non-public and in close to 11.3% public institutions. This, again, means that one third of the organizations suffered from some sorts of issues and deficiencies in the way they managed their management programmes. Despite their failure to satisfy legal requirements concerning the submission and storage of teaching staff statements of consent to their assignment to the minimum staff resources, there were other issues of graver significance for students and graduates.

Table 2. *Evaluation of Management and Marketing programmes by the State Accreditation Committee*

	Total	Excellent	Favourable	Conditional	Unfavourable	Withheld
Public institutions of education	57	0	29	19	5	4
Non-public institutions of education	112	1	67	33	11	0
Total	169	1	96	52	16	4

Source: SAC, 2007: 192

Specifically, as enumerated by Danuta Strahl, the issues included “failures to meet the minimum staff resources requirement laid down in the law, due mainly to the fact that the faculty members’ research specializations were ill-suited to programme profiles” (SAC, 2007: 193). Furthermore, the State Accreditation Committee stressed failures to maintain the required ratio of teachers holding professor or habilitated doctoral degrees to students. In view of the criteria adopted by the legislator with respect to ensuring the availability of a specific number of teaching personnel, ensuring that teachers give their students personal attention and that a specific general level of education is maintained, a skewed teacher to student ratio is certain to affect the quality of education. In other words, a system of mass education in which legal requirements are commonly disregarded will inevitably result in lower quality instruction, poorer quality graduation papers and, ultimately, poorer quality holders of undergraduate and graduate degrees. Needless to say, such failings severely undermine the labour market which receives a certain number of specialists and managers who complete their schools unequipped with even the most basic sets of skills and even the most rudimentary knowledge. It is difficult to imagine how such graduates could take initiative, act critically and think out of a box. Especially that the above shortcomings of the education system are readily perpetuated by the business world at large which only appears to be based on knowledge.

The list of the audit qualifications raised with respect to the higher education of managers does not stop there. Danuta Strahl speaks of such repeated transgressions as failures to comply with teaching standards consisting not only in reductions in teaching hours in evening and weekend programmes but also in the downright absence of certain content in their curricula. Furthermore, SAC auditors noted that teachers unqualified to teach specific courses (specializations) were nevertheless assigned to them and that lecture courses were entrusted to holders of graduate (as opposed to doctoral and higher) degrees (SAC, 2007: 193). Finally, the SAC raised the issue of the unsatisfactory quality of graduation papers and, similarly to economics programmes, the cursory nature of their reviews. The teaching facilities, i.e. the premises and library holdings, also appear to impact upon the quality of education in management and marketing (as well as obviously in any other program).

As shown above, the audit findings clearly reveal a number of shortfalls in the teaching process, many of them serious and endemic. I am referring in particular to the quality of graduation papers, study programme design, course staffing and library holdings. Danuta Strahl has summarized several years' worth of conclusions by the State Accreditation Committee in the form of the strengths and weaknesses of the assessed institutions. It was graduation papers that were considered to be the weakness of the management and marketing programmes offered by the evaluated organizations. I deliberately point this out as I consider such papers to be among the most crucial parts of the education process with potential not only to further students' education in the strict sense of the word but also to build their character and improve their ability to perceive and embrace specific phenomena and processes (which in this case are economic and organizational), enhance the disciple-master relationship, and awaken a true interest in, if not a passion for, their majors. The audit findings find fault in the quality of bachelor's and master's theses and their remote relevance to the fields of studies pursued by the students (SAC, 2007: 203). I am confident that such shortcomings are commonly caused by overcrowding which persists all across Poland's system of higher education and can also be seen country-wide in specific programmes, individual institutions and individual seminars. In some of the assessed organizations, as many as 90 students were found to have been assigned to a specific seminar class (SAC, 2007: 204) – this appears to be totally absurd undermining the effectiveness and personalization of the education process.

In closing, note that the deficiencies identified by the State Accreditation Committee and committed by institutions offering programmes in economics and management & marketing are not only legal in nature (in the sense of

institutions of higher education breaching the educational principles laid down in primary and secondary laws) but also social. The fact of the matter is that students graduating from programmes offered by mediocre institutions walk away with a set of habits and the harmful conviction that a university diploma can be bought and that education resembles any other commodity. Such commodification applies also to the perception and treatment of teaching faculty as the providers of specific desirable goods and as persons who should not stand in the way of the students seeking to obtain their degrees rather than masters who directly or indirectly inspire one to think and who offer ideas and even suggest organizational and economic innovations. Such a model of education and economy can hardly be called meritocratic.

Characteristics of the manager labour market

The manager labour market can certainly be described against the familiar frame of reference of employment and unemployment rates. It is notable, however, that such a framework is not directly relevant for this specific social category. Executives, particularly higher-ranking, tend to monopolize managerial positions. While there is a certain turnover of managers, kept at a fairly constant level with specific people circulating among corporations, managers are rarely found to be truly out of a employment. Max Weber referred to the phenomenon as the appropriation of managerial jobs. Such an appropriation may be viewed as “an opportunity to hold a position in the long term fairly independently of organizational and market factors” (Banaszak, 2011:).

All in all, the labour market of top managers appears to be open and free to an only relative degree. As a matter of fact, the pool of the existing managers in today’s corporations and that of the candidates who are potentially fit for the job is quite limited. This, needless to say, has far-reaching consequences for executive pay. By the way, other than in other countries, executive pay in Poland is not always disclosed, not even in public companies. And the compensation is high in real terms, commonly amounting to many times the average wages.

However, Poland’s manager labour market is also characterized by relatively high internal turnover. A study by Antal International¹ shows that

¹ This is a commercial study. While the researchers reveal the sample size and the techniques they use to arrive at their data, they do not consider their measurements as being error-proof and a faithful reflection of reality. However, since the significance of the study for this paper is only incidental, the author does not attempt to investigate the methodological design of the study.

an astounding 51% of the respondents disclose information on the course of their education and careers whereas 27% are still actively pursuing employment (*Aktywność...*, 2014: 6). Hence, more than three quarters of the respondents remain open to changing their employers. Nevertheless, the Polish General Social Survey suggests that few managers, and especially high ranking executives, are apprehensive about losing their jobs (cf. Banaszak, 2006: 149).

One should bear in mind, however, that such public surveys paint an incomplete picture. Note that a dozen plus years ago, the reputable weekly *The Economist* launched a debate on the permanence of the employment of top managers. The golden age of happiness and lasting employment it prophesied is gone forever. In 2001, driven presumably by uncertainty in world markets, major corporations in the United States laid off more than one hundred chief executive officers. An added factor at the time was the collapse of dotcom companies which sent scores of managers fleeing to more secure sectors (*The Economist*, 2001: 75-76).

Conclusion

The work of a manager entails a great deal of responsibility. Managers are responsible for the physical assets of their organizations as well as, and even more so, for the human factor. It takes a number of specific predispositions, competences and qualifications to be able to lead people. This makes education, in the broad sense of the word, highly critical. Especially that, as the author has attempted to point out, the managerial job market is only relatively open. In other words, once employed, managers are on the market for the long haul exerting a huge impact on the overall economic performance.

For that reason, educating managers in various majors and specializations plays a pivotal role in preparing them for actual work as executives. A study of the quality of education in the two types of programmes designed to educate the future managers of the Polish economy reveals severe abnormalities. While some of them can be remedied at a relatively meagre expense, others are certain to be much harder to uproot. At any rate, irregularities and neglect in this field compromise corporate management and undermine the economy at large.

Furthermore, the mistakes, neglect and irregularities ingrained throughout the years into the education system coupled with high demand for diplomas seen as a ticket to the world of people and organization management, contribute not only to undermining the prestige of education in

general and managerial education in particular but also to the depreciation of trust in corporate recruiters who, as perceived by business owners and business managers, are in fact employers.

One may therefore conclude that in addition to the obvious moral dimension, care for the relevance and fairness of managerial education is of pragmatic as well as economic significance. It simply pays to educate well. This, one might add, applies not only to managers but also to all other fields. The education of managers, however, is the most glaring and consequential example as, if done poorly, it is bound to result in, among others, deteriorated corporate and economic performance, poorer interpersonal relations within organizations, dissatisfaction with jobs and, finally, deteriorated relations outside of the workplace leading to a lower overall quality of life. This view is by no means exaggerated catastrophic thinking. In fact, I consider it highly realistic. Needless to say, the forms and extent in which such adverse consequences of abnormalities manifest themselves in the education of managers require a separate broad-based study.

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Market Value of Voluntary Activities

Introduction

Volunteering is a particular type of human activities. Its value results primarily from the positive impact on the operation of the entire society. A broad spectrum of benefits extends not only to people or institutions for which the services are provided, but, above all, to people directly involved in them: volunteers. Profits resulting from this type of activities are mostly of an intangible nature. Volunteering provides the opportunity to meet new people, expand horizons, overcome own restrictions, fulfil dreams, and shape one's character; in the context of projecting the educational and professional future, it enables to become familiar with the nature of operation of different industries and acquire specific skills. This is a perfect chance to gain experience, increase qualifications, develop in professional terms, and increase own market value as a worker.

Volunteering Service and Labour Market

Voluntary activities are one of the best ways to gain experience, and professional and life skills in a natural manner¹. It is perceived as one of the forms of self-fulfilment² that allows to satisfy needs, and follow passions and interests in any organisation. Volunteering corresponds to work perfor-

¹ A. Olubiński, *Humanistyczno-edukacyjne wartości wolontariatu w przygotowaniu do pracy społecznej*, [w]: *Wolontariat w obszarze humanistycznych wyzwań opiekuńczych*, red. B. Kromolicka, AKAPIT Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne, Toruń 2005, s. 47.

² M. Knop, *Wolontariat szansą na udany start zawodowy*, [w]: *Edukacja szansą aktywizacji lokalnego rynku pracy*, red. U. Pulińska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, Olsztyn 2010, s. 27.

mance, but this is not the case within the meaning of statutory provisions³. It is not included in the seniority, but brings a wide range of benefits. Similarly as professional career, it gives people independence and possibility of self-fulfilment. Nowadays, in order to obtain and keep a job, some specific skills and knowledge are required. A twentieth-century worker is shaped by the labour market, specifically by changes that occur on the market. Labour market priorities include: knowledge, information, communication, mobility, flexibility, creativity, ethics and trust⁴. The contemporary labour market is forged by such global trends as globalisation and technological revolution. The role of various sectors and branches of the economy changes, thus increasingly affecting the size of employment and modifications in the sectoral and professional structure. Work becomes desirable and expertise (knowledge of the industry) and competence play a particular importance for it. Modern professional activities require permanent development, verification and improvement of skills, while dynamic transformations on the labour market increase the expectations formulated in respect of candidates⁵. The changing reality related to the labour market requires constant mobility, continuing modifications, decision-making, and adaptation to conditions prevailing at a certain time. Therefore, it is necessary to supplement knowledge and skills in a variety of ways in order to meet the needs of specific sectors of the economy and, thus, of specific professions. The range of facilities and organisations where one can work as a volunteer is very wide, which enables to gain diverse and multidimensional practical skills expected by employers. Volunteering is an opportunity for young people entering the labour market and people at risk of social exclusion because of difficulties in finding work, which is extremely important in relation to the discussed issues. D. Stauffer emphasises that volunteering is a way to acquire skills and experience that will bring fruit in the form of future success. Research results show that people in management positions who additionally work as volunteers gain a new dimension of experience in management⁶. Furthermore, they acquire a sense of strength and self-confidence that go beyond the area of their work in volunteering, accompanying them in gainful employment

³ D. Pietrykowski, R. Skiba, *Jak zgodnie z prawem współpracować z wolontariuszem*, Warszawa 2004, s. 6.

⁴ M. Mamak-Zdanecka, W. Takuska-Mróż, *Od pracownika taylorowskiego do pracownika mobilnego – refleksje nad rolą zawodową w społeczeństwie wiedzy*, [w]: *Przemiany pracy, postaw i ról zawodowych*, red. D. Walczak-Duraj, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2011, s. 111.

⁵ M. Czechowska-Bieluga, A. Kanios, E. Sarzyńska, *Profile kompetencji społecznych osób pracujących i bezrobotnych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2009, s. 7-8.

⁶ D. Stauffer, *Praca w wolontariacie może być korzystna dla kariery*, [w]: *Zarządzanie karierą*, red. K. Borowiecka-Strug, Wydawnictwo Studio Emka, Warszawa 2006, s. 86-87.

and personal life. Volunteering is an opportunity to experience a more varied environment, broaden perspectives and have a chance to solve existing problems. Volunteer's work allows to be with people with whom, in standard working and other circumstances, collaboration would never exist⁷.

Volunteering as an Element of Development of Professional Experience

Young people should be aware that when they start activities in any field, the priority for them should be to learn from professionals by observing the latter's work, gain valuable contacts and acquire practical skills. Financial issues during this period should be pushed to the background; they will become a natural consequence of the gained experience and will pay off in the form of increased benefits in the future. Candidate's market value consists of the three essential elements: acquired competence; ability to present oneself (in market terms, the ability to sell oneself); and established contacts and knowledge⁸. Undoubtedly, this is somewhat simplified; however, it proves useful in many cases. Volunteering services contribute to shaping a rich array of skills and attitudes useful in gainful employment. Work as a volunteer gives a number of intangible benefits, including: satisfaction, awareness of doing something important, strengthening of self-esteem, and sense of doing something for one's community. Depending on the place of service provision, volunteers may play many roles and perform diverse tasks, ranging from office assistance to project management. According to Ochman and Janeczek's research in respect of functions carried out by volunteers, 87% of them are knowledge workers, 8% are function workers (managers and board members), while 5% are interns⁹. Henzler believes that volunteering may substitute internships. The basis for this thesis are the following arguments: firstly, the author thinks that not all candidates will find a place in a selected organisation or institution; secondly, this kind of experience is much more interesting because workplaces are third-sector organisations that are very diverse in terms of involved issues and working methods. The NGO sector enables to gain skills in terms of organisation and management of conferences, training courses, advertising campaigns or drafting projects, and raising funds for those activities, which is not always possible

⁷ *Ibidem*, s. 93.

⁸ A. Rynkowska, *Moja wartość rynkowa? Co to takiego?*, <http://www.pracatobie.pl/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=25>, [dostęp: 15.03.2015].

⁹ M. Ochman, M. Janeczek, *Wolontariusze, ich motywacje i oczekiwania*, [w]: *Wolontariat – nowe spojrzenie na pracę społeczną*, BORIS, Warszawa 1996, s. 75.

in case of internships resulting from university curricula. According to the author, all of these skills may prove very useful when applying for a job¹⁰. According to Reed Abboud, volunteering service in the *non-profit* sector allows to establish contacts in the new field of work, in addition to gaining useful experience¹¹. The author stresses that it is worth considering volunteering as a job-search strategy because it enables to check the potential work environment without making any long-term commitments; at the same time, it is also a way to obtain references or testimonials. Reed Abboud also emphasises that the selection of the organisation for which the volunteer will work is extremely important in this case. Preferred values and possibility of involvement need to be taken into consideration here. According to the American [service.leader.org](http://www.serviceleader.org) website, voluntary activities that develop a network of contacts enable to obtain references and extend résumé may contribute to finding a full-time job. Volunteering allows active students and graduates to be noticed on the background of other applicants. Voluntary service shows the possession of practical skills related to functioning in a working environment, but also demonstrates the involvement in problems of the local community. Website administrators stress that volunteering is also a chance for people tired of their current work who look for new challenges, enabling them to check their performance in new situations and make a decision regarding a potential change¹². Voluntary activities are an additional asset in candidate's professional history. Ellis emphasises that there is a misconception about one way of designing a résumé whose most important objective is to provide information about the candidate in such a way as to support and accomplish one's professional goal, which is to find a job. A résumé is to present the candidate as the only one appropriate for the job offered. Despite the fact that volunteering is not the standard employment relationship within the meaning of labour law provisions and is not a form of employment, it should be included in application documents in the professional experience category because it is fully productive. According to the research carried out by Serve DC the Mayor's Office on Volunteerism¹³, volunteers have 27% more chances to find employment than

¹⁰ P. Henzler, *Wolontariat zamiast praktyki*, <http://stary.pracuj.pl/praca-turystyka-gastro nomia-hotele-wolontariat-zamiast-praktyki.htm#top>, [dostęp: 11.01.2015].

¹¹ S. Reed Abboud, *Volunteering Can Open Doors to a New Career*, http://www.quintca reers.com/volunteering_to_new_career.html, [dostęp: 12.12.2014].

¹² S.J. Ellis, *Put Volunteer Work on Your Resume*, <http://www.serviceleader.org/volunteers /resume>, [dostęp: 12.12.2014].

¹³ This is an agency dedicated to promoting voluntary activities as a model of sustainable development, innovative form of social problem solving, and building partnerships, <http://serve.dc.gov/page/about-serve-dc>, [accessed on: 15.01.2015].

people who do not provide such services¹⁴. Employers perceive volunteers as helpful, organised, ambitious and involved in the activities they undertake. At this point, it is worth noting a broad spectrum of skills acquired and features shaped in the process of voluntary work, which very often are necessary to function in almost every working environment and circumstances¹⁵. The most commonly acquired and improved ones include: communication skills, responsibility, accuracy, creativity, assertiveness, strategic thinking, flexibility in action, ability to listen, teamwork ability, organisation of own work, quick solving of occurring problems and conflicts, motivating oneself and others, and self-presentation. People who provide voluntary services emphasise a wide range of benefits, particularly in respect of designing their professional future.

Table 1. Benefits of voluntary services

enables to acquire practical skills	65.00%
gives an opportunity to establish valuable contacts	55.00%
ensures experience expected by employers	40.63%
enables to become familiar with the operation of a relevant facility	36.88%
gives an opportunity to test oneself	28.75%
is an advantage/strength in a résumé	22.50%
gives an opportunity to evaluate one's inclinations	21.25%
enables to develop one's good reputation	13.13%

* the result does not add up to 100% because this was a multiple-choice question
Source: own survey

Job search is a long-term process that requires knowledge of recruitment and selection methods, and having skills associated with the introduction of one's candidacy. One of the ways to arouse interest of the employer is to include additional information in your résumé. Extra-university activities help extend candidates' experience and skills, and point to some character traits. Employers pay more and more attention to activities going beyond university curricula. It is, therefore, important to promote voluntary activities among young people, especially through programmes and projects carried out by universities and non-profit organisations.

¹⁴ B. Kovalic, *Path2Serve – From Volunteerism to Employment*, Washington 2014, s. 7.

¹⁵ S.J. Ellis, *op.cit.*

Bearing in mind the value of voluntary activities, its promotion in the field of market mechanisms may be strengthened. The European Volunteer Centre is responsible for the promotion of volunteering in Europe, supporting it among the public, media, business and policy-makers. Sources of promotion of volunteering should be sought in the 1996 introduction of the European Commission programme "European voluntary service" that aims at developing collaboration among Member States. It enables to exchange experience and develop solutions useful for local communities. EVS was established so that volunteers can acquire competence and skills that affect their personal and professional development through experience related to non-formal education¹⁶. On the other hand, volunteering ideas related to the Polish labour market are included in such programmes as "Absolwent" (Graduate) (1998) and "Pierwsza praca" (First work) (2002), designed to counteract unemployment among young people¹⁷. In accordance with provisions of the programmes, graduates registered in the relevant Employment Offices are offered not only gainful employment, but also volunteer jobs. Voluntary activities is to create an opportunity for graduates to familiarise themselves with the characteristics of operation of certain facilities (non-governmental organisations and public administration authorities), and acquire specific skills and knowledge.

Valuation of Volunteers' Work

In addition to intangible benefits, the value of voluntary activities may also be perceived from the viewpoint of economics, namely the precise valuation of volunteer's work. The American society appreciates and popularises this kind of activities. According to governmental statistics, 1/5 of the American society (around 62 million people) provide voluntary services annually. The temporary value of work has been estimated at 8 billion hours of work for the community, valued at the USD 173 billion. Many American companies have established corporate voluntary programmes, encouraging employees to practice this specific activity¹⁸. Research on volunteering in the American society is carried out regularly since 2002 by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Analyses in the field of voluntary

¹⁶ Wolontariat Europejski (EVS) European Voluntary Service http://evs.org.pl/evs/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=24&lang=pl.

¹⁷ M. Knop, *op. cit.*, s. 28.

¹⁸ S.J. Ellis, K.H. Campbell, *Volunteering: An American Tradition*, http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/11/20111114165203nasus0.1764032.html#a_xzz2MDfEWodq [dostęp: 12.01.2015].

activities show that volunteers operate most often in the areas of education, religion, culture, and civic, professional, political and international organisations, etc. They highlight the increased interest in voluntary activities in all age categories¹⁹. In this respect, the policy of the state is extremely important, contributing to increasing the participation of Americans in voluntary activities. As demonstrated by Pająk-Ważna, voluntary activities in the United States are rewarded in the form of grants used to pay educational costs; they may also be a reason for extinguishing a student loan; volunteering is also promoted through the media, in TV series and shows, by famous actors or musicians. At this point, it is worth adding that people holding high position who enjoy social trust also show examples of their personal involvement in their résumés. Famous politicians and American presidents (B. Obama, J. F. Kennedy) undertook a number of activities related to volunteering. Volunteering experience is also regarded as professional experience that enables to win the right job²⁰. The programme *Volunteering for Employment Skills* (V4ES) was created in the United States. It offers support and advice for those interested in acquiring skills through volunteering. The main objective of V4ES is to improve young people's situation and give them opportunities to find better paid work. According to authors of the project, volunteering allows to gain confidence, communication skills, work experience and work-related skills, e.g. punctuality, timeliness, contacts with other people²¹. The initiation of the project demonstrates, in an unquestionable manner, the market value of volunteering in the context of expected competence and challenges of the modern labour market. The fact that famous (successful) people refer to their voluntary experience will presumably lead to further growth of interest in the provision of voluntary services, also because of the prestige and possible work-related success. In Poland, Centrum Wolontariatu (the Volunteer Centre)²² and GUS (Central Statistical Office) have attempted to value volunteer's work. Undoubtedly, this is a difficult task because something intrinsically free is to be estimated. The value of volunteer's work depends on his/her competence, qualifications and time spent on task performance.

¹⁹ Raport Volunteer Growth In America, New York 2006, s. 2-4.

²⁰ E. Pająk-Ważna, *Wolontariat w USA – idea pragmatyczna (i) czy polityczna*, Edukacja – Studia – Badania – Innowacje 4(116)/2011, s. 87-88.

²¹ A. Corden, R. Sainsbury, *Volunteering for Employment Skills. A qualitative research study*, SPRU, University of York, York 2005, s. 4.

²² It was established in 1993 in Warsaw and started the spread of the idea of professional volunteering in Poland <http://wolontariat.org.pl/siec/siec-centrow-wolontariatu/>, [accessed on: 15.01.2015].

Table 2. Valuation of volunteer's work

	Services requiring specific competence and qualifications	Services requiring high competence and qualifications	Services not requiring special qualifications
Nature of work	teacher, project coordinator	similar to freelance work (trainer, translator/interpreter)	office assistant, photocopying documents, packing
Pay rate per hour ²³	PLN 17.00	PLN 150.00	PLN 7.00

Source: <http://wolontariat.org.pl/wiedza/wycena-pracy-wolontariusza/>

According to 2010 GUS data, the formal and informal volunteering comprises an equivalent of work of 9.6% of those working in extended national economy (including voluntary work) and 2.8% of extended GDP. As much as 2.5 million hours was spent on non-gainful employment outside of households, corresponding to work of almost 1.5 million of full-time employees. The average annual value of non-gainful employment outside of households amounted to PLN 2,265 per person working in non-gainful employment in case of work provided directly (individually), and PLN 1,511 per volunteer in case of community work in organisations or institutions²⁴. To illustrate the importance and value of the analysed non-gainful employment, its value was estimated in PLN and, according to the accepted calculation method, amounted to PLN 41.1 billion for 2010²⁵. The above data confirm that volunteers are not only the source of strength of the organisations for which they work, but also build their human capital and, in a broader sense, their social capital.

Conclusion

Human and social capitals are of fundamental importance for the direction and pace of development of each country; they comprise core values that build modern enterprises and, thus, the labour market. Voluntary activi-

²³ The average pay rate per hour is calculated on the basis of GUS data; the average monthly pay is divided by the average number of hours worked. The value of volunteer's work depends on the number of hours worked as part of volunteering service provision in project implementation.

²⁴ K. Gołaś-Wójcicka, *Praca niezarobkowa jako część krajowych zasobów pracy*, [w:] *Wolontariat w organizacjach i inne formy pracy niezarobkowej poza gospodarstwem domowym*, red. S. Nałęcz, K. Gołaś-Wójcicka, Warszawa 2011, s. 57-70.

²⁵ K. Gołaś-Wójcicka, S. Nałęcz, *Zagregowana wartość pracy niezarobkowej na tle gospodarki narodowej* [w:] *Wolontariat w organizacjach i inne formy pracy niezarobkowej poza gospodarstwem domowym – 2011*, red. S. Nałęcz, K. Gołaś-Wójcicka, Warszawa 2012, s. 81.

ties prevent waste of the human and social capital, with the concurrent development of its value. Volunteering is an excellent tool to increase candidate's market value, which includes professional skills, industry knowledge and established contacts. All the above-mentioned aspects of the market value may be acquired and improved by providing voluntary services. Undoubtedly, participation in projects and campaigns gives us the opportunity to establish invaluable contacts, also within the industry in which we would like to be involved in our professional future. The experience gained as part of voluntary work often goes beyond the scope obtained during internships or on-the-job training, developing candidate's reputation on the market. It demonstrates involvement, motivation, and willingness to work and learn. Collaboration started in this manner may pay off as long-term cooperation or employment in the future.

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The employee 50 plus – needed in the labour market?

Introduction

The title of this paper: *The employee 50 plus – needed in the labour market?* has been given a question mark, as it provokes a reflection and raises a lot of doubts. Indeed, increasingly there are job proposals for the adults from this age category, as exemplified by the following extract from a job advertisement: *You are 50+ and it is an advantage for us. You have a variety of abilities, you are versatile, open to people and challenges.* Nevertheless, people in this age group, according to the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions, are recognized as: being in a special situation in the labour market and, for this reason, requiring a special help.¹

At the beginning, it will be useful to formulate a few questions so as to put in order the issues raised in this paper:

- Why is it not easy to be an employee aged 50 plus, while this age group is one of the most numerous in the Polish society?
- In what way, under the new law on pension rights, legally binding since 1st January 2013, may proceed a further professional career of adult people who still have a dozen, or perhaps even a few dozens, years of work in their own perspective?
- Is it true that middle adulthood, i.e. concerning people aged between approximately 40 and 60, is connected with the time of achieving the greatest professional successes and job satisfaction, since this correlation is pointed out in the developmental tasks for middle adulthood?
- What are the positive features characterizing the employee 50 plus?

¹ *Osoby powyżej 50 roku życia na rynku pracy w 2013 roku (People over the age of 50 on the labour market in 2013)*, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/analizy-i-raporty/raporty-sprawozdania/rynekpracy/sobypowyzej50rokucyanarynkupracy/rok-2013/>, p. 1 [accessed 10/02/2015].

Along with the advanced process of demographic aging in the Polish society, people over the age of 50 are and will constitute in the coming years an important age cohort, and thus the labour market cannot remain indifferent to them. The confirmation of this thesis can be statistical data on employment, economic activity and unemployment in this age group acquired in a few recent years.

According to the market research, in the last quarter of 2013 the employment rate of people aged 50-64 in the European Union stood at 67.4% and in Poland at 55.1%. The job activity was significantly lower among a bit older people – those aged 55-64, it stood at 55.1% in the EU and 45.1% in Poland (28 countries). The employment rate among people aged 50-64 was lower than in Poland in the following countries: Malta (46.5%), Croatia (50.4%), Romania (52.5%), Slovenia (52.5%) and Greece (53.4%).² Nonetheless, it should be added that despite the low employment level of people over 50 years old, the share of this age group in the labour market is steadily growing. In the last quarter of 2013, the number of employed persons aged 50 and older increased by 1.4%, while the overall employment rate increased from 31.7% to 31.8%, that is by 0.1 percentage point. According to experts, a bigger total number of working Poles was mainly due to the increase in employment of older age groups, which in turn may be the result of reducing the possibility of an early retirement³. On the other hand, it must be noted that in the group of registered unemployed, the percentage of people over 50 years old is also growing. In late 2013, the people in this age group accounted for 24.3% of the total registered unemployed, in 2012 it was 22.8%, and at the end of 2005 they accounted for less than 16% of the registered unemployed, and accordingly in a few years this share increased by more than 8 percentage points.

To conclude, both beneficial and detrimental changes may be perceived. On the one hand, some people aged 50 plus remain professionally active for a longer time, and thus the employment rate has slightly improved, on the other hand, late-middle-aged people are exposed in a special way to unemployment, mostly long-lasting. Moreover, a major problem turns out to be a durability of the professional activity of people who are over 50 years old. Supreme Chamber of Control carried out the analysis of this phenomenon, which shows that professional activation is mostly short-term in its nature.

² *Osoby powyżej 50 roku życia na rynku pracy w 2013 roku (People over the age of 50 on the labour market in 2013)*, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/analizy-i-raporty/raporty-sprawozdania/rynekpracyosobypowyzej50rokozycianarynkupracy/rok-2013/> [accessed 10/02/2015].

³ *Osoby powyżej 50 roku życia na rynku pracy w 2013 roku (People over the age of 50 on the labour market in 2013)*, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/analizy-i-raporty/raporty-sprawozdania/rynekpracy/osobypowyzej50rokozycianarynkupracy/rok-2013/>, p. 1 [accessed 10/02/2015].

In the period 2010-2012, despite the use of activation tools, the number of registered unemployed in this group increased by 15.4%. The people 50 plus usually participated in the low-cost forms of activation, thereby reducing their chances of finding permanent employment. They constituted 21.6% in 2010 and in 2012 already 22.8% of the registered unemployed. Only from 7.5% to 9.7% of resources were allocated for their activation in the subsequent controlled years.⁴ The forms of professional activation of 50 plus were also poorly assessed, especially internships, upon the completion of which most participants again registered themselves as unemployed. It was recognized that the links between a training and a subsequent job were weak. What is more, the use of funds to start a business activity was often incompatible with the objective. Grants to the unemployed were frequently treated as a kind of a welfare benefit. More favorable results were obtained while subsidizing workplaces in which the employed were given jobs⁵.

It is thought that the causes of the above findings, from the inspection carried out by the Supreme Chamber of Control, can be ascribed to various phenomena, especially to the lack of proper organization of activation projects, poor planning of the unemployed activation by particular district labour offices, wrong matching of offers to needs and expectations both of the persons concerned and the local job market. Other problems are connected with a low education level of people over the age of 50, poor health and the lack of internal motivation for further work.

Hence, does one of the most important developmental tasks concerning the career development, i.e. to achieve and maintain satisfactory performance in professional work, is a realistic task to accomplish by people over 50 who are in their middle adulthood phase?

Self-realization of people in their middle adulthood phase

Middle adulthood phase corresponds to the age between 35-40 and 55-60. As in any other phase, there are assigned some specific developmental tasks⁶. However, the life of adults in approximately twenty-year age range

⁴ Aktywizacja zawodowa i łagodzenie skutków bezrobocia osób powyżej 50. roku życia (*Professional activation and mitigation of the unemployment effects for those over 50 years old*), <http://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,5809,vp,7513.pdf>, p. 8 [accessed 24/02/2015].

⁵ Aktywizacja zawodowa i łagodzenie skutków bezrobocia osób powyżej 50. roku życia (*Professional activation and mitigation of the unemployment effects for those over 50 years old*), <http://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,5809,vp,7513.pdf>, p. 8 [accessed 24/02/2015].

⁶ M. Olejnik, *Średnia dorosłość. Wiek średni*, [w:] *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka, Charakterystyka okresów życia człowieka (Middle adulthood. Middle age*, [in:] *Psychology of human development*.

can be extremely different. For some adults, the age of 40 is the beginning of family life, career and personal fulfillment resulting from their own interests and passions. For others, it means the end of professional activity, the children leaving family home, the beginning of loneliness and a midlife crisis. Of course, there are still other possible practical-life scenarios at this stage of adulthood. Developmental psychologist can see a great potential in this stage of life, but also a lot of dangers to human development. It is in fact time to implement many developmental tasks, among which one is very important, namely the job satisfaction. Zbigniew Pietrasiński, referring to the division of developmental tasks by Havighurst and Goldenson, defined this challenge as: further professional development, career management.⁷ In a slightly different way, the same task was formulated by Piotr K. Oleś, but also in relation to the tasks by Havighurst: to achieve and maintain a satisfactory performance in the professional career.⁸

Especially noteworthy are the developmental tasks of the middle age related to the professional activity of adults formulated by Karolina Appelt, because they are further specified and viewed from the perspective of contemporary changes in the labour market. The proposals of the author are as follows:

- achieving and maintaining the desired economic standard of living;
- expanding qualifications in order to reach a sense of mastery;
- coping with growing professional responsibility due to holding the managerial positions;
- preparing the successors and supporting them in achieving an ever greater independence;
- in the final stage, preparing to the retirement.⁹

There are also other concepts regarding the commitment to professional work in the middle age, yet most of them highlight a positive dimension of careers in this period of life and an optimum performance, expressed in the material status, the financial situation, the scope of power, authority and satisfaction resulting from work.¹⁰

Characteristics of periods in human life), B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała, (ed.), Volume 2, Warsaw 2001, p. 234.

⁷ Z. Pietrasiński, *Rozwój człowieka dorosłego (Development of an adult)*, PW „Wiedza Powszechna”, Warszawa 1990, pp. 98-99.

⁸ P.K. Oleś, *Psychologia człowieka dorosłego (Psychology of an adult)*, Warszawa 2011, p. 52.

⁹ K. Appelt, *Środkowy okres dorobności. Jak rozpoznać potencjał dojrzałych dorosłych?*, [w:] *Psychologiczne portrety człowieka. Praktyczna psychologia rozwojowa (Middle adulthood. How to recognize the potential of mature adults? [in:] Psychological human portraits. Practical developmental psychology)*, A.I. Brzezińska, (ed.), Gdańsk 2005, p. 529.

¹⁰ M. Olejnik, *Średnia dorosłość. Wiek średni*, [w:] *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka, Charakterystyka okresów życia człowieka (Middle adulthood. Middle age, [in:] Psychology of human development.*

The results of a poll conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre confirm that in recent years the level of job satisfaction among the Poles has been on the raise. It is divided into two main areas: fulfillment and stability. The highest level of job satisfaction was declared by the Poles in the age group of 34-44 and over the age of 55, actually it was the same and amounted to 3.81 (on a scale of 1-5 points, 5 indicates the highest level of satisfaction; 1 is the lowest level of satisfaction). This result concerned the fulfillment, which consists of: the opportunity to make full use of qualifications, the relevance of education to employment, the interest in work, as well as the sense of importance and significance of performed tasks. The employees aged 45-54 declared a slightly lower fulfillment in work, because it amounted to 3.75. The youngest professionally active Poles declared the least job satisfaction and the poorest fulfillment, those aged 18-24 scored 3.35 points, and those in the age group of 25-34 scored slightly higher - 3.61 points out of 5.

To sum up, from the above it can be deduced that along with aging the level of job satisfaction and fulfillment in career increases, although it slightly decreases between 45 and 54 years of age. Perhaps this situation is the result of approaching or exceeding the age of fifty, which in some way changes the status of the middle age adults and puts them in the category of adults 50 plus. Maybe there appears some uncertainty, a kind of stigma, or even a positive discrimination because there is a special treatment of people 50 plus, often already called seniors, also transmitted in the media, and just completing the age of 50 moves almost automatically the adults to another adult category. This is of course a speculation, however, it seems to be one of the possible causes of this temporary reduction of the job satisfaction.

At that time of development, adults may also experience some changes related to their health, midlife crisis, entering into new non-professional roles, i.e. a grandmother or a grandfather and an adult child of elderly parents. Certainly there are more factors reducing the satisfaction, such as the fear of professional competence outdated and "younger competitors" taking over managerial positions. In contrast, people older than 55, already approaching retirement, perhaps have already been through a period of adaptation to these changes, therefore their level of satisfaction is slightly higher and the level of fear and uncertainty is lower.

The results of the research on job satisfaction in terms of stabilization (satisfaction from pay, contentment with social benefits and job security)

according to the Public Opinion Research Centre are slightly worse. The lowest scores were obtained in two extreme age research groups: people in the age range of 18-24 scored 3.11 points and those above the age of 55 scored 3.14. Professionally active adults aged 25-34 rated the stabilization at work the highest: 3.34 points, and successively, the adults aged 35-44: 3.26 and between 45-54 years of age: 3.17.

The level of satisfaction from work stabilization is thus falling along with age, although it is the lowest in adults who are just beginning their career paths. In all age groups there is a discrepancy between the satisfaction from fulfillment and the satisfaction from stabilization, to the detriment of stabilization. This is another confirmation of the difficult situation for the youngest and the oldest workers in the labour market. The lowest score of satisfaction from the professional activity also correlated with the education level of the respondents. It concerned the employees over 54 years of age with basic schooling and the lowest income per person in the household in rural areas.¹¹

The research results quoted above suggest the importance of the development task connected with the personal fulfillment of adults through their professional activity. From the perspective of current situation in the labour market and static data previously quoted on the employment and unemployment rate for people aged 50 plus, the detailed tasks by K. Appelt seem even more strongly to emphasize the role of professional activity in the middle age. In a consumer society, the economic factor is not without significance for people in the middle adulthood phase; achieving the desired standard of living and material stabilization of a family are certainly the challenges faced by people in the middle age. Also the job satisfaction and the ability to take responsibility for entrusted duties, as well as the need to prepare the successors and oneself to retire are all of great importance. The uncertainty of people 50 plus is also connected with the amount of their pension, which, as we know, is reflected in the standard of living and the sense of security, so important in health deterioration that progresses with age.

The professional activity in the middle age does not always give a sense of satisfaction. A crisis may occur in the career development resulting from the differences between expectations connected with the profession and the work performed, or from a professional burnout syndrome¹². Other prob-

¹¹ *Zadowolenie z pracy i jej oceny (Job satisfaction and its evaluation)*, Warsaw 2013, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_010_13.PDF [accessed 02/11/2014].

¹² M. Olejnik, *Średnia dorosłość. Wiek średni*, [w:] *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka, Charakterystyka okresów życia człowieka (Middle adulthood. Middle age, [in] Psychology of human development. Characteristics of periods in human life)*, B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała, (ed.), Volume 2, Warsaw 2001, p. 239, compare: A. Bańka, *Działalność zawodowa i publiczna*, [w:] *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki. Jednostka w społeczeństwie i elementy psychologii stosowanej (Professional and public*

lems include: prolonged stress at work, dehumanization of work due to an excess of tasks, a shortage of tasks, inactivity, or the already mentioned unemployment.¹³ There are also a few other well-defined and described examples of pathological behavior at work, such as: mobbing, physical abuse, verbal abuse, workaholism, sexual harassment, discrimination or exclusion.¹⁴ The phenomena of discrimination and exclusion on grounds of age in a special way affect people aged 50 plus. Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law analyzed the content of 60727 job advertisements in terms of their correctness, i.e. the absence of any discrimination concerning: gender, age, appearance, disability, nationality, etc. The 24628 ads contained the elements of discrimination. The predominant discrimination was based on sex (86%), followed by age (10%), appearance (2%), nationality (1%), disability (1%), and others (criminal record, addictions, military service status, health, sexual orientation).¹⁵ The discrimination on grounds of age was present at the stage of seeking candidates for employment, while performing particular work, and when leaving it. The authors of the study recognized as discriminatory not only the ads directly referring to a specific age, but also those using such suggestive phrasing as: “young dynamic team”, “students are welcome”, etc., that could indirectly cause the applicants to refrain from applying for specific positions.¹⁶

activity, [in] *Psychology. Academic textbook. The individual in society and elements of applied psychology*), GWP, Gdańsk 2000, Volume 3, p. 306.

¹³ A. Bańka, *Działalność zawodowa i publiczna*, [w:] *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki. Jednostka w społeczeństwie i elementy psychologii stosowanej (Professional and public activity, [in] Psychology. Academic textbook. The individual in society and elements of applied psychology)*, GWP, Gdańsk 2000, Volume 3, pp. 305-306.

¹⁴ S. Kozak, *Patologie w środowisku pracy. Zapobieganie i leczenie (Pathologies of the in the workplace. Prevention and treatment)*, Warsaw 2009, Diffin; S.M. Litzke, H. Schuh, *Stres, mobbing i wypalenie zawodowe (Stress, mobbing and professional burnout)*, Gdańsk 2007, GWP.

¹⁵ K. Kędziora, K. Śmiszek, M. Zimny (eds.), *Równe traktowanie w zatrudnieniu. Przepisy a rzeczywistość. Raport z monitoringu ogłoszeń o pracę, Polskie Towarzystwo Prawa Antydyskryminacyjnego (Equal treatment in employment. Rules and reality. Monitoring report on job advertisements, Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law)*, Warsaw 2009, pp. 11-12.

[https://www.google.pl/#q=K%C4%99dziora+K.%2C+%C5%9Amszek+K.%2C+Zimny+M.%2C+\(red.\)%2C+R%C3%B3wne+traktowanie+w+zatrudnieniu.+Przepisy+a+rzeczywisto%C5%9B%C4%87.+Raport+z+monitoringu+og%C5%82osze%C5%84+o+prac%C4%99%2C+Polskie+Towarzystwo+Prawa+Antydyskryminacyjnego%2C+Warszawa+2009](https://www.google.pl/#q=K%C4%99dziora+K.%2C+%C5%9Amszek+K.%2C+Zimny+M.%2C+(red.)%2C+R%C3%B3wne+traktowanie+w+zatrudnieniu.+Przepisy+a+rzeczywisto%C5%9B%C4%87.+Raport+z+monitoringu+og%C5%82osze%C5%84+o+prac%C4%99%2C+Polskie+Towarzystwo+Prawa+Antydyskryminacyjnego%2C+Warszawa+2009) [accessed 12/12/2014].

¹⁶ K. Kędziora, K. Śmiszek, M. Zimny (eds.), *Równe traktowanie w zatrudnieniu. Przepisy a rzeczywistość. Raport z monitoringu ogłoszeń o pracę, Polskie Towarzystwo Prawa Antydyskryminacyjnego (Equal treatment in employment. Rules and reality. Monitoring report on job advertisements, Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law)*, Warsaw 2009, p. 14.

[https://www.google.pl/#q=K%C4%99dziora+K.%2C+%C5%9Amszek+K.%2C+Zimny+M.%2C+\(red.\)%2C+R%C3%B3wne+traktowanie+w+zatrudnieniu.+Przepisy+a+rzeczywisto%2C+Warszawa+2009](https://www.google.pl/#q=K%C4%99dziora+K.%2C+%C5%9Amszek+K.%2C+Zimny+M.%2C+(red.)%2C+R%C3%B3wne+traktowanie+w+zatrudnieniu.+Przepisy+a+rzeczywisto%2C+Warszawa+2009)

In conclusion, people over 50 years of age, certainly a significant part of them, in the task of development within their career, are exposed to a series of obstacles and problems which they not always can cope with alone. So it seems reasonable to take interest in this group of employees and assist them in responding to difficult developmental challenges. Unfortunately, not always the aid comes up to the expectations, or the beneficiaries themselves are not prepared to receive such support and assistance. There is also the paradox - "50 plus" may sound frightening, because it suggests the next stage of life, a difficult and an unpredictable one, hence it is rarely associated with something good and enjoyable. The incorporation into the group of people *being in a special situation and requiring a special help* may cause a positive stigma, or it is a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: young people perceive me differently, so I am different because I am already 50 plus.

There is no doubt that mature adult people have many qualities, competencies and skills that make them special in the labour market. Nevertheless, it is problematic that these advantages of older workers are not taken seriously and are not always truly appreciated. It would be good if the experience, mastery and specific soft skills, such as: loyalty, commitment, ability to communicate in a team, did not have to compete with the following: pace of work, efficiency, speed of thinking and learning, endurance, mobility, fitness, command of foreign languages and advanced information technologies. Indeed, they are not comparable and, certainly, the second group of attributes is related to young people. Perhaps it is important, however, to mutually learn and understand that each phase of adulthood is different and, more importantly, it proceeds to the next one according to the flow of time. It is also important to learn about mutual benefits, and not to enlarge the classification with even more age groups in the society. This causes the trend towards distancing people from each other, or provokes intense efforts of some mature adults to "keep up with the young". It is important to neither feel too old nor too young, because such mental states provoke complexes and lead to the ghettoization of particular social groups.

Why the employee 50 plus?

In order to enumerate the advantages of mature age employees, it is first necessary to emphasize one important fact - people aged 50 plus in today's labour market are very diverse and, therefore, no excessive generaliza-

tions should be applied. As it results from the studies on the already completed professional activity of older people, it was strongly correlated with the level of formal education and gender. For example, the women in collectivities of the least qualified people, especially those residing in rural areas, found fulfillment in a traditional model of life, which required the availability for the family and remaining outside the labour market, more frequently than their better educated counterparts and the residents of cities.¹⁷ Also in the group of still active people aged 55-59, the level of education decided about staying in work.¹⁸ The education, social capital, competence and willingness to continuously learn are certainly the factors that conduce the people 50 plus to remain longer in the job market.

In recent years, many studies have been carried out and a lot of Polish reports have been elaborated that indicate a significant socio-emotional potential of the employees 50 plus. The features of mature people highlighted in these diagnoses are quite similar, although, as it has been pointed out, they do not concern the entire population of 50 plus to an equal degree. The final conclusions in one of the reports suggest that managers should take into account the following psychosocial characteristics of the employees 50 plus:

- they have the highest possibilities to provide social support for both the heads of the company and younger colleagues;
- they do not look for support, they do not occupy others with their needs, even those from their own generation, in contrast to young workers;
- they are altruistically oriented, attending to the problems of both young people and the managers;
- they easier let others lead them, they are characterized by the lowest rate of directiveness;
- the social roles at work are more harmonized between those 50 plus and managers, hence the mature age workers feel connected with the team and are loyal to it;
- the factor of assertiveness in this group is the lowest, therefore there is no need to fear a strong and assertive refusal expressed by these workers;

¹⁷ P. Szukalski, *Aktywność zawodowa (The professional activity)*, [in] Mossakowska M., Więcek A., Błędowski P., (ed.), *Medyczne, psychologiczne, socjologiczne i ekonomiczne starzenia się ludzi w Polsce (Medical, psychological, sociological and economic aging of people in Poland)*, Termedia Wydawnictwa Medyczne, Poznań 2012, p. 411-412.

¹⁸ P. Szukalski, *Aktywność zawodowa (The professional activity)*, [in] Mossakowska M., Więcek A., Błędowski P., (ed.), *Medyczne, psychologiczne, socjologiczne i ekonomiczne starzenia się ludzi w Polsce (Medical, psychological, sociological and economic aging of people in Poland)*, Termedia Wydawnictwa Medyczne, Poznań 2012, p. 416.

- rarely do mature people have a need to disclose their intimate information;
- their structure is more uniform, with similar psychosocial parameters, similar attitudes and evaluations, hence they are predictable in relationships and the manager is not forced to seek a differentiated, individual approach;
- they are more stable not only in life and work but, consequently, they are also more stable psychologically;
- they are characterized by devotion and loyalty to the company cherishing its traditions and culture, they have extensive professional experience (although they lack IT skills), they are more responsible, they are willing to make sacrifices and, at the same time, they are less demanding;
- they have developed the emotional intelligence expressed in empathy, deeper understanding and perception of any situation from the broader context of events and attitudes.

The final commentary in the report quoted above indicates that: *such a constellation of features among people 50+ is less favorable for themselves. It may be a source of bitterness, professional burnout and a desire to take retirement or disablement pension at the first opportunity. However, it should be prevented by using the values of 50+, simultaneously building the resources of both the company and this valuable group of employees.*¹⁹

Comparatively, other European studies should be acknowledged, carried out with a broader scope, on the subject of people 50 plus in the labour market. The questions asked in the poll concerned the benefits of workers aged 55 and older. People from this age group had a slightly better opinion about their own skills at work than the rest of the respondents, but in terms of the main features, the total views were consistent – that people 50 plus are experienced, reliable and able to make their own decisions, however, in comparison with younger employees, they lack flexibility, openness to new ideas or knowledge of the latest technologies.²⁰

¹⁹ *Uwarunkowania organizacyjne i psychologiczne intermentoringu dla utrzymania osób 50+ na rynku pracy. Raport (Organizational and psychological determinants of inter-mentoring to maintain the persons 50+ in the labour market. Report)*, http://www.zysk50plus.pl/storage/fck/file/raport_uwarunkowania_organizacyjne_i_psychologiczne.pdf, pp. 235-238 [accessed: 26/02/2015]; Compare: E. Dubas, J. Pyżalski, M. Muszyński, J.R. Pavel (ed.) *Wspieranie rozwoju bezrobotnych 50+. Doświadczenia z projektu Adults Mentoring (Supporting the development of the unemployed 50+. The experience with Adults Mentoring project)*, Łódź 2008.

²⁰ *Aktywność osób starszych i solidarność międzypokoleniowa. Statystyczny portret Unii Europejskiej 2012 (Active aging and solidarity between generations. A statistical portrait of the European Union in 2012)*, http://www.mpips.gov.pl/gfx/mpips/userfiles/_public/1_NOWA%20STR

Quite similar conclusions may be drawn from the opinion surveys of young Polish workers on the people aged 55 plus. They appreciate the experience of older people, but do not express an unambiguous conviction about the willingness to cooperate with these people, although they think that it would be beneficial for their companies.²¹

The age and maturity does not mean a full range of competencies, but it certainly fosters achieving mastery, expertise, facultative and procedural, hence not only do the psychosocial features of mature age workers constitute their assets in the labour market.²² AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) have long argued that *older workers are reliable, flexible, experienced and possess valuable institutional knowledge. Increasingly, employers seem to want these traits.*²³ The mature age people are important for a sustainable labour market. Such solutions as: age management, intergenerational transfers, adapting the educational offers and competencies both to the possibilities and needs of employees but also to the labour market, preparing suitable workplaces for the mature age staff, flexible forms of employment, promoting and supporting the entrepreneurship have already been used for many years. Further solutions are still being implemented to encourage people aged 50 plus to stay professionally active as long as possible. These are certainly highly desirable efforts.

There remains, however, another, broader social problem that also requires changes – the perception of aging and the old age phenomena, as well as the self-perception of older people. As long as strong stereotypes, stigmas and discriminatory practices are entrenched in the society, the old age will be associated only with loss, limitations and the worst phase of adulthood, it will be difficult to change both the attitude of people 50 plus towards staying in the labour market, and the attitude of younger generations towards the presence of senior colleagues at work. An important task is to educate

ONA/Aktualnosci/seniorzy/badania%20aktywne%20starzenie/1Final_statystyczny_portret_UE_pl.pdf [accessed: 19/12/2014].

²¹ A. Richert-Kaźmierska, K. Stankiewicz, *Kompetencje pracowników 55+ w opinii pracowników z młodszych grup wiekowych (Competencies of 55+ employees in the opinion of employees from younger age groups)*, "E-mentor" 2013, No. 1, <http://www.e-mentor.edu.pl/artukul/index/number/48/id/984> [accessed 01/03/2015].

²² M. Olejnik, *Średnia dorosłość. Wiek średni*, [w:] *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka, Charakterystyka okresów życia człowieka (Middle adulthood. Middle age, [in] Psychology of human development. Characteristics of periods in human life)*, B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała, (ed.), Volume 2, Warsaw 2001, pp. 241-242.

²³ D. Kadlec, *The Suddenly Hot Job Market for Workers Over 50*, [in] *Money Magazine*, March 2, 2015, <http://time.com/money/3725034/jobs-older-workers-improved/> [accessed: 10/10/2015].

equally the young and the old about the intergenerational solidarity, and the people 50 plus about acquiring competencies and motivation to stay longer in the present job or to take up a new, satisfying career.

Final outcome – multigenerational labour market

The focus on people aged 50 plus in the Polish labour market is not an accidental phenomenon because, as highlighted in this paper, the benefits of a longer working life have both individual and social dimensions. Finding the fulfillment, the satisfaction from playing professional roles, good relationships at the workplace, as well as material benefits – all translate into life satisfaction. The occupational activation programmes for people aged 50 plus, which were implemented years ago, have already brought certain results, unfortunately, not all of them in equal measure, neither in the long-term. Monitoring and in-depth analyses of the effects of these programmes, particularly after their completion, is certainly a very important task. The following programmes: “Age management”, “Profit from maturity” and “Solidarity of Generations” are just some examples of proposals designed for mature age workers to stay active in the labour market.²⁴ The long-term programme “Solidarity of generations”, which was initiated in 2008, by the year 2020 is supposed to boost the employment rate for people aged 55-64 up to 50%.²⁵ By the year 2015, the Polish government allocated approximately 23 billion PLN for the implementation of this project.

More and more frequently, the huge potential of mature-age employees is used through such practices as: mentoring, inter-mentoring, interim management or coaching, but these activities involve the people with extensive

²⁴ Program solidarność pokoleń. Działania dla zwiększenia aktywności zawodowej osób w wieku 50+ (*The programme solidarity of generations. Measures to increase professional activity of people aged 50+*), <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/seniorzyaktywne-starzenie/program-solidarnosc-pokolen/> [accessed: 01/02/2015].

Uwarunkowania organizacyjne i psychologiczne intermentoringu dla utrzymania osób 50+ na rynku pracy. Raport (Organizational and psychological determinants of inter-mentoring to maintain the persons 50+ in the labour market. Report), http://www.zysk50plus.pl/storage/fck/file/raport_uwarunkowania_organizacyjne_i_psychologiczne.pdf [access: 26/02/2015]; *Zarządzanie wiekiem – szansa dla przedsiębiorców. Mini przewodnik zarządzania wiekiem (Age management – an opportunity for entrepreneurs. Mini guide to age management)*, http://www.zysk50plus.pl/storage/fck/file/PUBLIKACJE/Zarządzanie_wiekem_minipradnik.pdf [accessed: 03/01/2015].

²⁵ *Aktywizacja zawodowa osób 50+ – rozpoczyna się ogólnopolska kampania informacyjno-promocyjna (Professional activation of persons 50+ – the beginning of a nationwide information and promotion campaign)*, <http://50plus.gov.pl/Aktywizacja-zawodowa-40389> [accessed: 02/02/2015].

experience, high level of education and competence. The people 50 plus with the lowest level of formal education are still in a more difficult situation, and they definitely outnumber the well educated group. Abroad, the situation of people in the analogous age group is better. *Foreign employers very often make a condition that the employee should have e.g. a minimum of 10 years' experience, and they do not see the problem that the electrician is 55 or 60 years old (...). Most often there is a journeyman who helps him in heavy physical work, e.g. to drag cables. What above all counts abroad are: conscientiousness, punctuality, precision and experience. To tell the truth, there is often a language barrier, but e.g. in construction companies or in the staves recruited to production, there are usually people who speak German or French, and if there is some need, they interpret for the others.*²⁶ A good and recent example is the British multinational bank Barclays. In spring 2015 it expanded its apprenticeship programme and began employing people past age 50. *The bank says this is no PR stunt; it values older workers who have life experience and can better relate to customers seeking a mortgage or auto loan. With training, the bank believes they would make good, full-time, fairly compensated loan officers. Already, Barclays has a team of tech-savvy older workers in place to help mature customers with online banking. The new apprenticeship program builds on this effort to capitalize on the life skills of experienced employees.*²⁷

The purpose of this paper was an attempt to draw attention to the complicated situation of people aged 50 plus in the labor market. On the one hand, these are the people who have a great potential and characteristics considered to be useful at work, on the other hand, in practice they are not fully and not by all employers appreciated, consequently, they are discriminated because of their age. Encouraging this age group to take on *the style of extended employment activity*²⁸ requires the preparation of both employers and employees. The intervention policy is certainly needed, as well as some important systemic preventive measures intended for younger workers. *The change of mentality among Polish employers progresses very slowly, and it is mainly due to foreign companies that were the first to introduce the employment programmes or age management programmes. Just like Ikea where the people*

²⁶ Pracownicy 50+ mają źle w Polsce. Za granicą przeciwnie (*Workers 50+ do badly in Poland. Abroad, on the contrary*), Gazeta Prawna. pl 07/09/2012. http://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/pracakariera/artykuly/645593,pracownicy_50_maja_zle_w_polsce_za_granica_przeciwnie.html [accessed: 03/02/2015].

²⁷ D. Kadlec, *The Suddenly Hot Job Market for Workers Over 50*, [in] *Money Magazine*, March 2, 2015, <http://time.com/money/3725034/jobs-older-workers-improved/> [accessed: 10/10/2015].

²⁸ O. Czerniawska, *Style życia na emeryturze (Lifestyles in retirement)*, [w:] Konieczna-Woźniak R. (ed.), *Dorobłość wobec starości. Oczekiwania – Radości – Dylematy (Adulthood in relation to old age. Expectations – Joys – Dilemmas)*, Wydawnictwo UAM, Poznań 2008, p. 27.

50 plus have been recruited and trained for years. The company also subsidizes their treatment and offers discounts on shopping. Currently, the workers in their fifties represent approximately 5 – 6 percent of the staff.²⁹

The author of this paper tried to give answers to the questions raised in the introduction, but not all the answers are simple and straightforward. Therefore, at the end of this study, it is worthwhile bringing up one more issue – the aforementioned mutual acceptance of generations, ideally, not just in the labor market. If we do not cease to be afraid of what is natural and inevitable, which is aging and the old age, it will result in applying a distinct, separating approach towards the people 50 plus. Moreover, a special treatment will frequently be tantamount to the stigmatizing behaviour and not to the supporting one. The valuable, accurate and reliable reports are important to diagnose and disseminate the problems of people 50 plus, but they will not be sufficient to convince the bigger number of employers to give the older people a chance.

Adults aged 50 plus must also demonstrate the will of lifelong learning and development, which are known not to be easy due to the aging processes. The adjustment of training offers and the engagement of properly skilled educators of adults, career counselors who are able to motivate their adult students, certainly present other challenges facing adult education nowadays³⁰.

The employers' actions are also important. Maintaining a healthy and motivating working environment, efficient management of age, ability to solve conflicts, a sense of team, tactful and businesslike communication – these are only the tools in the hands of efficient managers that might be used to merge intergenerational relationships in every company's "backyard". Young people should not be afraid of elderly and vice versa. The best way to improve the situation of people aged 50 plus is by integrating activities and not separating ones, maintaining, however, a personal autonomy. Last but not least, the differences should be perceived as strengths and not antagonistic factors. It is also worth pointing out that in the next years in the group of people 50 plus there will be more and more individuals with a higher level of formal education, with other competences and aspirations. Perhaps in the future, the title of a similar paper to this one will not have to be ended with a question mark, it will be replaced with an exclamation mark!?

²⁹ *Pracownicy 50+ mają źle w Polsce. Za granicą przeciwnie (Workers 50+ do badly in Poland. Abroad, on the contrary)*, Gazeta Prawna. pl 07/09/2012. http://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/praca-kariera/artykuly/645593,pracownicy_50_maja_zle_w_polsce_za_granica_przeciwnie.html [accessed: 03/02/2015].

³⁰ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik (ed.), *Całozyciowe uczenie się jako wyzwanie dla teorii i praktyki edukacyjnej (Lifelong learning as a challenge for educational theory and practice)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2013.

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Post-graduate MBA studies as a form of life-long learning

Introduction

The socioeconomic changes which have continued since the early nineties of the 20th century have initiated the growth in educational ambitions of the Polish society. University education has become an indispensable investment which increases employment potential and reduces the risk of unemployment. This undiminishing interest in education, especially in higher education, has been going on since that time.

Contemporary world compels people to continue their education into their adulthood. Therefore it is often called life-long learning. Scientific and technological progress along with civilizational development makes it essential to modify and update knowledge and gain new qualifications and competencies. Frequently, a university diploma is not enough to find employment. An individual has to be prepared to engage in constant learning and self-betterment, as employees are more and more often expected to be better qualified, to keep up with the changes in the free-market environment, to fulfil the idea of life-long learning within their own job. Therefore life-long learning has become the response to the continuously changing, fluid, post-modern reality. One of the forms of lifelong learning is post-graduate study, whose popularity has been growing by the year. In country-wide terms, the statistics show a stronger interest in these studies and every year new specialisations are being established while universities are increasing their recruitment limits. Master of Business Administration (MBA) studies are particularly considered to be the “top-class” specialisation in this category.

The purpose of the present article is to analyse MBA studies as a form of life-long learning. The author starts off by discussing the issue of post-

graduate studies in general and then moves on to present MBA studies as a form of education which is not only dedicated to managers. The article also discusses the findings of the author's own research concerning educational decisions of managers who are engaged in MBA studies at present.

Post-graduate studies – option or obligation?

The range of post-graduate studies available in Poland is varied and really wide. Most Polish universities and other tertiary education institutions offer them to people who, having graduated from the university, want to broaden their skills and qualifications or acquire knowledge in a different field which is indispensable to their job and which will enable them to continue to climb the career ladder. The offer is aimed both at the people who have just started their career path and those who are already significantly experienced. A post-graduate study is an investment in one's own development. If we want to gain new competencies, acquire new tools and become innovative, a post-graduate study is the right choice. It is an abundant source of knowledge, reflections and experience throughout the whole period of study¹.

Polish post-graduate studies are regulated by the act called *Higher Education Law* of 27 July 2005². It states that post-graduate studies differ remarkably from university studies or PhD studies. They are specifically dedicated to those who have completed either first or second cycle studies. Each public or private institution of higher education may offer post-graduate studies according to the subject-matter of a given university's faculty. It is also possible to offer studies specialising in a subject different from the university's specialisation, but then it requires the consent of the Minister and Chief Council of Higher Education.

Each university passes its independent Post-graduate Studies Regulations, which describes precisely the studies' course and organisation, as well as the rights and the duties of the participants. Their status is different from that of a university student, so they are not eligible for material benefits; they do not receive a student's ID which enables various forms of discounts, either. Post-graduate studies are organised by the given university faculties, frequently in co-operation with other universities, institutions or organisations. They can be run as evening or extramural courses, or, increasingly, as

¹ K. Klimek-Michno, *Kiedy iść na studia podyplomowe?*, *Personel i zarządzanie* nr 8/2014, s. 27.

² Compare: the Act of 11 July 2014 on amendment to the Act of Law on Higher Education and some other acts.

the so called "e-learning" courses, i.e. remote on-line studies. Depending on the university, they may last from one to four semesters, the most typical duration being two semesters. In order to complete these studies it is required to obtain positive grades (or credit) in the subjects taught as well as in the final examination including the defence of the thesis or graduation project. Each participant receives a post-graduate study graduation certificate.

In the recent years universities have noticed a significant growth in the interest in this education form. Particularly popular specialisations usually close their enrolment lists on the first day of recruitment. Their requirements are contingent on the particular specialisation and the university itself. Very often it is the first-come, first-served rule and submitting the required documents that make applicants successful. The documents usually encompass the post-graduate study application form, a personal details form and a copy of the university diploma. Some schools may also accept candidates who are final year students of uniform Master's degree studies or final year students in the first or second cycle studies. Some schools also prefer to conduct an interview with prospective candidates. The classes have the form of lectures, workshops, conversation classes and laboratory classes, and the main purpose of post-graduate studies is to present the practical solutions within the studied subject-matter.

According to the Central Statistical Office of Poland, in 2011 the post-graduate study participants accounted for 24.2 per cent of people aged 25 - 64³. In the academic year 2012/13 the total number of students amounted to 172,589, 102,864 of which were public university students, while 69,725 studied at private schools⁴. The growing interest in post-graduate studies undoubtedly encourages universities to broaden their offer in order to attract as many learners as possible. The most popular choices refer to the specialisations which increase the likelihood of finding employment in rapidly developing areas such as trade, logistics, IT, telecommunications, finance and accounting or environmental protection. Other increasingly appealing subjects include public relations, marketing, advertising, communication, administration and managing human resources, companies, projects, quality, real estate or business management⁵.

The market is the decisive force responsible for establishing or closing down particular specialisations. More and more people are aware of the need for promoting the idea of Lifelong Learning and the opportunities which result from it. "Considering the civilisational turning point we are approaching, which is caused by the growing importance of science and

³ *Kształcenie dorosłych*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warsaw 2013, p. 26.

⁴ *Szkoły wyższe i ich finanse w 2012 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warsaw 2013, p. 156.

⁵ *Informator o studiach podyplomowych i MBA*, Cracow 2008.

education in the contemporary world, one may assert that knowledge is the key resource of the post-industrial age and the learning society”⁶.

Post-graduate studies are a great opportunity to learn about new solutions, look at the business from the practical point of view, to reach beyond the theory acquired during the studies. It is also a valuable chance to exchange experiences with other participants from the same business area and to establish new contacts⁷.

MBA – a choice not just for managers

Master of Business Administration courses are particularly valued among post-graduate studies. The first course in Poland was made available to students at the International School of Management in 1989⁸. Since that time two different MBA models have come into being in Poland: the first (American) type of studies is usually conducted in the “full-time” mode, rather academic in its style, based on independent, analytical work of students who are tutored and supervised by academic scholars. The other model (European) is usually shorter, dedicated to adult students who are more professionally experienced. The teachers are both academics and practitioners⁹. Both private and public universities in Poland prepare these studies in co-operation with foreign universities. The courses offered, as it has already been pointed out, are usually more practical in character than the traditional university curricula, as the classes are given by managers and presidents of international companies and organisations¹⁰. Indeed, most MBA curricula belong to the “*executive*” category, which means they are dedicated to practitioners. A typical MBA curriculum encompasses educational modules starting from general basics moving further on to strategic management, marketing, finance, production, managerial accounting or HR management. Additionally, some curricula also include classes in ethics and psychology of business. MBA studies are usually conducted in a foreign language, and what is more, the course framework requires participants to attend an obligatory traineeship verified by the employer. Although the

⁶ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w perspektywie globalnej i lokalnej. Między wymogami rynku a indywidualnymi strategiami edukacyjnymi*, Poznań 2004, p. 38.

⁷ K. Klimek-Michno, *Kiedy iść na studia podyplomowe?*, *Personel i zarządzanie*, No 8/2014, p. 30.

⁸ *Narodowe obserwatorium kształcenia i szkolenia zawodowego. Raport*, 2002, p. 108.

⁹ A. Andrzejczak, *Studia MBA jako międzynarodowy standard kwalifikacji*, (w:) *Studia MBA paszportem do międzynarodowej kariery w biznesie*, Poznań, 2 March 2001, p. 1.

¹⁰ O. Flak, *MBA znaczy: Mieć w Banku Aktywa*, *Personel i zarządzanie*, No 5 (182) May 2005, p. 52-55.

average price of an MBA course is ten times higher than the prices of other post-graduate studies and constitutes a huge investment cost, the popularity of these courses is undiminishing¹¹.

In the research conducted by the author as many as 62 per cent of the managers took part in an MBA course, which is believed to be the most advanced form of developing managerial competencies. It is a serious asset in the course of job-seeking and job-changing because it offers useful, practically applicable knowledge as well as develops the attitude of open-mindedness to various forms of knowledge¹². The main motivator for enrolment is usually the urge to be promoted to a higher position or the willingness to keep the existing job thanks to acquiring solid, profound knowledge as well as new skills. MBA studies are considerably challenging and demanding, but at the same time, they sensitise the participants to humanistic and ethical aspects of business behaviours. Therefore they may motivate the managers to pay closer attention to relations with employees which means that they raise their social competencies as well¹³. Finally, MBA studies are undoubtedly connected with prestige and recognition in the eyes of the employers.

MBA studies in the light of research

The survey was conducted in December 2014 among 32 MBA course participants at the Poznan University of Economics and Business¹⁴. The survey was anonymous and consisted of open and closed questions.

The respondents' replies point to the unambiguous conclusion that they independently direct their educational and professional development and they are aware of the need for constant learning which enables them to make progress in terms of both their intellect and personality. An overwhelming majority's (90%) answer to the question "Who influenced your decision about taking up a post-graduate study?" was that it had been an autonomous decision. 6% replied that they had been affected by friends and acquaintances, while a minuscule percentage pointed to family (2%) and a superior (2%) (see Fig. 1).

¹¹ A. Andrzejczak, *Kompetencje kadry kierowniczej a studia MBA*, (w:) Wiśniewski Z. (red.) *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Wyzwania u progu XXI wieku*. Toruń, 2001, p. 156.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹³ J. Szłapińska, *Podnoszenie wartości kapitału edukacyjnego pracowników w systemie kształcenia ustawicznego*, Poznań 2009, p. 136.

¹⁴ Program MBA Poznań-Atlanta zajął 5 miejsce w rankingu Perspektyw z 2014 roku http://www.perspektywy.pl/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1888:ta-bela-rankingowa-2014&catid=152&Itemid=315 (date of access 21.04.2015).

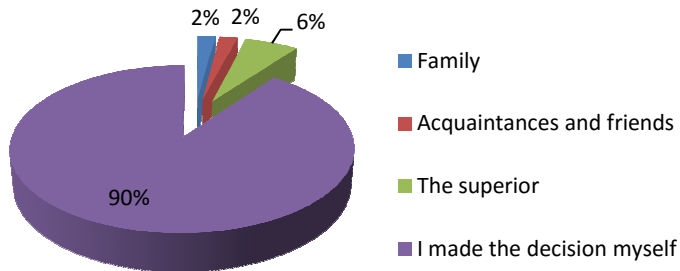


Fig. 1. Who affected your decision to start a post-graduate study?

Source: author's own research

Each person taking up a post-graduate study has varied goals and expectations as well as disparate motivators leading to engagement in this form of education. More often than not, they are connected with the given person's career path. The worker wants to develop their skills and broaden their knowledge in the job-related area and, thanks to this, become promoted. On the other hand, some employees prefer to move on in their career, change the subject of their work and the post-graduate study is a chance to gain knowledge and new skills in a so-far-unknown field. Still another motivator, unrelated to the professional career, might refer to the willingness to develop oneself or to pursue one's passions¹⁵.

In fact, this was indeed the most frequent answer in the survey: 24% declared that they had taken up MBA studies for their own development and advancement. The second most common answer was that the respondents wanted to find a better, more interesting job (17%), just like those, who were compelled by their superiors to start the study (17%). Promotion opportunities were given as the reason for studying by 12% of the respondents, and 8% declared that it was the recommendation from the friends or acquaintances who had completed this form of education, that made them begin the studies. Mere 7% of the surveyed stated that they had taken up the study because they had planned to retrain and improve their work (see Fig. 2). According to Sedlak & Sedlak consultancy, in 2013 the earnings of MBA recipients were in the range of 15,000 PLN¹⁶. It is clear then, that better paid jobs may also constitute additional motivation to engage in MBA studies.

¹⁵ A. Solak, *Rynek studiów podyplomowych*, na http://rynekpracy.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria_glowna.32/wpis.749 (date of access: 21.04.2015).

¹⁶ <http://praca.interia.pl/zarobki/news-ile-daja-studia-mba,nId,1546274> (date of access 21.04.2015).

The people who have already opted for this study believe that an MBA diploma is a guarantee of a good job and that it will help them in their further career path.

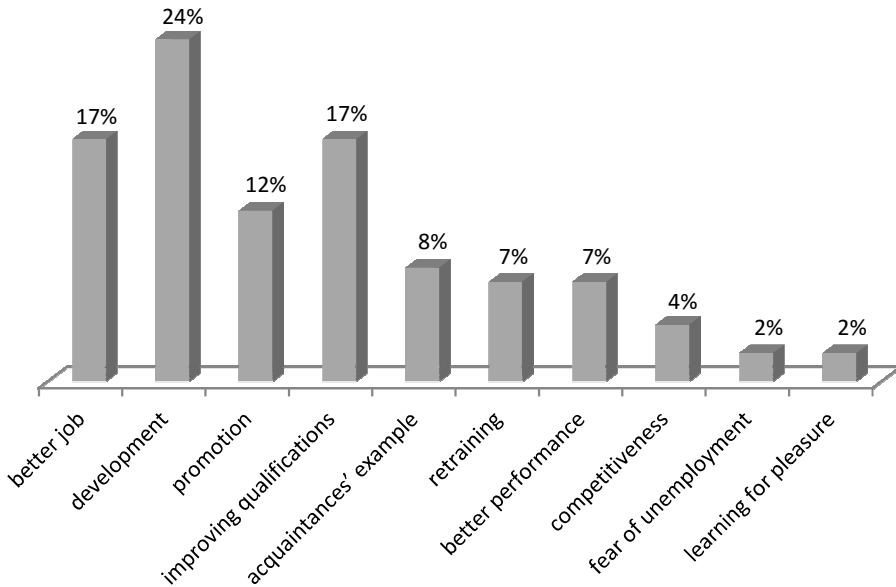


Fig. 2. What factors have determined the choice of MBA studies?

Source: the author's own research

Once the choice of the field of study has been made, one has to choose the university where the course is conducted. According to the research findings, the key reason (80%) for this choice is the university's prestigious position (as it has already been mentioned, the survey was carried out at the Poznan University of Economics and Business¹⁷). The remaining participants were primarily motivated by the distance of the university from their hometown (14%) and the friends and acquaintances' opinions (6%) (see Fig. 3). It has to be said here, though, that it is not only the students who try to verify the quality of education at a given school, but also the universities themselves which thoroughly select their students in order not to lose the hard-earned reputation. In spite of the high prices for MBA studies, renowned universities have more candidates than available vacancies and the demand for these courses has been growing for the past 10 to 15 years.

¹⁷ In the economic universities' league table the University of Economics and Business comes second, http://d.polskatimes.pl/k/r/1/08/9e/537c353f1e38a_z.pdf (date of access: 17.02.2015)

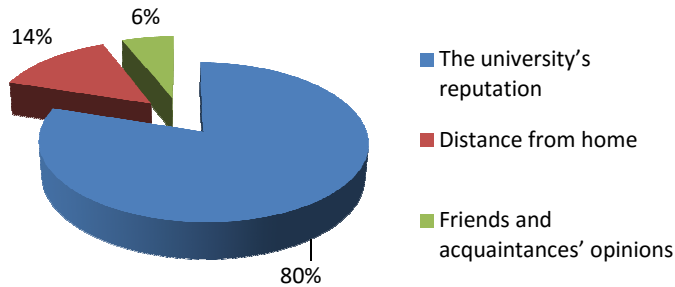


Fig. 3. What factors were decisive in choosing the university offering an MBA course?

Source: author's own research

Most of the surveyed participants (76%) pay for the studies with their own means. A rather small percentage of employers (14%) have consented to cover the total costs of studying while 10% of employers have covered half of the total cost (see Fig. 4). The fees for MBA studies range from approx. five to more than fifty thousand PLN. The cheapest ones are usually conducted without participation of any foreign universities, and the teachers are university lecturers with little or no business experience¹⁸.

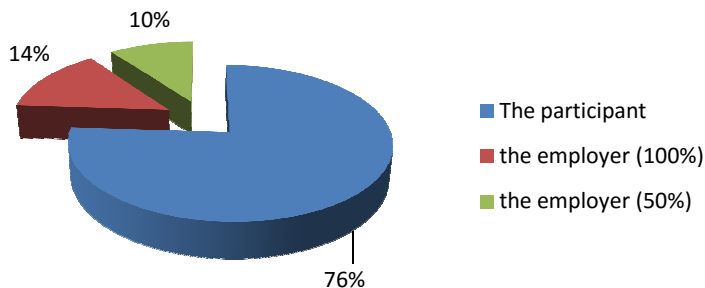


Fig. 4. Who covers the MBA fees?

Source: author's own research

When asked if they would apply the acquired knowledge and skills in practice, MBA course participants replied that they probably would (58%), or that they definitely would (24%) (see Fig. 5). Only 16% answered that they

¹⁸ A. Hausner, *Najdroższe studia świata*, dokument elektroniczny na: <http://targimba.gazeta.pl/targi/10,59,,,12230,Najdro%C5%BCsze+studia+%C5%9Bwiata.html> (date of access: 17.02.2015).

probably would not put this knowledge to any practical use. Hence, most participants will improve their skills and qualifications by means of innovative solutions and up-to-date knowledge while employers will benefit from these changes as well.

MBA courses are largely based on practical workshops and case studies in which students deal with realistic problems which they encounter in their working lives. In this way participants gain practical experience and learn specific behaviours in order to be able to use these later in their workplace. They are taught how to use knowledge and skills in effective decision-making, The course enables them to understand all the important aspects of company operations, encourages creative thinking and acting in an innovative way, which is indispensable in contemporary world. Additionally, it tackles legal, economic and financial matters necessary in business management, teaches strategies of company management, planning, leadership within the company and in a team, communication and presentation skills¹⁹.

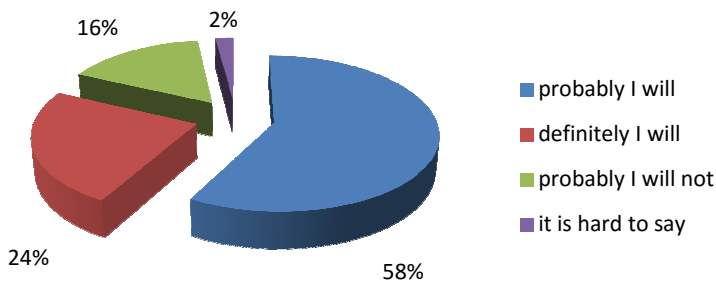


Fig. 5. Will you use the new knowledge/skills at work?

Source: author's own research

Each person taking up post-graduate studies has certain expectations regarding their completion and outcome. These expectations are usually different from motivation which these people have. The respondents mainly focused on broadening their knowledge in a selected field – 31% of the respondents replied in this way. 27% of the participants expected their chances on the labour market to improve as a result of completing post-graduate studies. 19% stated that gaining new skills which they would use in the current job was important. 13% of the respondents, in turn, hoped for finding a new job more easily after the post-graduate studies, while 4%

¹⁹ <http://www.sprawdzprace.pl/artykuly/studia-i-edukacja/studia-mba-cena-wymagan-ia-ranking,27/> (date of access: 21.04.2015).

wanted to gain respect and recognition. Finally, 6% of the participants claimed that post-graduate studies would not change their situation at all (see Fig. 6).

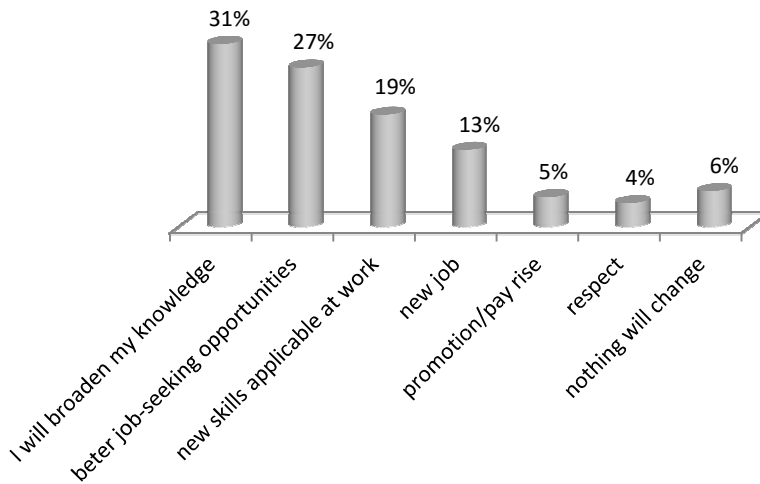


Fig. 6. How will your life change after finishing MBA post-graduate studies?

Source: author's own research

The decision to choose particular specialisation of post-graduate studies is a crucial one. Potential students expect tangible benefits and measurable outcome in the form of broadened knowledge and improved skills indispensable in their working life. The research also elicited responses concerning the degree of satisfaction with the MBA post-graduate study and its curriculum. As it can be seen on Fig. 7 most participants of the MBA course are satisfied with it – 64% of the participants answered that they were “quite satisfied” and further 14% replied that they were “definitely satisfied” with the course. While 6% of the participants could not decide if they were satisfied or not, 16% stated they were “quite dissatisfied” with it. The strict evaluation of the course was probably caused by the participants’ prior professional experience and precise objectives which they had planned to fulfil in the course of these studies.

As a final question, the students were asked to explain what they really enjoyed/liked in the selected studies. The aim of this question was to elicit the participants’ opinions about the most essential aspects of these studies. The respondents pointed at various aspects: from the number of people in the class to the teaching aids available. Most often, however, their comments were focussed on: teaching methods, the staff’s professionalism, their skills

and ways of presenting knowledge. Here are some sample comments (in brief): *“interesting forms of class organisation”, “the knowledge presented by trainers is well-grounded in practical experience, not only theory”, “it was possible to become familiarised with aspects of management which so far had been beyond my competencies”, “real-life examples, not just dull theory”, “the lecturers were practitioners from the topmost local companies”, “case studies provided a chance to verify theory in practice”, “experienced trainers from many companies who shared best practice”*. As it is clearly visible, the opinions are really positive, which can be a credit to the organisers, among other things.

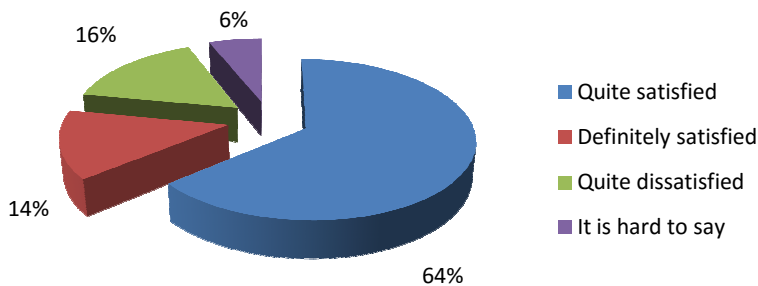


Fig. 7. Are you satisfied with the studies' curriculum?

Source: author's own research

Interest in MBA studies has been growing continuously as the role of education in today's world has also been increasingly significant. For some time, lifelong learning has been considered ultimately important. When a manager realises after a period of work that he/she has insufficient knowledge, that a different management style is needed to be more effective, when he/she feels that the change is inevitable because they would like to face and overcome new challenges, MBA programmes are exactly what they should look for²⁰.

Conclusion

Contemporary world is a fast changing one, requiring constant adaptation and education. The idea of lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important, both in the microscale of an individual development and in the macroscale of social progress. More and more people realise that if we do

²⁰ http://www.perspektywy.pl/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1892:raport-100-lat-mba&catid=150&Itemid=314 (date of access: 21.04.2015).

not continuously supplement and broaden our knowledge, if we do not manage to learn new skills, occupational tasks will become more and more impossible to perform. In the process of raising vocational qualifications post-graduate studies play a significant role and become more popular by the year. They make it possible to gain practical competencies which cannot be learned in the earlier stages of education.

A key factor in reaching for success in general and in pursuing professional career is the recognition of one's own plans, goals and aspirations. It is crucial to design one's educational and vocational doings so that they are in agreement with individual talents and abilities. Employers expect workers to keep up with the changes in the surrounding environment, through lifelong learning within the job they have, to function successfully in the competitive world. This is why professional training and education is increasingly important and encompasses an ever larger number of people. Contemporary human being must learn to survive in the changing environment, conditions and with new working requirements. This is the reason why it is so important to improve and update qualifications, refresh the knowledge and skills people possess, in order to keep up with the progress within their occupation. The knowledge we have once acquired is insufficient to last for the rest of our lives. These processes result in rapidly developing schemes for systematic refreshment and updating of general and vocational education among adult, active professionals. According to the research presented in this article, lifelong learning allows people to find fulfilment despite the rapid changes in the surrounding environment of globalised world. Post-graduate studies are a very effective form of meeting the lifelong need for education, supplementation of knowledge and moulding new skills and behaviours. It is no surprise, then, that the respondents' opinions of the MBA course and attitudes toward it were predominantly positive.

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Dimensions of Employment Flexibility According to Polish Students

Along with globalization and economic changes, quite significant changes in employment have been observed for many years. Increasingly more often, there can be seen a departure from full-time work characteristic of the so-called Fordism model involving an employment agreement. Such an agreement is characterized by an indefinite period of employment, stable working hours, in a company registered office and under an employer's supervision. Fluctuating economic conditions and ongoing globalization processes, including the globalization of the labour market, have resulted in employers using flexible forms of employment increasingly more often. Flexibility has become the key feature of the modern labour market and human resource management strategies as well as an ability to react to changes and adjust to them.

In the current political discourse of the European Union, flexibility is more often perceived as a desired, even essential, factor which is the natural effect of changes taking place in the labour market. The introduction of flexible forms of employment has initiated the comprehensive implementation of the flexicurity concept. The basis for the implementation of the flexicurity model in the EU countries is *The Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity* published in Brussels on June 27, 2007¹. According to L. Machol-Zajda, the flexicurity concept in the labour market is based on positive feedback between flexibility and security². It has been assumed in the EU that its

¹ http://www.mpips.gov.pl/userfiles/File/flexi_komunikat_ue.pdf (access on 17.03.2015).

² L. Machol-Zajda, *Flexicurity w warunkach kryzysu [Flexicurity in the Times of Crisis]*, (in:) Organiściak-Krzykowska A. (ed.), *Współczesne aspekty rynku pracy [Modern Aspects of the Labour Market]*, Warsaw-Olsztyn 2013, p. 21.

implementation is essential for achieving objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and currently the *Europa 2020* strategy.

The authors of the Communication to the European Parliament emphasize that in order to implement the flexicurity model, it is necessary that four elements exist:

- flexible and reliable contractual arrangements (from the perspective of an employee and an employer);
- comprehensive lifelong learning strategies enabling employees to be still capable of adapting themselves and being employed;
- effective and active labour market policy which enables the reduction of unemployment spells and facilitation of changing jobs;
- modern social security systems³.

According to the authors of the quoted study, the indicated elements can support each other thus result in positive changes in the labour market.

It is worth mentioning that the flexicurity concept became the subject of a political debate of the EU politicians at the end of the 1990s, what was caused mainly by the reform of the labour market in Denmark and the Netherlands which were the first to implement the concept of combining flexible employment with social security. Ongoing positive changes in countries which have revolutionized their labour markets caused that flexicurity has become to be considered as the essential element of the EU labour market policy⁴. Labour market experts unanimously state that in the diverse and quickly changing world flexibility is needed for both employees and employers. Since 1997, along with the Green Paper, *Partnership for a New Organization of Work* being established by the European Commission, flexible working time has become the key element of the debate concerning modernization of work and employment organization. In the document, it was acknowledged that flexible working time management can be beneficial for both employers and employees provided that there is a negotiating mode of introduction of changes (mainly in group arrangements and agreements)⁵. Labour market pundits unanimously agree that employment flexibility is inevitable and it is a constant element of the market reality. However, there are still unsolved issues concerning achieving optimal balance between flexibility of the labour market and protection of employees against risk in

³ http://www.mpips.gov.pl/userfiles/File/flexi_komunikat_ue.pdf (access on 17.03.2015).

⁴ L. Machol-Zajda, *Flexicurity w warunkach kryzysu [Flexicurity in the Times of crisis]*, (in:) Organiściak-Krzykowska A. (ed.), *Współczesne aspekty rynku pracy [Modern Aspects of the Labour Market]*, Warsaw-Olsztyn 2013, p. 21.

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=102&langId=en> (access on 17.03.2015), cf. *Elastyczne formy pracy. Poradnik dla pracowników [Flexible Forms of Work. Guidelines for Employees]*, Wydawnictwo WSE, Białystok 2007, p. 18.

the labour market. L. Machol-Zajda emphasizes that "flexicurity can be a response to the need for improvement of employees' and companies' capabilities to adapt as well as dynamically changing conditions in the labour market"⁶. According to the EU experts, currently, flexicurity is needed more than ever, however, it is important to adjust the discussed concept to conditions of particular member states of the EU and to maintain an appropriate balance between flexibility and social security, what seems to be vital also in the Polish reality.

Flexible forms of employment is a term which we have been using in Poland for several years. However, although the aforementioned forms of work have been present for a long time in the lives of Poles, non-standard agreements seem to be a category which is not fully recognized and, above all, accepted. Despite many advantages and increasing popularity in the labour market, flexible employment is often considered as 'second class work' or 'a necessary evil', mainly due to lack of social security.

Reading this study, the range and complexity of the term of employment flexibility have to be taken into consideration. According to experts, 'flexibility' refers only to forms providing employees with autonomy of work and working time organization, and since it is a narrow definition, it is advisable to use the term of *untypical* or *untraditional* employment⁷. However, the objective of this article is neither to describe particular forms of employment at length nor to explain all issues connected with it, but to provoke reflection on actions favourable to promoting employment flexibility in terms of chances of young people in the labour market. A considerable part of the study will be devoted to discussing the research findings that present attitudes of Polish students towards the analysed concept. To be more precise, in this study flexible forms of employment (FFE) are defined as a form of employment (the most often used civil-law agreements, agreements for a definite period of time and self-employment).

Considering flexible employment as 'worse' work opens a list of risks which non-standard employment carries. Temporary agreements and other forms of flexible employment in Poland are very often equated with exploitation of employees and sly employers who intend to take advantage of their employees as much as they can. Thus there is a disgraceful term for temporary agreements, i.e. 'junk contracts'. The next risk resulting from

⁶ D. Szaniawska, *Spoleczny i rynkowy wymiar idei flexicurity* [Social and Market Dimension of Flexicurity] after L. Machol-Zajda, *Dialog* 1/2013, p. 101.

⁷ M. Sochańska, A. Morysińska, E. Makowska-Belta, Z. Kołakowska-Seroczyńska, R. Szarfenberg, T. Mering, *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia – skutki społeczne i ekonomiczne. Raport końcowy* [Flexible Forms of Employment – Social and Economic Effects. Final Report], Wrocław 2013, p. 26.

popularization of flexible employment is the labour market segmentation. Fixed-term agreements often result in the division of the labour market into: full-time employees (having steady employment) and temporary employees (living in an uncertain situation, at risk of unemployment and with little chance of promotion), what increases the risk of an uncertain professional situation. The labour market segmentation clearly refers to M.J. Piore's concept of the dual labour market which indicates two significantly different areas: the primary and secondary markets. This concept introduced a division into the so-called "good" jobs attributed to the primary sector and "bad" jobs connected with the secondary sector. The employed in the primary sector have high job security, prospects for promotion, incentives and professional development opportunities as well stable working conditions. The secondary sector jobs are unattractive and are characterized by a relatively low salary, poor professional development opportunities and high job insecurity, what results in unused employee potential in this sector and high employee turnover⁸. Moreover, a long-term presence in the secondary market increases the risk of a growth of a new social class, the precariat. It is a term introduced by G. Standing who describes people being members of this group as those characterized mainly by job insecurity⁹. The author emphasizes that besides job insecurity and insecure social income, members of the precariat also experience lack of a work identity. Even when working, the precariat does not identify themselves with the job done or the employer, is poorly motivated to engage in work since they do tasks which do not reinforce their professional position and give chance to develop their careers¹⁰. The majority of them feel a lot of discomfort caused by uncertainty about their professional situation.

However, it should be observed that apart from risks connected with flexible employment, there are also advantages of this type of employment. It seems that the greater accessibility of flexible employment forms and flexible working hours have a positive impact on the likelihood of switching from temporary employment to permanent one thus increase the average working period and decrease the risk of dismissal. This thesis corresponds very well to the concept of the transitional labour markets by G. Schmid. According to the author, developing the transitional labour markets "creates opportunities for employees to develop their professional biographies freely, move

⁸ A. Szydlik-Leszczyczyńska, *Funkcjonowanie współczesnego rynku pracy. Wybrane uwarunkowania*. [The Functioning of the Modern Labour Market. Selected Determinants], Warsaw 2012, p. 49-50.

⁹ G. Standing, *The Precariat. The New Dangerous Class*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2011, p. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

smoothly between various spheres of activities and combine educational needs and family duties with professional activity"¹¹. Schmid emphasizes that the presented concept allows for various employment forms and, at the same time, favours the introduction of various forms of social security and stimulating activities which will increase chances of individuals in the labour market. The methods of its implementation should be negotiated by social partners and adjusted to uniqueness of a given labour market, the same way as in the case of implementation of the flexicurity idea. The author claims that specific solutions in terms of the transitional labour markets depend on social and economic factors and social policy models in particular European countries¹².

When analysing advantages of flexible employment forms, it is worth indicating that untypical employment forms are a comfort solution for people who value professional development and time management. Untypical agreements give a possibility of achieving balance between professional and private life as well as a satisfactory life in all aspects of human activities. The proposed approach fits in well with the concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB). WLB programmes are aimed at such distribution of time that each employee – regardless of age, sex or race – can combine work with other duties and aspirations as well as it is possible¹³. The promoted approach corresponds to a holistic approach to life where a career is considered as its integral part and not a separate and obligatory task to be done. The next benefit resulting from flexibility in the labour market is an increase of likelihood that employees adapt to diverse employer's requirements. Therefore, a flexible employee is considered as "adapted" what results in employability – extremely significant for effective functioning in the present labour market.

The discussed concept also favours implementing the idea of diversity management, including in particular the concept of age management. As B. Jamka states, "the overriding objective of optimal use of employee potential requires the diversification of approaches towards particular age groups, and at the same time, acceptance and understanding of the necessity of such an approach – what is not easy to achieve due to generation differences, also in approaches towards work"¹⁴. The idea of flexicurity favours satisfying expectations of

¹¹ E. Giermanowska, *Ryzyko elastyczności czy elastyczność ryzyka. Instytucjonalna analiza kontraktów zatrudnienia [Risk of Flexibility or Flexibility of Risk. The Institutional Analysis of Employment Agreements]*, Warsaw 2013, p. 151.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹³ *Elastyczne formy pracy. Poradnik dla pracowników [Flexible Forms of Work. Guidelines for Employees]*, Wydawnictwo WSE, Białystok 2007, p. 21.

¹⁴ B. Jamka, *Czynnik ludzki we współczesnym przedsiębiorstwie: zasób czy kapitał? Od zarządzania kompetencjami do zarządzania różnorodnością [Human Factor in the Modern Enterprise:*

various generations employed in organizations and enables using to a large extent capital of employees representing various generations in the labour market.

The unquestioned advantages of employment flexibility are also an increase of possibilities of employment for people from the so-called peripheral areas and those which have a high unemployment rate, and a rise of people active in the labour market who due to their private or health situation cannot take up traditional jobs (taking care of a child or a parent, disability).

Apart from the obligation to implement the idea of flexicurity in member states of the EU since 2007 when the EU incorporated the discussed term and flexibility strategies into the European Employment Strategy, it should be emphasised that each state has a right to select their method of implementation of the concept, however, none of them can avoid assessment and initiatives connected with flexicurity¹⁵.

Taking the statistics on the Polish labour market into consideration, it should be observed that among employees who most often take up non-standard forms of employment there are mainly young people entering the labour market. These are people who have the least secure employment as they work on the basis of flexible employment forms. According to the Eurostat data from 2012, the highest percentage of people employed under an agreement for a definite period of time was in Poland. There were 26.8%¹⁶ of all employees employed under such conditions. In 2011, as many as 67% of Poles aged 15-24 took up jobs under untypical agreements. It is worth emphasizing that only young Slovenes were at that time more often employed temporarily than their Polish peers¹⁷. As A. Kiersztyn indicates, hired employees aged 21-25 constituted the only group where employment agreements for an indefinite period of time were extremely rare. In 2008, one in three young employees had such an agreement and in 2013 only one in four¹⁸.

Resource or Capital? From Competence Management to Variety Management], Warsaw 2011, p. 234.

¹⁵ L. Machol-Zajda, *Flexicurity w warunkach kryzysu [Flexicurity in the Times of Crisis]*, (in: A. Organiściak-Krzykowska (ed.), *Współczesne aspekty rynku pracy [Modern Aspects of the Labour Market]*, Warsaw–Olsztyn 2013, p. 29.

¹⁶ A. Kiersztyn, *Niepewność zatrudnienia. Kto jej doświadcza? Czy to stan chwilowy? [Employment Insecurity. Who Experiences it? Is it a Temporary State?]*, on: http://polpan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/polpan_niepewnosc-zatrudnienia2.pdf (access on 15.02.2015).

¹⁷ M. Kowalówka, *Nowa klasa prekariatu [New Class of Precariat]*, on <http://www.rynekpracy.pl/artukul.php/n.266/email.105830/wpis.742> (access on 16.03.2015).

¹⁸ A. Kiersztyn, *Niepewność zatrudnienia. Kto jej doświadcza? Czy to stan chwilowy? [Employment Insecurity. Who Experiences it? Is it a Temporary State?]*, on: http://polpan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/polpan_niepewnosc-zatrudnienia2.pdf (access on 15.02.2015).

Analysing the above data, it seems justified to research these young people as they most often use non-standard employment forms. The research findings below concern attitudes towards flexible employment forms by students of Pedagogy from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The subjects were 142 second-year students of the BA programme. Due to the character of the specialization, the vast majority of the respondents were women - 95%.

The respondents were between 20 and 25 years old, 47% were 20 years old, 41% were 21 years old and 12% were between 22 and 25 years old. The employment situation of the participants was as follows: most often they do odd or temporary jobs - 41%, 25% of people declare that they do not work at all or they are out of work at the moment (also 25%). Interestingly, the only reason why the respondents do not work is studying and too many duties connected with that. Only one respondent, what accounts for 0.7% of respondents, runs their own business and around 6% of the respondents declare to have a steady job. As many as 64% of the subjects had jobs under the contract of mandate or contract for specific work, 34% have never had such jobs and the rest did not give an answer. Around 23% of the respondents have taken up a temporary job twice or three times - in total over the period of about 2 months. About 18% of the respondents worked this way for about 6 months, 7% for a year and 11% for more than a year having even several agreements. The rest of the respondents did not give an answer.

The main objective of this research was to examine student opinions on flexible employment forms, in particular to identify advantages and disadvantages of the discussed forms of work.

At that point, I would like to emphasize that in Poland there is a quite unique attitude towards non-standard employment forms. Due to strong tradition of employment 'stability' and attachment to one employer, especially among representatives of generations functioning in the labour market for many years, the only right method of working, established among next generations, is traditional employment on the basis of an employment agreement. All forms different from the traditional employment are considered as negative. Pejorative features attributed to flexible employment forms have caused that in Poland it is common to describe untraditional agreements as 'junk contracts'. The very name itself does not evoke positive feelings and it additionally causes the growing mistrust among the Polish society towards untypical agreements. This situation is fuelled by union representatives and the opposition to ruling parties who convince the Poles that acceptance of 'non-standard' employment means acceptance of exploitation. Unfortunately, such activities do not favour the popularization of flexible employment forms and the development of flexicurity.

One of the hypotheses, which were verified during the analysis of the research, was that the respondents do not fully understand what flexible employment forms are and they are more accustomed to the term of junk contracts what automatically results in a negative attitude towards non-standard agreements. In order to verify this hypothesis, the respondents were asked if temporary agreements and junk contracts are the same types of agreements. The research findings are presented in Chart 1.

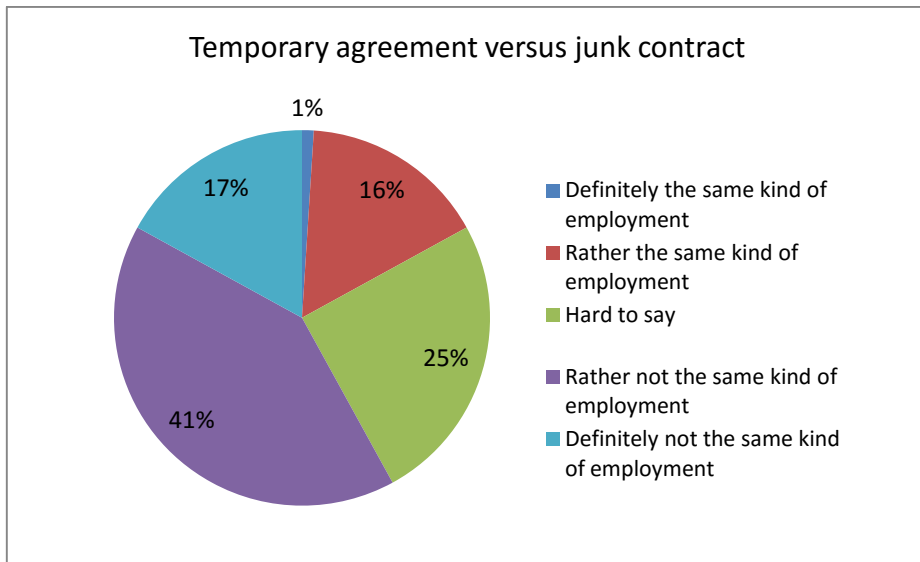


Chart 1. Temporary agreement versus junk contract

Source: The author's own study on the basis of the research.

The analysis of the data from Chart 1 indicates that the respondents clearly distinguish temporary agreements from junk contracts. As many as 58% of the respondents claim that these are different kinds of agreements, 17% of them think they are the same and 25% do not know if there are any differences between the analysed categories. The research findings seem to be confirmed by answers to next questions concerning defining the analysed concepts by the respondents. In terms of flexible employment forms, 60% of the subjects do not know what the term means and 40% do not have such knowledge. Among features of flexible forms of employment mentioned by the respondents, most often ones were those describing flexible working time. Interestingly, the mentioned flexibility most often appeared in the context of an employer adapting (working time) to employee's needs and not the other way round. Such expressions appeared like: *"the employer moves away from fixed standards and adapts to the employee"*, *"I decide on my own when*

and how I work". The respondents also emphasize that FFE give an opportunity to negotiate with an employer in terms of the amount of a salary and perks. According to the respondents, the discussed concept is a task-based, part-time job for an indefinite period of time. In their opinion, it is a job which can be done at home, what gives a possibility of cooperation with several employers at the same time. According to the subjects, the diversity resulting from many opportunities that FFE give, lack of a direct contact with an employer and no attachment to a workplace give people working this way more comfort. In their opinion, the next feature of FFE is lack of obligations towards an employer and responsibility. Moreover, the respondents emphasize that the analysed forms give a possibility of adjusting work to the current life situation and combining various life roles. Among the pejorative descriptions, there were single cases of descriptions concerning unpaid social contributions and unsettled overtime.

The students were also asked if they know what 'junk contracts' are. The knowledge of the term was declared by 69% of the respondents and 29% did not know what these contracts are. The rest of the respondents did not give an answer. Analysing the concept of a junk contract, it was most often emphasized that such contracts are only beneficial for employers, are characterized by a low salary without any perks (holiday, health insurance, Social Insurance Company), temporariness and a short, most often a one-month period of work so they do not guarantee a steady job and job security. The respondents emphasized that such contracts are pointless: "*they are concluded just to be*", "*the contract which gives nothing*", "*they do not count*". The respondents emphasized that these are contracts which an employer can quickly terminate and an employee can be dismissed immediately without notice. They think that these contracts do not bind employees with an employer, are the least prestigious from all offered ones in the labour market and equate with contracts of mandate or contracts for specific work. Only one respondent claimed that junk contracts mean employment agreements.

The answers clearly suggest that despite the knowledge of the issue, expressions attributed to flexible forms of employment and junk contracts are not the same. Moreover, the respondents have positive associations with flexible employment. It can be even concluded that it is beneficial for an employee, gives a possibility of negotiating with an employer and adjusting work to one's own needs. On the other hand, even due to their name and public stigma, junk contracts have negative associations and are considered as 'a necessary evil' which is beneficial only for an employer who treats an employee as a hired worker who can be easily dismissed. The expressions attributed to particular forms of employment are proved by the data in the Chart below.

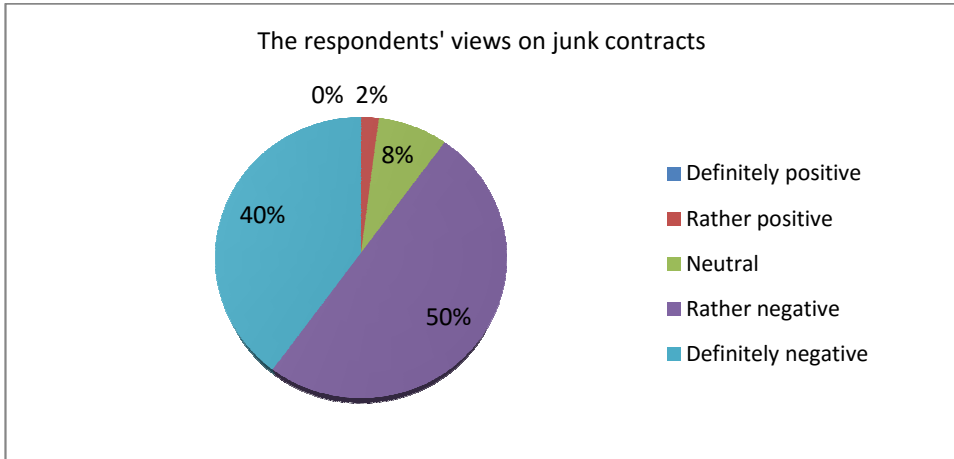


Fig. 2. The respondents' views on junk contracts

Source: The author's own study on the basis of the research.

The data presented in Chart 2 indicates that there is a definitely negative attitude towards the so-called 'junk contracts'. As many as 90% of the respondents declared that such contracts "*evoke negative associations*" and only 2% of them have "*rather positive*" associations with such contracts.

Interestingly, despite a positive image of flexible forms of employment, a temporary job does not seem to be perceived so optimistically.

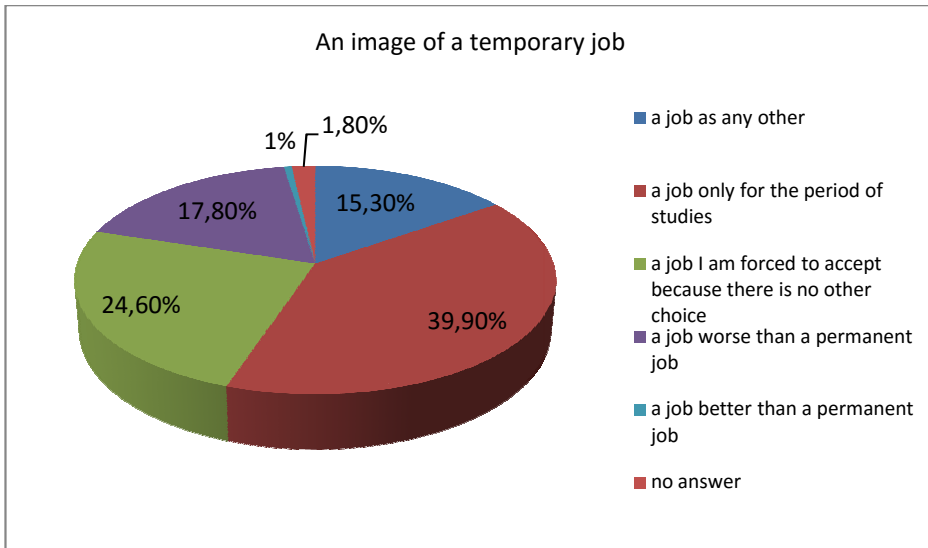


Fig 3. An image of a temporary job according to the respondents

Source: The author's own study on the basis of the research.

The data presented in the Chart above indicates that almost 25% of the respondents consider a temporary job as a kind of obligation and not a choice, almost 40% treat it as a transitory state – a job only for the period of studies, and 17.8% of the respondents claim that a temporary job is worse than a permanent job. The presented answers suggest that still the most desirable solution in terms of employment is a permanent job with an employment agreement. The presented research findings prove the formulated hypothesis.

During the research, the respondents were asked to point out associations which temporary agreements evoke in them. The research findings are presented in Chart 3.

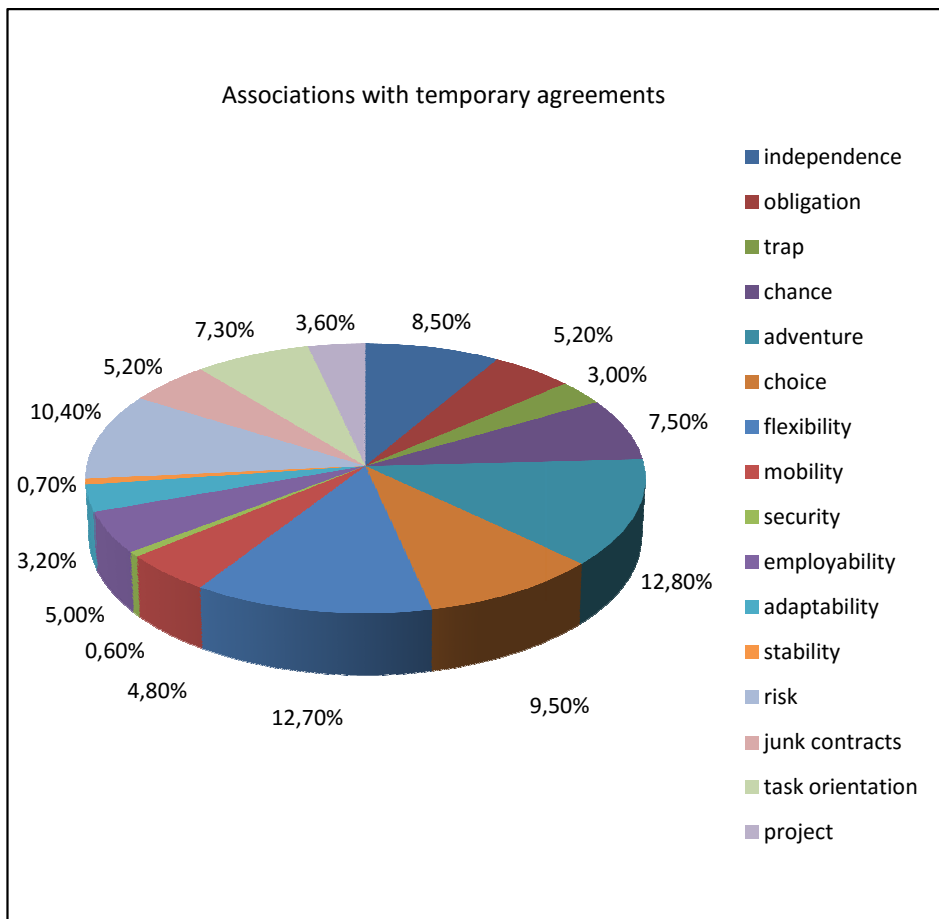


Fig. 4. Associations with temporary agreements

Source: The author’s own study on the basis of the research.

As the data in the Chart above indicates, the range of associations concerning temporary agreements is really impressive. Among the expressions which appeared most often the following ones could be found: adventure (12.8% of answers), flexibility (12.7%), risk (10.4%), choice (9.5%), chance (7.5%), task orientation (7.3%). The lowest value was attributed to such categories as: security (0.6%), stability (0.7%), trap (3%) and adaptability (3.2%).

These associations correspond to advantages and disadvantages attributed to flexible employment. The respondents identified a wide array of advantages and disadvantages of flexible employment which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of flexible employment

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexible working hours • possibility of quick additional earnings • high earnings • no long-term commitment to an employer • easy agreement termination • feeling of financial independence • chance to become independent • no responsibility • variety, originality • mobility • meeting new people • exchange of experiences • acquiring new experience • exploration of one's own professional interest and the labour market • skill development • not very demanding (in terms of qualification and engagement) • preparing for changes • benefits for employers: fewer fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disadvantageous for an employee • below employee's qualification and expectations • low-paid, no established minimum wage • requirements inadequate for earnings • no possibilities of development • no chances to be promoted • short-term • unstable in terms of both period of time and salary • no sense of security • no social benefits • no guaranteed holiday, maternity or sick leave • not counted as work experience • no social recognition and prestige • part-time work • increased risk of unemployment • risk of sudden dismissal • no respect for the provisions of the Labour Code • work as obligation and not a choice • escalation of treating employees as objects • beneficial only for an employer • favours exploitation of employees by employers • breeds professional frustration

Source: the author's own study on the basis of the research.

The data included in Table 1 indicates that the respondents can point out both advantages and disadvantages of non-standard employment. The advantages mentioned focus on several important aspects. The first one con-

cerns the possibility of acquiring necessary experience (44% of the respondents). The subjects define experience in terms of developing skills, acquiring new professional competence as well as functioning in the labour market, e.g. practicing job interviews. According to the subjects, the analysed forms of work are a great method of 'testing' searching for one's own place in the labour market. The unquestioned advantages of flexible forms of employment are also, according to the students, flexible working hours and a possibility of adjusting a schedule to the needs of those working in order to be able to combine work with studies (37% of the subjects). According to the respondents, an important aspect of short-term work is the financial one. The subjects emphasize that such an activity gives a possibility of quick earnings or extra earnings, what enables greater financial independence and sometimes even financial independence from parents. The material aspect of temporary agreements was highlighted by 47% of the respondents. The aspect of short-term work was ranked high among advantages although it is often considered as the biggest disadvantage of short-term agreements. The respondents emphasize (54%) that the short term nature of work makes it a very beneficial solution for them, does not bind them permanently with an employer and gives the possibility of terminating an agreement quickly and searching for more favourable conditions. Thanks to short terms of agreements, the subjects perceive such kind of work as more interesting, devoid of routine, more varied and original. They also mention lack of responsibility and great commitment in such work as well as some kind of adventure that at the given stage of their life is definitely convenient. They claim that this is ideal work for students and all young people. Among advantages of flexible employment, the subjects also highlight possibilities of meeting new people (8.5% of them). It is worth mentioning that networking plays a considerable part in effective functioning in the present labour market. It should be also noticed that students indicated possibilities of development resulting from flexible forms of employment. Only a few respondents pointed out such advantages as low social contributions and benefits for an employer.

An array of disadvantages of temporary agreements indicated by the respondents seems to be a little bit wider. The disadvantage of the analysed forms of work that appeared most often was lack of stability (66%), an insecure situation connected with extending the agreement and a steady income. Moreover, the respondents emphasized that temporary agreements usually mean low earnings (20% of the respondents). The respondents also point out the risk of becoming workers of a lower category (7%) thus lower chances for a steady job, what corresponds perfectly to the aforementioned concept of the dual labour market and the developing precariat. The next weakness of the discussed categories of employment is no sense of security connected

with no social security in the form of various holiday, insurance, pension contributions, etc. (22%). Among disadvantages the respondents also mentioned aspects concerning exploitation of employees by employers (10%), a higher risk of fraud than in the case of a permanent job and too low salary. Additionally, the subjects emphasized that work on the basis of such agreements is often falling short of employees' potential, expectations and aspirations. It is work which an employee is not satisfied with. According to the respondents, the discussed forms of employment lower significantly chances for promotion, do not give possibilities of presenting one's competence and exclude chances for development. The subjects highlight that these are forms which are not chosen, but one is forced to accept them due to their life situation. In students' opinion, working on the basis of flexible forms of employment is still "*work for some time*" and is not the final solution. The respondents clearly emphasize that it is work for students (25.5% of the respondents), people entering the labour market (28.8%), people who want to combine household duties with their professional life (13.3%) or people with low qualifications (12.9%). Only 14.2% claim that flexible forms of employment can be a good solution for specialists with large professional experience.

The research findings presented in Chart 4 confirm commitment of the respondents to a permanent job.

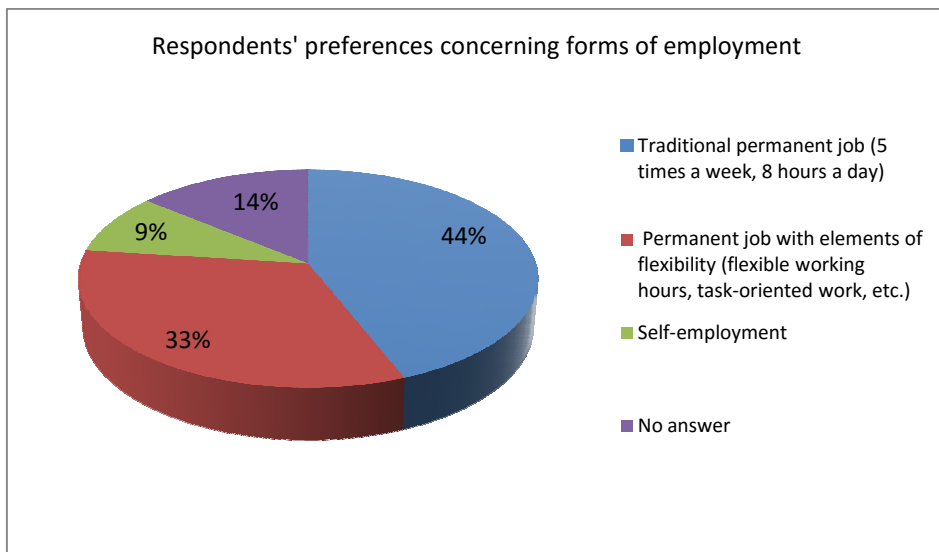


Fig. 5. Respondents' preferences concerning forms of employment

Source: The author's own study on the basis of the research.

The presented data explicitly indicates that the most desirable form of employment among the respondents is a permanent job in the most traditional form (44%) or a permanent job with elements of flexibility (best when concerns working hours, 33%). Self-employment was chosen as the best solution by 9% of the respondents. Interestingly, despite such a possibility, in the questionnaire none of the respondents mentioned temporary agreements as a preferable form of employment, even those with social security. It seems that, apart from a sense of security resulting from continuity and a long-term character of an agreement, the subjects consider a sense of controlling the situation they are in as particularly important. The respondents emphasized many times that a temporary job "gives an employer a lot of power", what is very disadvantageous and uncomfortable for them. Although, they notice the advantages of flexibility, the most important for them is stable employment and continuity in terms of a salary. The respondents highlighted the fact that they consider social benefits important, however, in comparison with a steady salary, they seem to fade into the background.

It is worth noticing that both advantages and disadvantages specified by the respondents perfectly correspond to the previously mentioned features of flexible forms of employment. It means that the respondents have high awareness of consequences connected with choosing flexible forms of employment. Despite the great knowledge of the respondents, too large attachment to the stability of employment seems to be alarming as it is difficult in the times of liquid postmodernity.

According to G. Wanio and K. Koszewicz, "in accordance with the idea of flexicurity, achieving the goal – considered as ensuring that an employee feels stable and secure – does not happen thanks to maintaining their job, but rather guaranteeing that they will find a new job quickly due to their skills and experience"¹⁹. Perhaps, the suggested perception of flexible employment could help young people to change an attitude presented in the research towards untypical employment and attachment to the traditional model of work. The presented research findings clearly point out the need to popularize flexible forms of employment in terms of chances rather than threats, and to promote the concept of flexicurity. Unfortunately, perceiving flexible employment in terms of chances will not happen spontaneously and it is needed to depart from the stereotypical understanding of the discussed solutions. The departure from thinking in terms of 'a junk contract' and starting thinking in terms of 'a flexible agreement'. It is necessary that flexibility is seen as a greater (in comparison with traditional forms of employment) opportunity

¹⁹ G. Wanio, K. Koszewicz, *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia [Flexible Forms of Employment]*, Wrocław 2013, p. 6.

to introduce changes in the employer-employee relationship what does not have to mean lack of security and it does not have to be a negative phenomenon. On the contrary, it can mean a chance – mainly to develop (in terms of both an entrepreneur and an employee) and to adjust forms of cooperation of the parties to mutual expectations and individual abilities in a better way. It should be emphasized that a mistrustful attitude towards flexible, unstable employment can result from lack of a sufficient knowledge and education of young people in terms of opportunities that non-standard forms of work give. It seems that the young more often present the attitude of *“what to do in order to avoid such employment in the future and not what to do to benefit most from work on the basis of the discussed forms”*. The concerns of young people connected with flexible employment could be reduced to a large extent through appropriate educational and counselling actions directed at enhancing competence in functioning in the labour market and maintaining employment, increasing one’s own employability thanks to mobility, flexibility and adaptability.

Obviously, lack of trust in new forms of work is a social problem in the Polish conditions, but also a problem of particular individuals and a scary image which does not enable thinking outside the box and forgetting that *“professional work equals a permanent agreement”*. Undoubtedly, the change of such thinking will be supported by promoting enterprise and developing pro-active attitudes among young people towards their own educational and professional future as well as making information on the professional support about that available. Moreover, it should be done by developing among pupils, students, young employees skills in directing a career and using their resources which should be perceived as important factors determining the situation of the young in the labour market.

Taking into consideration the presented research findings and overall reluctance of Poles to untypical employment, it seems very important to create a positive image of flexible solutions, on the side of both an employer and an employee. It is necessary to work on the change of attitudes towards FFE which, to a large extent, depends on discourse in the public sphere as well as on how, in reality, these instruments are used by employers. If flexible forms of employment still exist as junk contracts, it is difficult to believe that the attitude towards them will be more positive. The change of an attitude is a long process and needs action in all its spheres. Therefore, actions supporting the change of attitudes should be directed at objectives connected with enhancing knowledge, developing mindsets and opinions, and creating constructive behaviour. Flexible forms of employment should be discussed in the public sphere and their wider context and advantages also for employees should be presented.

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The Role of Entrepreneurship in Designing a Professional Career

The essence of entrepreneurship

What is entrepreneurship? This term is used in research reports, scientific publications and colloquial language. It is usually associated with setting up and running one's own business and achieving success, or with the way in which the business is run. "At present, the importance of entrepreneurship [has] increase[d] in management science because entrepreneurship is treated as part of a broader activity and innovativeness and is considered an important factor which makes it possible to effectively deal with both tensions in the global economy and the rapidly changing business conditions."¹ It should be emphasized that entrepreneurship is also a form of behaviour and the way in which we perceive the world and ourselves. P. Drucker sees the entrepreneur as a person who "knowingly and actively searches for change, [and] directs and controls its course to finally exploit it as an opportunity."²

In this sense, entrepreneurship is defined as a range of competencies and skills associated with personality and character which facilitate or hinder certain behaviours of an individual.³ Entrepreneurship is a form of conduct that involves the propensity to undertake new, risky and unconven-

¹ M. Kaczmarek, P. Kaczmarek-Kurczak, *Przegląd metaanaliz dotyczących związku cech osobowości i przedsiębiorczości. W stronę modelu badań*, "Management and Business Administration. Central Europe" 2012, no. 1, 108, p. 50.

² K. Mrozowicz, *Cechy zachowań przedsiębiorczych w świetle psychologicznych badań osobowości*, „Studia i Materiały. Miscellanea Oeconomicae. Przedsiębiorczość a rozwój regionalny”, 2010, no. 1, 14, pp. 13-23.

³ Z. Dowigałło, *Nowy słownik ekonomiczny przedsiębiorcy*, Wydawnictwo Znicz, Szczecin 2004, pp. 175-176.

tional projects, and of initiative in searching for and implementing them. This action aims at development and is innovative by nature.⁴ Entrepreneurship can be characterized as a two-pronged activity: obtaining maximum benefits from the use of what exists and continuously creating something new or innovative.⁵ Entrepreneurial behaviour and thinking are desirable in any professional activity, and they are the subject of training both at the level of the employing company and at the level of future employees.

Academic entrepreneurship

Universities have placed increasing emphasis on the development of academic entrepreneurship as one of the processes of lifelong learning to meet the rapidly changing needs of the labour market. Opening up to business and building the capacity to release entrepreneurship potential among students and personnel represents a new form of higher education development. The current model of a university – based on education and research – has been extended to include entrepreneurship, understood as the formation of active behaviours to maintain independence in the market. Activity in the field of business education and practical support for new companies created based on the know-how of persons related to research is termed “academic entrepreneurship.”⁶ Nationwide research considering university entrepreneurship conducted by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development shows that “the level of development of academic entrepreneurship understood as running one’s own spin-off or spin-out is negligible. As few as 6% of respondents ran their own businesses (9% of academic staff and 2% of students). Students (51%) would like to have their own businesses much more frequently than academics (31%).”⁷ The study shows that as many as 88% of researchers and 80% of students estimate that in their curriculum universities offer subjects conducive to entrepreneurial activities and confirm their suitability.

Hessel Oosterbeek, Mirjam van Praag and Auke Ijsselstein (2010) show that there is no simple relationship between centres of entrepreneurship and

⁴ J. Kortan, *Podstawy ekonomiki i zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem*, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 77-78.

⁵ K. Fabiańska, *Planowanie rozwoju przedsiębiorstwa*, Państwowe Wydawnictwa Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 1986, p. 17.

⁶ G. Banerski, A. Gryzik, K.B. Matusiak, M. Mażewska, E. Stawasz, *Przedsiębiorczość akademicka. Raport z badania. Przedsiębiorczość akademicka (rozwój firm spin-off, spin-out) – zapotrzebowanie na szkolenia służące jej rozwojowi. Raport z badania*, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2009, pp. 6-8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

the development of entrepreneurial skills, as they are strongly correlated with personality traits and temperament. Their study also confirms that the entrepreneurship of individuals should be seen as an approach to life, which is a natural extension of personal tendencies which will translate into specific behaviours, thoughts and emotions in relation to various life events. Therefore, measures taken by offices for entrepreneurship will be effective as long as they support the internal predispositions of those concerned, but they are unable to radically change their temperament and convictions resulting from life attitudes, which is confirmed by numerous studies discussed later in this paper.⁸

Einar A. Rasmussen and Roger Sørheim (2006) have developed a similar thesis. In their study, they demonstrated the role of practical activities, skills and competencies associated with entrepreneurship in the development of entrepreneurial attitudes based on the predispositions of personality and temperament.⁹ Changing a life attitude will always be based on increasing – through life experiences – the availability of specific behaviours and on expanding the knowledge and emotional experience associated with the object of this attitude, which is why practical training for entrepreneurship is more effective.¹⁰ The study conducted by Georg von Gravenitz, Dietmar Harhoff and Richard Weber (2010) was even more interesting. They studied the skills and knowledge of students concerning entrepreneurship before and after compulsory classes in this field.¹¹ They have proved that entrepreneurial classes conducted with an emphasis on the practice and development of students witness a significant increase in knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial behaviour in their daily activities, and that they change their attitude towards entrepreneurship. In this way, they prove that the work on all elements of life attitudes can lead to effective change at the behavioural, cognitive and emotional levels associated with the object of this attitude. The authors emphasize that comparable results were obtained in the course of research at several universities. Moreover, Vangelis Sonitaris, Stefania Zerbinati and Andreas Al-Laham (2007) confirm that practical education in this field affected the beliefs, approaches and entrepreneurial behaviours of students. At the same time, they proved that the classes had a significant influ-

⁸ H. Oosterbeek, M. von Praag, A. Ijsselstein, *The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship skills and motivation*, "European Economic Review", 2010, no. 54, p. 452.

⁹ E.A. Rasmussen, R. Sorheim, *Action-based entrepreneurship education*, "Technovation", 2006, no. 26, pp. 185-194.

¹⁰ E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R.M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna*, Zysk i Spółka, Poznań 2006, pp. 180-197.

¹¹ G. von Graevenitz, D. Harhoff, R. Weber, *The effects of entrepreneurship education*, "Journal of Economic Behavior and Organisation", 2010, no. 76, pp. 96-99 and 103-104.

ence on careers and the development of emotional intelligence in the studied group.¹² The impact of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurship is analysed further in this paper.

Entrepreneurship and the labour market

Graduates represent a significant proportion of the unemployed. The unemployment rate among young people with higher education reaches 10%, which is lower than the 12% unemployment rate among young people with no breakdown by education.¹³ The situation of people with higher education is difficult not only because of unemployment, but also because of the huge gap between the knowledge learned and the skills required in a workplace. Employers complain that school leavers have no basic skills and no responsibility or fairness in their approach to work. As part of the project "Qualifications for the needs of employers", Urszula Sztandar-Sztanderska (2009-2013) presented the results of her study on the (in)adequacy of workers' skills with respect to the needs of the labour market, which testifies to the widespread lack of not only professional but also basic social skills allowing for adaptation to the work environment. Investment in education and an early start to working life (during the course of studies) may facilitate the transfer of young people to the labour market.¹⁴

Since 2008, a team of experts from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development in cooperation with the Jagiellonian University has been implementing a project within the Study of Human Capital in Poland (BKL). In their latest report, "The Competence of the Poles and the Needs of the Polish Economy", the experts draw attention to the fact that, in the public discourse, the inadequacy of graduates' competence with respect to the needs of employers is put down to a lack of practical skills, while the need to extend the programme of internships is suggested as a remedy to this problem.¹⁵ The results of the BKL indicate that the Polish labour market searches for people with transferable competence (i.e., those who are useful for a larger number of jobs) of a general or a professional character which can be

¹² V. Sonitaris, S. Zerbinati, A. Al-Laham, *Do entrepreneurship programmes raise entrepreneurial intention of science and engineering students? The effect of learning, inspiration and resources*, "Journal of Business Venturing", 2007, no. 22, pp. 566-591.

¹³ D. Piróg, *Absolwenci szkół wyższych na rynku pracy w warunkach kryzysu*, „Przedsiębiorczość – edukacja”, 2013, no. 9, pp. 308-309.

¹⁴ Ł. Sienkiewicz, M. Gruza, *Badanie kwalifikacji i kompetencji oczekiwanych przez pracodawców od absolwentów kształcenia zawodowego*, Studio Magic, Warszawa 2009.

¹⁵ A. Szczucka, K. Turek, B. Worek, *Rozwijanie kompetencji przez dorosłych Polaków*, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2014, pp. 23-28.

provided by schools and universities but are now developed inadequately and for an insufficient number of people.

On the other hand, a study conducted in 2013 showed that the vast majority of Poles of working age (65%) in no way raised their competence, even through various forms of self-education, including as many as 39% of Poles declared that they had never participated in any courses, training, workshops, internships or other forms of education. As few as 35% of Poles aged 18-64 (8.7 million people) had raised their competence through any of a variety of forms:

- 19% (4.7 million) from the said group of Poles participated in courses, training, workshops, lectures, seminars, conferences, practical classes, professional internships or post-graduate studies;
- 5% (1.2 million) took part in compulsory OHS and fire protection training;
- 14% (3.5 million) raised their competence through optional courses and training;
- 17% (4 million) studied alone (learned something new or gained experience with the help of family members, friends, colleagues, books, professional magazines, computer programmes and the Internet, and programmes broadcast via the television, radio, museums, exhibitions, galleries and science centres);
- 14% (3.4 million) of respondents participated in formal education.

Optional courses and training (other than those concerning health and safety and fire protection) were attended by 18% of the workforce (2.7 million), 10% of the unemployed (280 thousand) and 7% of the inactive population (480 thousand).¹⁶

Entrepreneurship and human personality

Since "entrepreneurship is an immanent and creationist part of personality, it is a set of personal characteristics that manifest themselves in various social and professional roles, characterized by a relatively stable range of specific personally, socially and situationally conditioned behaviours."¹⁷ Entrepreneurship is thus a life attitude, which is a causative factor necessary to undertake entrepreneurial activities.¹⁸ The said attitude is

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 5-15.

¹⁷ K. Mrozowicz, *Osobowościowa geneza i determinacja kształtowania się zachowań przedsiębiorczych*, [w:] *Wpływ zarządzania procesowego na jakość i innowacyjność przedsiębiorstwa*, ed. E. Skrzypek, vol. II, Zakład Poligrafii UMCS w Lublinie, Lublin 2008, p. 558.

¹⁸ S. Sudoł, *Przedsiębiorczość – jej pojmowanie, typy i czynniki ją kształtujące*, „Problemy zarządzania”, 2008, no. 2, 20, pp. 9-10.

composed of: personality traits (such as resourcefulness, initiative, independence, commitment, creativity, resistance to stress, a strong will and self-discipline), behaviour (activities of daily living, directing, controlling, monitoring, decision-making, risk-taking and assertive behaviour), as well as personal competence and social competence corresponding to emotional intelligence.¹⁹

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize one's own emotions and those of other people and to guide them through appropriate social behaviour. People with high IQs do not always have high levels of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is affected by empathy, the ability to look at oneself and others from a distance, and the ability to establish contacts, build consensus and cooperate. According to Daniel Goleman (2012), emotional intelligence consists of emotional competence, which include personal competence and social competence. Personal competencies determine the extent to which we deal with ourselves, and they include self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation. Social competencies decide how we deal with others. These competencies include empathy (understanding others: sensing others' feelings and perspectives and taking an active interest in their concerns, tolerance for diversity and supporting the individuality of other people) and social skills, also known as interpersonal skills.²⁰

A series of studies has been conducted to verify the relationship between an entrepreneurial attitude and specific personality traits, character and forms of behaviour. Many researchers have sought relationships between the features of the functioning of entrepreneurial individuals and the theories of personality developed by Hans Eysenck²¹ and the five-factor model created by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae, also known as "the Big Five".²² K. Mrozowicz studied the intensity of personality traits identified in the studied group (entrepreneurs) and a control group (the budget sector).

¹⁹ K. Szelągowska-Rudzka, *Cechy przedsiębiorcze – czy domeną tylko przedsiębiorców?*, [w:] *Uwarunkowania przedsiębiorczości – różnorodność i zmienność*, ed. K. Jaremczuk, Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa im. Prof. Stanisława Tarnowskiego w Tarnobrzegu, Tarnobrzeg 2008, pp. 142-143.

²⁰ D. Goleman, *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, Random House Publishing Group, 2011, pp. 25-27.

²¹ The theory of personality was initially based on two dimensions: introversion vs. extraversion and neuroticism vs. emotional balance, a third dimension – psychoticism – has been added with time. Based on the intensity of the characteristics, the following types of temperaments have been defined: sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic. Cf. J. Strelau, *Psychologia temperamentu*, PWN, Warszawa 2012, pp. 75-79.

²² The five-factor model of personality (PMO) includes the following factors of personality: neuroticism vs. emotional stability, extraversion vs. introversion, openness to experience, agreeableness vs. antagonism and conscientiousness vs. carelessness. Cf. J. Strelau, *Psychologia temperamentu*, PWN, Warszawa 2012, pp. 63-65.

He discovered that “entrepreneurs were characterized by greater extraversion. Statistically, more common attitudes were: optimism, openness to experience, pro-social attitudes, assertiveness, high self-esteem, a deficit of stimuli, sensation seeking, stress tolerance, the ability to make decisions in difficult situations, a sense of inner locus of control, creativity, activity and independence.”²³ On the neuroticism-emotional stability scale, entrepreneurs proved to be statistically less neurotic, meaning that the probability of such behaviours as irrationality, timidity, languor, emotionality, attitudes of avoidance, a sense of guilt and low self-esteem were significantly less common than among public sector employees. Furthermore, Magdalena Kaczmarek and Piotr Kaczmarek-Kurczak (2012) investigated the relationship between the theory of the Big Five and the characteristics of entrepreneurs. The strongest relationship was found in relation to the tendency to take risks, followed by openness to experience, emotional stability, conscientiousness, extraversion, a sense of efficiency and internal motivation.²⁴ Similarly, a study conducted by Ludvig von Mises, Joseph A. Schumpeter, David C. McClelland, James A. Timmons and Robert H. Brockhaus revealed a significant correlation between entrepreneurship and qualities such as decision-making, innovativeness, the need for achievement, the willingness to take risks and an internal locus of control.²⁵

Entrepreneurship and subjectivity

Psychologists emphasize that entrepreneurship involves a high awareness of behaviour and responsibility for oneself and one’s own life, and in this context entrepreneurs manifest a subjective approach to life. Kazimierz Obuchowski, the originator of the concept of man as a subject, indicated that man in this sense is the cause of action, a designer, a creator of his own life, an active person, a decision-maker who occupies a specific position in the structure (i.e., the surrounding reality) and fulfils his own roles and responsibilities. Subjectivity is implemented through the sense of being someone and having one’s own individual and social identity. Man as a sub-

²³ K. Mrozowicz, *Cechy zachowań przedsiębiorczych w świetle psychologicznych badań osobowości*, „Studia i Materiały. Miscellanea Oeconomicae”, 2010, no. 1, 14, pp. 16-18.

²⁴ M. Kaczmarek, P. Kaczmarek-Kurczak, *Przegląd metaanaliz dotyczących związku cech osobowości i przedsiębiorczości. W stronę modelu badań*, “Management and Business Administration. Central Europe”, 2012, 1, 108, pp. 55-63.

²⁵ F. Bławat, *Przedsiębiorca w teorii przedsiębiorczości i prowadzenia małych firm*, Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Gdańsk 2003, pp. 40-46, and H. Mushtaq Ahmad, *Personality traits among entrepreneurial and professional CEOs in SMEs*, “International Journal of Business and Management”, 2010, no. 5, 9, p. 204.

ject believes that his own activity largely depends on himself. To become a subject, man needs to make conscious assumptions about himself and choose his own path of development. A sense of subjectivity expands the potential for individual development (including education) and makes one's personality flourish. Man is an active entity taking responsibility for his own life.²⁶ Therefore, Janusz Reykowski (1989) defines subjectivity as self-determination, i.e., having an internal source of causality, understood as an independent activity directed by independently selected or created objectives.²⁷

The concept of man as a subject is based on the conviction that man alone should define his goals, plans and projects concerning himself and the world around him. When an individual looks for the meaning of life, when he or she feels responsible for it, he or she aims for self-creation. Creative activity throughout one's lives will mean innovative activities which are non-conformist and which give rise to a new surrounding reality or redefines oneself. The degree of human maturity can even be measured by one's flexibility, preparedness for reflection and change in a constantly changing reality, and also by fidelity to what is most important to oneself. The ability to reorient and adapt a creative approach to life is a direct result of self-confidence, certainty and identity.²⁸ Kazimierz Przyszczypkowski (1995) concludes that "to achieve that, it turns out to be necessary to change competencies, attitudes and beliefs primarily of the adults who are incapable (...) of recognizing meanings consistent with social reality, that is, with their own developmental interests."²⁹ K. Obuchowski (1995) describes this ability as the ability to creatively restructure experience, the ability to subjectively organize one's own life.³⁰ It is worth noting that, in light of the research, it can be concluded that people with a higher level of education are more flexible in thinking and behaviour, more aware of their needs, and are able to operate more effectively in new situations, requiring the creation of new adaptive behaviour.³¹

²⁶ J. Jarmużek, *Podmiotowość w edukacji a poziom poczucia koherencji*, [w:] *Polityczne uwikłania systemów edukacyjnych. Badawczy problem społeczny*, eds. K. Przyszczypkowski, T. Polak, I. Cytlak, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2014, pp. 240-245.

²⁷ J. Reykowski, *Podmiotowość – szkic problematyki*, [w:] *Podmiotowość. Możliwość, rzeczywistość, konieczność*, eds. P. Buczkowski, R. Cichocki & Nakom, Poznań 1989, p. 201.

²⁸ H. Sęk, A. Sommerfeld, *Być dorosłym*, Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli im. Władysława Spasowskiego, Legnica 1990, pp. 70-73.

²⁹ K. Przyszczypkowski, *Dorosły wobec edukacji*, [w:] *Zmiana społeczna a kompetencje edukacyjne dorosłych*, eds. K. Przyszczypkowski, E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, 1995, p. 9.

³⁰ K. Obuchowski, *Przez galaktykę potrzeb. Psychologia dążeń ludzkich*, Zysk i Spółka, Poznań 1995, pp. 314-317.

³¹ J. Czapiński, T. Panek, (eds.), *Diagnoza społeczna 2000*, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna Towarzystwa Wiedzy Powszechnej, Warszawa 2001.

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Reflections on subjectivity and intentionality refer in a meaningful way to problems of entrepreneurship perceived as a life attitude. Man as a subject creates his own life consciously in accordance with his aspirations, beliefs and values. Being a subject takes courage, because one then becomes a designer of one's own life.

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**LIFELONG LEARNING –
NEW TRENDS
AND EXEMPLIFICATIONS**

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Learning organisation as an employer – unique characteristics

Introduction

As globalisation progresses and managing companies is becoming increasingly complex and dynamic, contemporary work must become harmoniously aligned with education, especially with lifelong learning. The vision appears of an integrated world where distinct elements and areas are interconnected and function as one entity. Hence, it is no longer possible to set goals at the top of the organisation and force the workers to tread unknown and unacknowledged paths. The really successful organisations will be those which are able to inspire involvement in people and put it to use; which introduce new, courageous thinking patterns and conditions for development of team aspirations where people continuously learn how to learn collectively. In Poland, it is particularly important to point at the study of theoretical concept of equal terms staff management and also its implementation in company practices. The slowly growing need for knowledge workers in modern learning organisations is the starting point for considerations devoted to various ways intellectual capital may be managed in companies. Discussion also continues on the subject of the approach to workers, the change being directed towards more employee-centred one. Evolution of human resources management toward partnership and strategic operations encourages reflection on the special character of a learning organisation and its contemporary role as an employer. Emphasis on creation of effective training and development policies leading to greater adaptability of companies is tackled in the final part of this article.

Demand for knowledge workers

In the current competitive labour market, managing the company financial assets which are perceived as the main source of market advantage appears to be insufficient and ineffective. Company owners and executive managers are building their organisations on the assumption that nowadays it is the employees and their knowledge and skills that matter most. In this context, B. Kwarciańska aptly points at "the changes which have occurred in the recent years lead companies towards reliance on intangible assets, increased production and application of information, and ultimately, significance of virtual values. Organisations hold in high esteem such notions as intellectual, social or human capital"¹. In an innovative society it is crucial to streamline work by means of machines, electronical devices, computer programmes and specific technologies which offer a direct business outcome. However, it is the human being who uses these technologies that develops, improves and applies them to achieve optimum performance and assure the company's success. In the light of the above HR management can be defined as "a strategic, homogenous and consistent method of managing the most valuable asset of every company - the people who contribute to its competitive advantage and fulfilment of the company strategic objectives with both their individual and collective effort"². Needless to say, managerial staff is responsible for setting long-term objectives; yet, the company workers are the very people who implement these objectives in the company operations. The managers are in charge of building up attitudes which are reflected in the norms according to which people act and which make human resources strategically significant. It is the managers who should match the company priorities and particular workers' individual features, allowing them to face optimised duties and challenges, which unify individual and organisational goals³. Hence, it is possible to state that a worker who is able to show his/her personal potential in various situations will greatly appreciate the employer for being given a chance for individual fulfilment. On the other hand, one can say that the psychological aspect of working is not a sole motivator for an employee. In HR management it is important to guide people so that "the employer benefits the most from their capabilities and the employees receive both material and psychological gratification resulting from

¹ B. Kwarciańska, *Doskonalenie menedżerów w gospodarce opartej na wiedzy*, Poznan 2005, p. 45.

² M. Armstrong, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Strategia i działanie*, Cracow 1996, p. 14.

³ M. Armstrong, *ibidem*, pp. 45-50; M. Adamiec, B. Kozusznik, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Aktor-Kreator-Inspirator*, Katowice 2000, p. 14.

their work”⁴. It is crucial to pay attention to both dimensions of human labour so that it does not only come down to the material aspect when the worker receives their remuneration. The combination of labour’s material and psychological factors allows workers to both lead a satisfactory life for a decent salary and enjoy fulfilment and satisfaction with a job well done.

According to the modern HR management style, it is crucial to distinguish between meaningful traits of employees which affect the company development. The workers are capable of “learning and developing their potential; they are creative, adaptable and they are able to work mentally”⁵. Furthermore, leaving the “industrial” way of thinking aside according to which a worker used to be merely an “object”, one can move on to “post-industrial” reasoning, where the worker becomes the “subject” whose actions have a true effect on the company policies and at the same time it is reflected in the profits generated thanks to his/her work and involvement. Employees are no longer just “machine operators”; they exert particular influence on moulding the company’s development potential. Naturally, everything is heavily dependent on how much the company is willing to empower particular groups of people in decision making and how the relations between employees are shaped by the corporate culture⁶. Still, a modern company should appreciate the value of every single worker for his/her special, individual scope of knowledge needed for the company to reach its goals and strengthen its position against its rivals’ operations. This strong link between employers and employees is visible when not only tangible objects are exchanged, but it is mainly the knowledge which competitors may not possess. A. Poczowski writes that HR management effectiveness “is becoming more and more of an important factor in achieving organisation’s competitive advantage, which is closely related to the rise in significance of knowledge as the source of company’s competitiveness”⁷. This is why companies which are keen to maintain their development potential in relation to other businesses in the same sector must possess highly qualified staff who are open-minded in terms of new technologies. These organisations have to maintain the highest standards of their intellectual capital.

Summing up, one can say that “consistent HR policies which put people first will primarily make it possible to recruit valuable employees and sus-

⁴ M. Adamiec, B. Kożusznik, *ibidem*, pp. 17-18.

⁵ B.M. Jeżerys, *Istota i etapy procesu kadrowego*, [w:] *Proces kadrowy w przedsiębiorstwie*, red. U. Gołaszewska-Kaczan, Białystok 2002, p. 9.

⁶ M. Bartkowiak, *Kompetencje menedżera a relacje międzypracownicze w organizacji uczącej się*, Poznań 2011.

⁷ A. Poczowski, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Strategie – procesy – metody*, Warsaw 2008, p. 33.

tain their loyalty”⁸. Consequently, the employer has to address the HR management process not only in terms of obtaining valuable workers, but also other crucial factors which must be taken into account in order to provide employees with comfortable conditions for effective performance. In this way the employer minimises the likelihood of the staff looking for another job or being successfully headhunted.

Knowledge management in an organisation

Nowadays HR management is becoming increasingly focussed on knowledge i.e. the company intellectual capital. Like any other type of capital (technological, human, financial), knowledge of the company workers can be managed with varied effectiveness, being more or less successfully and efficiently applied to the benefit of the company and its development. The written works on the subject frequently mention knowledge and intellectual capital whenever discussion refers to the future of modern organisations and the methods which they may employ in order to achieve success on the market⁹. Company workers, therefore, are a much more precious asset to the company than e.g. machinery which, having been precisely programmed, may work according to particular schemes. Employees who are aware of their potential and act creatively towards their own and company’s development break the patterns and think unconventionally, trying to arrive at new, better solutions, even if it takes numerous, sometimes unsuccessful attempts. People are the most important element of the company structure, especially if the organisation invests in new technologies which can be not only put by humans to practical use, but also modified and improved.

A very important aspect of knowledge management is the set of values that the company and its workers follow. Knowledge itself can be defined as the ability to use the possessed information. Some of the most important and most common values are innovation and know-how¹⁰. A combination of these two elements makes it possible to produce workers who are eager to use the knowledge they have in a non-standard way and who are able to think out of the box. On the basis of their experience, they are capable of noticing new development prospects, recognising the loopholes in the existing system and searching for novel solutions to problems. Linking these values with high quality of all employees’ work increases the likelihood of the

⁸ A. Skiba, *Uwarunkowana satysfakcja*, „Personel i Zarządzanie” 2012, no 2, p. 32.

⁹ B. Kwarciańska, *op. cit.*, s. 43.

¹⁰ Harvard Business Review Polska (<http://www.hbrp.pl/news.php?id=992&t=co-sie-liczy-dla-firm> – date of access 11.01.2015).

company's success, which means accomplishment of company objectives along with attention paid the employees' development and satisfaction. Skilful application of their knowledge is also a daunting challenge to the managerial staff. It is them who must be able to set requirements properly for top-quality work and motivate their subordinates in an appropriate way. In fact, it is motivation that constitutes the core significance in the process of using innovation and know-how in everyday work, because only in an innovation-conducive environment will the employees be stimulated to fulfil their tasks effectively. A. Woźniakowski emphasises that companies which want to "establish foundations for the future company growth must release the people's ideas, passions and involvement. Treating innovation as exceptional occurrence must be replaced by approaching it as a profound competence of the company"¹¹. Therefore, the company's innovativeness cannot be just a herd instinct in following the prevalent fashion on the market; it must be a planned, well-thought-out activity which promotes behaviours among employees aimed at increasing efficiency in the company. If properly managed, innovativeness can become the core competence of the organisation. Additionally, there is the issue of fairness. It turns out that in companies around the world this value is often pushed into the background as an undesirable factor in the world of tough market competition. While choosing the core values for the company, the managers should primarily pay attention to those which will indeed matter in its operations. "Well-thought-out and genuine company values are a key element to the company's non-operational activities and may affect both its image and market success"¹². The values which the company follows become the driving forces behind its operations and define directions for development. Additionally, they affect the workers because it is the particular employees that must align with these values. "The ideal situation is the one in which workers associate themselves with the company on the level of these values. Whether the company credo is concurrent with the particular individual's beliefs and ideals should be determined already at the job interview stage, to the same degree as their competencies and skills"¹³. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasise the significance of the values cherished by both the employer and the employees. A. Kołodziejczyk and S. Stańczyk point out that holding uniform values should be given equal consideration as having appropriate competencies for a given post. Paradoxically, it does matter immensely even in everyday working life, as it builds up harmony in fulfilment of the key company

¹¹ A. Woźniakowski, *Organizacja ucząca się – koncepcja teoretyczna i praktyczna działania przedsiębiorstw*, [w:] *Przyszłość pracy w XXI wieku*, red. S. Borkowska, Warszawa 2005, p. 215.

¹² A. Kołodziejczyk, S. Stańczyk, *Wartości firmy*, „Benefit” 2014, no 12, p. 17.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

strategies and allows for operationalisation of company objectives. The person whose values are congruent with the company's will be more approving of the company operations. Obviously, it is not only the hard skills that have an effect on the employee's recruitment, but the values this person holds in their life. From the point of view of the candidate a similar approach seems reasonable. Before applying for a post in a given company, it makes sense to familiarise oneself with the values which the prospective employer follows. Sometimes the dissonance at this level may be too significant to allow the properly qualified applicant to work effectively in an environment which is entirely alien to them in terms of values. This conflict of values may be especially noticeable in sales and financial services, where ultimate performance is the core aim of the organisation. Many workers cannot cope with the stress and pressure, although, on the other hand, some people can be motivated by tight deadlines and inflated, excessive duties.

Company structure affecting information exchange between various levels is one of the changing aspects of a knowledge-based organisation. Following P.F. Drucker, B. Kwarciańska describes a modern organisation model as a network of particular company units which share information, ideas and resources between them. This structure reflects mutual relations, characterised by informality and multi-directionality of information exchange, strengthening common trust and involvement in the completed tasks. It also makes it easier for the workers to learn from each other, share the already possessed knowledge and, consequently, co-operate¹⁴. The presented model stresses the importance of creation of friendship-based relations between employees, where hierarchical differences lose their significance for everyday work tasks. One of the signs of this changing trend is the partnership model of co-operation introduced in many corporate cultures, where workers at all levels of the company hierarchy are equal counterparts within the company and open communication related to innovation and modification is promoted.

Another issue which is worth discussing is the levels of organisational learning, which refer to individual, team and organisational ones¹⁵. First of all, individual workers are the knowledge resources of the company. Their work stems from their qualifications and experience which they have already gained. As for the team aspect, the knowledge of individual members should be used efficiently to the benefit of the effective work of the whole team. At the same time, the work of all the teams in the whole company affects its structure and the results obtained. If, additionally, "the superiors

¹⁴ B. Kwarciańska, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹⁵ J. Szłapińska, *Podnoszenie wartości kapitału edukacyjnego pracowników w systemie kształcenia ustawicznego*, Poznań 2009, p. 74.

assist and support their employees in their innovativeness and supply them with suitable means for development, the workers, in turn, will reciprocate this with high level of motivation, company loyalty and a creative approach to solving everyday company problems”¹⁶. In the relationship between the employee and the employer there is a mutual exchange of goods – knowledge and skills on the employee’s side and remuneration and development opportunities on the side of the employer. Additional role can be played by motivation which will strengthen the worker’s loyalty for the company, which, in the case of highly qualified employees puts the organisation in a more favourable competitive position in comparison to its rivals. The company involvement in the workers’ progress also results in their autonomy and creativity in problem-solving activities.

Changes in the approach to employees

The employer’s approach to the workers has changed significantly in the recent years. The role and contribution of the employee as a company asset and not as plain “labour force”, as it used to be seen in the industrial era, has become much more remarkable and valuable. The philosophy of managing people has been enriched with a certain “fresh and individual” way of treating both workers themselves and the whole organisation. Nowadays, workers have a significant influence not only on the company operations and creating its image, but also on generating revenue and profits, which favours their treatment as valuable assets. This can also lead to currently so much desired job security, but first and foremost – to acknowledgement of the employee’s relevance to the company and its profitability. As it is commonly known, it is not only material benefits that matter to workers in their career path. It is also recognition and the sense of fulfilment that play the primary role in their work and in raising effectiveness of their activities. This is why the efficient and desirable approach to HR management in an organisation nowadays “refers to the human aspect of the company and the relationship between the employees and their company. It is the major goal of the enterprise to use its human resources to the greatest benefit of the company, while rewarding the them both materially and psychologically”¹⁷. Obviously, one cannot forget about the employer as the party which expects the workers to be as efficient as possible to maximise the company profits. However, the role of the workers maintains its relevance throughout the process, even though technological progress makes

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 17-18.

human work increasingly redundant. Therefore, most highly qualified employees will be sought to perform the tasks still unavailable to technological solutions.

An increasing number of companies seek very particularly skilled workers with qualifications matching precisely the requirements of the vacancy. It happens so due to the fact that the given work requires such skills which would be too costly or too time-consuming to be taught to a novice. Additionally, there would be no certainty that the particular candidate would ultimately perform well enough. This feature of labour market makes some specialists exceptionally valuable and many companies engage in tough competition in searching for the ideally suitable candidate. Such people can be more sensitive to other than just financial incentives: the company prestigious and renowned market position, access to the newest technologies used by the employer, HR management policies, externally awarded honourable titles (e.g. "Top Employer"), or fringe benefits (such as a subsidised nursery school or kindergarten on site). This is why HR management in the modern sense, where the role of the employee in the company strategy is truly recognised, is a highly complex structure. The process starts from the managerial staff who establish the priorities of the company which should respect its workers on all the levels of company hierarchy and ensure their development as well as fair working conditions. Hence, the HR department director is often responsible for decisions concerning the opportunities which are offered to the employees. Usually, newcomers to the company are expected to take the offered vacancies, complete the induction training sessions as soon as possible and start performing their duties so that the work continuity is possibly undisturbed. Depending on the priorities established within the HR policy, the selection of the suitable employee will be either carried out rapidly, with acceptance of a certain level of risk concerning the insufficient qualifications of the candidate who may after all appear to be less efficient than expected, or the search will be carried out with utmost engagement, creativity and given enough time, the company may find the best available candidate for a given post. One of the most important aims of the innovative HR management methods is to cement and integrate the rules of HR management and the company development plans. This integration of HR and company policy must be first of all drawn up by the board of directors in order to define the profiles of the most desirable candidates so that the company achieves the established goals most effectively. Additionally, the employees must be given an opportunity to present their talents and skills, to release the energy and creativity which may lie dormant in them. Each and every worker whose work is appreciated and who can develop in all of the versatility of his or her talents will remain permanently

loyal to the caring employer. For the company as a whole, in turn, adaptability will be the most relevant feature so that the constantly changing market situation is met with apt and effective adjustments. This also refers to the workers of the given organisation. It is crucial to prepare them for this changeability by constant training and updating of their knowledge and skills. It is clearly visible here how important it is for the company to present the people-oriented approach – not only at the recruitment stage, but also in order to retain the valuable individuals within the company structure.

Evolution of HR management towards strategy and partnership

The previously enumerated actions aimed at emphasising the worker's importance lead the company towards the new HR strategy. Assumptions and aims of HR management within a company cannot be accidental; they must constitute a thoroughly considered and planned sequence of actions coupled with the company strategy which should lead the company toward the established goals. Hence, HR strategies must not be detached from all the remaining strategies by which the company is directed.

The subject literature defines a strategy in different ways. One of the works claims that a strategy is concerned with "long-term goals and ways of achieving them which affect the whole system¹⁸". The long-term approach is worth emphasising. It requires the sense of planning, predicting market trends and changes or setting the limits for ongoing projects in order to adapt them with time to the market and competition trends. It has to be pointed out as well that the company is usually perceived as an entity, where each "piece of the puzzle" serves the achievement of the established goal, i.e. the strategy. This is why the company cannot be only viewed as a conglomerate of various elements, each of which acts on its own account. More precisely, an organisation should be treated as a system of tightly linked inter-relations, and each of them is made accountable for its part of responsibility for the common goal of the whole organisation. Managers play an exceptionally significant role in planning and implementation of the company strategy. It is the senior level managers who should lead the overall, continuous "process of management aimed at formulating and implementing effective strategies which are conducive to raising the company and its environment's abilities and to the accomplishment of strategic objec-

¹⁸ R.L. Ackoff, *Redesigning the Future*, [w:] *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, ed. W. Golnau, Warszawa 2008, p. 34.

tives.”¹⁹. Complexity of the whole process is worth mentioning here, as it jointly involves all the company divisions and employees who operate as one organism in an attempt to reach a particular goal. The managers’ task, then, is to formulate the strategic goals adequately and run their implementation system efficiently, while centrally co-ordinating the whole process in all the company units. In this way, it is possible to ensure fully simultaneous and parallel actions which are in conformity with the prior assumptions.

Similar strategic assumptions relate to the human capital of the organisation. A. Poczrowski quotes the definition of strategic management within HR policy which says that “the HR management strategy constitutes a consistent arrangement of actions which include setting long-term goals, formulating rules, plans and action schemes aimed at creation and use of human capital within an organisation, which guarantees reaching and retaining competitive advantage”²⁰. Forecasting changes and making strategic plans must be conducted with a view to the current potential of the company workforce. The author emphasises the importance of the connection between the company’s human capital and the competitive advantage on the marketplace. Hence, appropriate planning and introduction of changes is key, so that thanks to the joint efforts, dedication and competencies of the employees, the company can obtain the planned outcome. Therefore, the HR department should adapt “to the company objectives, which means that (...) it should take on a long-term perspective and become the driving force behind the changes”²¹. Sometimes the pace of the change may not be as dynamic as the surrounding changing environment. Most projects are extremely time-consuming, as implementation of each stage must be repeatedly verified in order to reach the desired effect (or – as close to the desired one as possible). Similarly, when implementing new strategies on the constantly fluctuating marketplace, the company should consider various aspects of these changes along with the condition of the human resources as the crucial division, jointly responsible for performing the planned tasks. Thus, flexibility in the broadest sense should be the paramount feature of HR company policy, as this will allow rapid and efficient response to the market changes. As a result, managers face a tremendously complex task of predicting all possible scenarios of the rivals’ moves. This also refers to the changes within the area of human resources, i.e. the actually possessed human capital as well as the real skills and competencies of the employed staff.

¹⁹ R.W. Griffin, *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, [w:] *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, ed. W. Golnau, Warszawa 2008, p.35.

²⁰ A. Poczrowski, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Strategie – procesy – metody*, Warszawa 2008, p. 53.

²¹ P. Reilly, T. Williams, *Strategiczne zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Rozwijanie potencjału organizacji dzięki funkcji personalnej*, Kraków 2009, p. 33.

The learning organisation as the employer

Nowadays, distinct rivalry can be seen between the so called learning organisations which struggle to hire the best qualified and most effective workers. The organisations are usually big, modern companies with precisely formulated HR policies (particularly with regard to training and development) linked to the marketing strategy; this allows these companies to adapt quickly to the fast-changing circumstances. Employees are described as the most valuable asset of the company which is to assure that the business is ultimately profitable. A profit-oriented company will seek to apply the most effective methods in order to achieve this goal. It is only the question of methods and strategy it will decide to apply and the resources which will be put to use. It is essential to stress that a learning organisation which focuses not only on the work results themselves but also on its quality, is knowledge-centred. The staff in such an organisation “can learn, develop their potential, are creative, capable of mental work and incredibly adaptable”²². Such qualities in employees stabilise the company position on the continually changing market. The possibility to constantly broaden and update the workers’ knowledge, which is additionally provided or facilitated by the employer, makes it possible not only to retain the employees’ loyalty to the employer but also results in tangible outcomes of their work. Raising the levels of knowledge and its improvement on the basis of everyday experience leads to workers’ greater creativity because it opens new prospects and opportunities ahead of them, which they may not have realised before. Workers do not always have the motivation or capability to look for training courses outside their working hours. This is why on-the-job training sessions are a very effective option, when the course is tailored to the needs of the particular individual and his / her job. These courses can be fully or partially subsidised by the company. An increasing number of organisations invest in their own training departments in order to assure an easy access to specialists who conduct in-company training courses and design HR policies with regard to staff development. It is worth noticing that a well-designed training policy (i.e. adequate to the marketing strategy assumptions) is an excellent tool for raising the workers’ involvement with their duties and building up their career paths. Another option is to use an external services provider. The choice depends on the employer’s needs and potential costs which may or must be incurred for this purpose – this should not, however, be the only criterion for making this decision. It is due to the fact that “effectiveness in the area of HR management in a company is be-

²² B.M. Jeżerys, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

coming an increasingly important matter in connection with reaching and maintaining competitive advantage, which is closely related to the increase in significance of knowledge as the source of the company competitiveness²³. A. Poczowski clearly makes reference to the relevance of knowledge possessed and cultivated by the company employees. It is its suitable application which may bring about desired outcome allowing the company to gain advantage over its rivals. Obviously, not only the knowledge itself, but also the way in which it is used may guarantee market success. The key here are the managers whose major task is to create favourable conditions to build a mutual exchange relationship between the employer who offers the opportunities and prospects and the employee who contributes initiative and dedication. This is why learning organisations present a belief that "a worker should be placed in a location where his/her individual capabilities will meet a unique chance to do something special"²⁴. Depending on a particular organisation, it may look slightly different; each time, however, it should spark the employees' activity and increase their creativity as long as, of course, the character of the given position allows it. This concept also proves valuable in the process of recruitment and selection where a suitable person is chosen for a given post. Given a conducive working environment, this person will use all his/her indispensable abilities. The aforementioned work effectiveness can be called "unique" or "exceptional" because it will exceed the standard duties connected with the given job. The excess will refer both to qualitative and quantitative aspects of work, being a non-standard, "out-of-the-box" way of doing things and solving problems. These solutions, in turn, may contribute to seeking innovative approaches and heading toward topmost competitive position on the market.

Conclusion

Possessing knowledge is becoming equally significant to individuals and organisations alike, becoming a value which enables them all to move in the right direction. On the one hand, the need for individual knowledge-acquiring effort is visible; on the other hand, each organisation requires appropriate knowledge management referring to common knowledge of its workers. Interconnected community consisting of individuals and economy constructed of single businesses is only possible when knowledge becomes both parties' primary asset. Therefore, employers should think about each worker individually in order to cultivate and develop their unique, personal

²³ A. Poczowski, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 33.

²⁴ M. Adamiec, B. Kozusznik, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

qualities and skills. As a result, it is possible to state that a company success is tightly connected with each and every worker's success.

Living and working in a society of knowledge and in an economy which requires constant updating of the possessed data, forces employers to provide the workers with unlimited access to all relevant information in due time. If the company is managed properly, it guarantees continuous work effectiveness along with success on the highly competitive market.

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Cyborgization yesterday, today and tomorrow: Selected perspectives and educational contexts

1. Introduction

Man's eternal aspiration to achieve "self-enhancement" seems so natural that it is actually difficult to draw the beginning of these enhancements. From the dawn of history, the humanity wants to reach farther, more, faster, stronger, fuller, wider ... Without doubt, both previously and nowadays there have been people among us who do not care about expanding their possibilities (in whichever way), whom the constant everyday of tomorrow allows for an "even" existence. It is not, however, a proof that the man does not want to "reach farther than the sight". It is obvious that mechanical eras made it possible to (in a way) expand our bodies in space, and the electrotechnics allows us to expand our nervous system to the entire globe (Logan, 2010), and actually far beyond its borders. We have become (and are still becoming) conscious inhabitants of the global village, and at the same time we have started to be citizens of a shrinking world, though it is a world of wider and wider horizons. Many technical solutions, devices that accompany the man, and mass media have become fragments of ourselves expanded and scattered into public domain. Their influence on us usually consists in activating new senses in new configurations. The way of acting, using and receiving further devices undergoes constant transformations, which in turn influences the enhancement of our own possibilities (Przybyła, 2012). In this context, McLuhan's "the wheel is an extension of the foot" is not the beginning of the human aspirations to enter a higher level; it is just a palpable proof that humanity aimed at expanding its possibilities much earlier than 4,000 years BC. Irrespective of whether we view it as a potter's tool or the beginning of a revolution related to travelling, the invention of the wheel is just a result of human aspirations, and not their clue. It is

through tools that humanity has tried to carry out those activities that were impossible to carry out with "bare hands"; alternatively, those tools made it possible for us to carry out work on our own, which would not be possible but for these tools. Both in the stone age, and in the following bronze and iron eras, *homo sapiens* focused on making the reality easier for themselves, using the tools that they themselves created. The beginning of this intentional process (known to us from archaeological research) stems back 2.6 million years. Initially, these were primitive but functional tools made of animal bones and corncobs, stone and wood; and gradually (along with discovering metal ores) they were replaced with copper and zinc alloys that were used to cast axes, hammers, chisels, as well as ornaments and weapons. The next step was to replace soft metal alloys with iron alloys. From the very beginning, the man incessantly aspired to being more efficient, and it applies to all the spheres of our lives.

The notion of cyborgization is above all a process of intentional, thus conscious, enhancement and development of human cognitive functions with the use of technical means available. It means deliberate influence on the course of a series of human life processes, also including our development and education. Cyborgization is therefore an eternal human drive at upgrading oneself to higher levels of development (which probably should be called "moving up to higher levels", using the terminology from computer games). It is thus a process that is naturally instilled in the will to speed evolution up, as evolution seems to be a process that is too slow for the modern man.

The cyborgization of man also appears to be specific prosthodontics from the angle of subassemblies for the man. Currently, many human organs or entire body fragments are replaced or enhanced with the use of technical means. Starting from the human brain, that is the headquarters for the whole organism, being nowadays implanted with electrodes (e.g. in the motor cortex) or microchips that eliminate the effects of epilepsy in Parkinson's disease, and maybe also Alzheimer's (Mussa-Ivaldi, Casadio & Ranganathan, 2013). We are also implanted with artificial eyes, ears and larynxes. Enhancing the man also entails artificial internal organs, such as: the heart, kidneys, bladder, intestines and blood vessels. These are also artificial bones, joints, muscles, skin and spine fragments. It also means filling bone cavities, including the human skull. Without doubt, the future of medicine is to link the artificial with the natural, interpenetrate and supplement ourselves with subassemblies for the man; it is the development of bionics, nanotechnology; these are microchips; it is the convergence of many different "devices".

However, going back to historical threads, from the angle of the above-mentioned prosthesis or cyborgization of man it has to be noticed that it is not a discovery from the current or previous century, nor is it a subject that developed together with new technologies and their explosion. We can use the example of the last of the “human subassemblies” mentioned, that is, the skull. Nowadays, bone cavities in the skull are replaced with rolls of synthetic fibre that are sewn directly to the bones with polymer thread. Other solutions include ceramic elements, and still metal materials, too; also titanium plates and nets are still used due to their durability and lightness, and the fact that they do not hinder diagnosing a patient, being inexpensive at the same time. “Another material that is often used in the plastic surgery of the skull are plastic masses (Cranioplas) that make it possible to manually form the shape of the implant (...) after forming the lobe by milling with a high-revolution drill. Very often, the synthetic material that is used are plates made of compressed fibre (Codubix) whose surface is preformed and whose shape is adjusted by cutting the plate accordingly. One of the most modern materials is hydroxylapatite in the form of paste that makes it possible to 3D-form the shape of an implant. After implanting, the hydroxylapatite is gradually replaced with the patient’s own bone undergoing bioresorption” (Głowacki, 2007). The solutions mentioned, slightly blood-curdling, prove that modern medicine reinforces and supports humanity by supplementing the cavities created in tissues as a result of injuries and disease. Every day, teams of experts study more and more possibilities of supplementing, replacing and supporting human organs, or even entire limbs, with state-of-the-art implants (Mussa-Ivaldi, Casadio & Ranganathan, 2013). Nowadays doctors and surgeons are very often supported with extremely precise hands of robots, as their mission now is not only a successful surgery, but also a quick or even immediate recovery and full fitness, related to minimal damage to health. The Da Vinci surgical system is a good example – it is a system of a medical robot whose precision goes beyond that of the human eyes and hands; what is more, these arms (Yakoubi, Hillyer & Haber 2012), three or four of them depending on the version, do not go numb, shake or get tired, and importantly, are (still) totally dependent on the will of their operator. In this context we can talk of an incredible revolution that has started in medicine by means of new technological solutions. Making reference to McLuhan’s “wheel” once again, we can definitely claim that the arm of a robot is an extension of the arm of the surgeon. However, it is neither innovative nor a need of the world today. Undoubtedly, the techniques of cyborgization have changed when we consider electronic implants that send signals to the brain and back, e.g. to bionic limbs (Donoghue et al.,

2007; Orenstein, 2012; Cullen & Smith, 2013). Still, it is worth noticing that 6,000 years ago ancient Egyptians carried out skull trepanation filling cavities with metal plates. Current archaeological surveys confirm that after the surgery such patients would enjoy good health for some time. Looking for more local examples among “national cyborgs”, hetman Stefan Czarniecki, probably well-known among Poles, at least from the national anthem, is worth having a look at. After suffering from head injuries, that brave man was “equipped” with a metal crown. Irrespective of whether we look at our national hero or those Egyptian patients, we can definitely see that although the “cyborgizing” materials may have changed, the willingness to enhance ourselves has remained the same.

In both the historical and contemporary contexts, special attention should be paid to how men aspire to the process of cyborgization which symbolically can be named restoring and expanding. At the same time, we have to remember that – in the context of the issues already mentioned – the willingness to both restore and expand human possibilities has been accompanying us invariably for ages. As far as the expanding cyborgization is concerned, we shall present its two exemplifications in detail, dividing them into two groups: expanding by physical enhancement and expanding by cognitive enhancement. The perspective of expansion through cognitive enhancement shall also be discussed in the context of the visions of the cyborgization of the future that are currently created. It is especially important for teachers because these visions draw a picture of a dichotomous perception of the relation between education and cyborgization. This dichotomy refers to the fact that on the one hand futurologists claim cyborgization is a technology of an excellent educational potential, and on the other hand they conjecture about a world of cyborgs that exists without education.

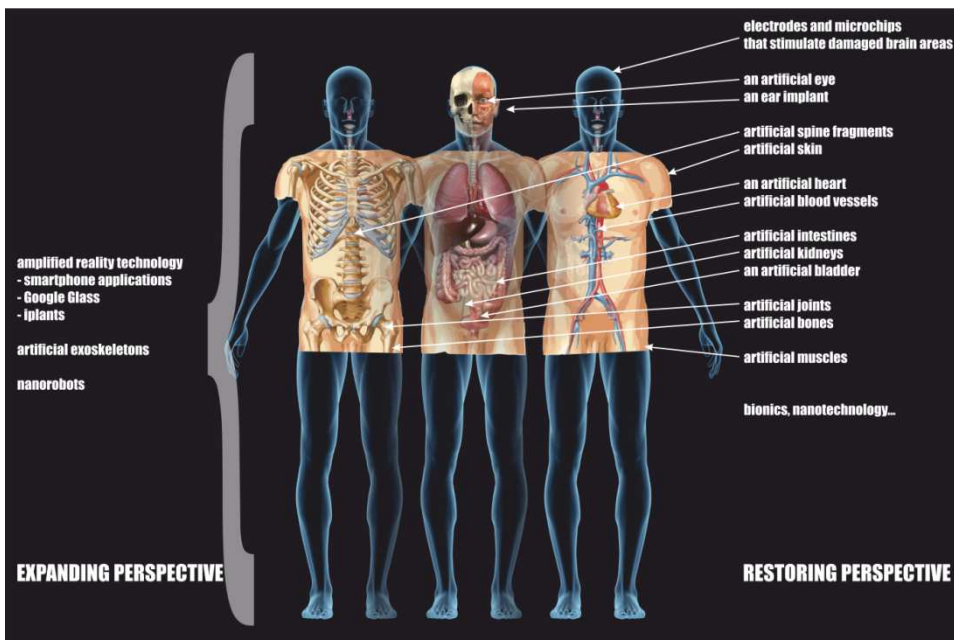
2. Two perspectives on cyborgization

Cyborgization, understood as enhancing the man with various technical solutions (Lapum et al., 2012), can be viewed from two perspectives: restoring (therapeutic) and expanding. From the restoring perspective, technology plays the role of an amplifier of damaged functions or organs. Examples are numerous: an ear implant, an artificial heart, an artificial eye, artificial kidneys, an artificial bladder, artificial intestines, artificial blood vessels, artificial bones, artificial joints, artificial muscles, artificial spine fragments, artificial skin, or different types of prostheses and orthoses, as

well as electrodes and microchips that stimulate damaged brain areas (Yokoi, 2009; Christie & Bloustien, 2010; Valente, 2011; Vlahos, 2011). The most recent research from this field deals with the so-called bionic limbs, i.e. a technology that allows to directly link prostheses (e.g. an artificial hand) to the central or peripheral nervous system (Cullen & Smith, 2013).

In the expanding perspective, cyborgization is presented as including technical solutions in the course of uninterrupted physical and cognitive processes. From this perspective, technology is thus not included in the process of reinforcing damaged functions, but in reinforcing those that function well in order to expand them (leading them to an overhuman shape, in a very lax understanding) (Saniotis, 2009; Fleischmann, 2009; Mushiaki, 2011; Palese, 2012). This is an educational perspective in a sense, because cyborgization in fact is an intentional action meant to enhance the man both physically and cognitively. Examples of such reinforcements include artificial exoskeletons (physical enhancement), amplified reality technology (smartphone applications, Google Glass, implants) or nanorobots (cognitive enhancement), which will be discussed in two following points.

Some distinguished perspectives of cyborgization are presented in picture 1.



Picture 1. Two perspectives on cyborgization (source: own work)

3. Cyborgization as physical enhancement

The idea of physical enhancement with technology through an artificial exoskeleton is correlated with the changes in thinking about disabilities caused by Oscar Pistorius's career. Not only did this South African disabled (double leg amputee) runner win the most important athletics titles in the Paralympics, but he also competed with able-bodied runners (van Hilvoorde & Landeweerd, 2010). Many researchers claim that by using carbon-fibre prosthetics Pistorius could gain significant advantage over able-bodied runners (Callaway, 2012). Currently, Pistorius is under arrest, which makes it impossible to verify this thesis, yet his career became a popular exemplification of the transformation of a dis-abled to a super-abled. The super-ability of the person with a prosthesis also made us realise that advanced prostheses not only bring back the ability, but also widen the possibilities. This is how the concept of an artificial exoskeleton was created, i.e. a prosthetic structure that is not prosthetics, used as a physical enhancement of an able-bodied person (van Hilvoorde & Landeweerd, 2010).



Picture 2. Sample artificial exoskeletons: Hercule and Hulc

Source: fot. Remigiusz Wilk, reprinted with permission of the author

The artificial exoskeleton was initially used in case of people suffering from leg paresis, yet now it is mostly used by soldiers, and in China by

policemen and many gardeners and fruit farmers. Most often, the artificial exoskeleton is made of titanium and powered by small but very efficient engines. It plays the role of a bone and muscle extension. On the one hand, it stabilizes the body and protects it from injuries, and on the other it gives more strength, makes it possible to march longer, run faster, lift and carry heavier weight, and move with more load (e.g. rucksack, rifle or a fruit box) (Vlahos, 2011). A sample artificial exoskeletons are shown in picture 2.

Designed by the Lockheed Martin company, the artificial exoskeleton named HULC makes it possible, for example, to walk, run, kneel, jump or even crawl with a rucksack weighing 90 kilos (in the future, the weight is to be increased up to 400 kilos), as well as lift objects weighing several dozen kilos (and in some contexts, even more than 100 kilos), with hardly any effort. Additionally, according to the producer's description, this equipment does not limit the movements of a soldier in any way (www.lockheedmartin.com, 21.02.2014).

4. Cyborgization as cognitive enhancement

The idea of cognitive enhancement with technology is an outcome of developing a well-known concept of the brain-machine interface (Saniotis, 2009). This concept is related to the cybernetic dream about creating a complex machine-man system (Trąbka, 1994) or a communication bridge between the biological (analogue) and electronic (digital) worlds (Kurzweil, 2013b). Such a system or communication is to be achieved through an implant to the brain that will allow for direct communication between neurons and a computer (Saniotis, 2009). Such an implant would use the augmented reality technology; it would simultaneously and interactively expand mental representations of the physical world with images of the virtual world (Topol, 2012). Augmented reality (AR) "supplements" the real world (which does not change of course) with new images or information (virtual layer). This supplementation can be some simple information (street names, navigation data) or it can be based on complicated photorealistic objects that blend in the real world and fit with it into a whole (e.g. in case of reconstructing destroyed historic buildings, military simulations etc.). Augmented reality is not equal to virtual reality (VR), that creates a new world which is computer-generated with the 3D technology. AR does not create "virtual worlds"; it recognizes real world objects and then adds virtual information to them. The currently developed AR applications put much emphasis on the virtual "augmentation" to be "indiscernible from reality" (Dejnaka, 2012: 1-2).

Augmented reality exists between the real and virtual worlds (Ullah Khan et al., 2011); it expands the actual world with virtual elements, but it does not build a world different from the real one (Lee, 2012). AR's aim is thus not making the reality unreal, but augmenting it, supplementing the real image with a virtual image that augments the reality (Thornton, Ernst & Clark, 2012). The world of augmented reality is therefore a mixture of real and virtual reality; it is a world of mixed reality (Jaramillo et al., 2010).

Research on AR implants inserted in the brain is conducted all over the world; we do not know yet if they will ever be created. Still, augmented reality can be used even today, e.g. through Google Glass produced by Google, that add an augmented image over the image perceived by the eye (Yakob, 2012) and many smartphone applications (e.g. Layar), that augment the image registered by the camera with virtual elements (Klichowski & Przybyła, 2013). It is thus possible to use augmented reality by looping at a given object (through glasses or smartphone screen), e.g. a monument, and learn about when and who founded it, how much it cost, what material it is made of and see what the space around it looked like five or a hundred years ago (Klichowski, 2014) (picture 3).



Picture 3. Augmented reality in the Google Glass concept

Source: own work

In a sense, augmented reality is a corrected reality because it not only expands the world but also brings order to it. Kurzweil (2013b: 308) writes in this context: “We will also have a corrected reality where the real world will be covered with screens that provide hints and explanations in the real time.

For example your retina display [such as *Google Glass*] can remind you: ‘This is Dr John Smith, the ABD Institute Director; last time you saw him half a year ago at a XYZ conference’ or ‘This is the TimeLife Building; your meeting is on the 10th floor’.

Nanotechnology, or the technology nanorobots to be more precise, is to become another strategy for cognitive (and also physical) reinforcement (Hook, 2004). Thousands, or maybe millions, of nanorobots, or robots of nanometric sizes, i.e. of the size of a single atom, are to travel in our blood circulation system in the future. “This idea is not as futuristic as it may seem. Based on it, successful experiments have been carried out on animals and there are already many microdevices in their blood vessels. At least four conferences devoted to BioMEMS (biological microelectromechanical systems) deal with devices that are placed in the human blood circulation system. Let us consider a few examples of the technology of nanorobots which, thanks to miniaturization and cost reduction, will be affordable in less than 25 years. [...] There will be billiards of nanorobots running in our blood vessels. They will destroy pathogenes, correct DNA errors, eliminate toxins and carry out many other tasks to boost our physical well-being. As a result, we will be able to live an endless life, without getting old. In our brains, huge numbers of nanorobots will interact with our biological neurons. In this way, access will be secured from the centre of our nervous system to full virtual reality that embraces all senses, as well as neurological correlates of our emotions. Also, what is more important, the tight connection between our biological thinking and non-biological intelligence that we create will greatly develop human intelligence” (Kurzweil, 2013b: 246-247, 297).

Kurzweil (2013a) claims that nanorobots will lead to the creation of a completely new brain soon; a brain with no limitations, without biological marks, without any limits. It is worth adding that there is no space for education in the world of nanorobots. In this reality, it is nanorobots that provide people with knowledge and skills; they are transferred directly, without any learning process, just like new software is installed in computers nowadays. In this context, Kurzweil (2013b) talks about a port (interface) in the brain that will allow the man to download patterns of neural connections and neurotransmitters that reflect the neurostructure of the skills or knowledge desired. Conjecturing about life in the year 2100, Stephens (2012) claims that a cyborg of that time after waking up on a day when he is supposed to set off on a long journey will be able to upload 20 foreign languages directly to his brain, thus mastering these languages in a split second.

5. Conclusions: Cyborgization and education – where are we heading?

Lee (2012) noticed that when cyborgization is viewed as strengthening the man with various technological solutions, it seems to be a very promising perspective for the development of education. What is more, he specified that augmented reality can turn out to be the most effective technology for education and business that we have developed so far. On the one hand thus, the perspective of the cyborgization of tomorrow lacks space for education; on the other hand, its great educational potential is visible.

Many antagonisms of this type could be enumerated. The aim of this article though is not to present the perspectives of cyborgization or its educational contexts in detail. Our aim was only to stress the dichotomy of the educational perception of cyborgization. Once its existence is noticed, teachers may be motivated to study both the educational potential of this process and diagnose the threats that are related to it. This is the objective of the Education Cyborgization Research Group (cyborgizacja.amu.edu.pl) at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. Research carried out by this team may help explain the multifaceted relation between cyborgization and education, both from the philosophical and didactic, and empirical points of view.

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Start your career up! Towards a practical teaching model of academic entrepreneurship

"The entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity"

Peter Drucker (2014, p. 33)

Due to rising unemployment and the difficult situation on the labour market in Poland, many university graduates face difficulties finding a job. In 2013–2014, the employment percentage remained at about 60% and the number of economically inactive members of the population decreased (from 32% to 28%); however, at the same time the proportion of the unemployed increased (from approx. 12% to over 16%). Of this group, 7% comprised people with higher education¹. The increase in unemployment coincided with a relatively constant rate of employment, which can be considered a failure of the employment support program^{me2}. It is crucial to debate how best to prepare young people entering the labour market in these difficult conditions. This discussion becomes all the more important when one notes the conclusion of the Employers' Report on the Labour Market³ that nearly two-thirds of employers have problems finding suitable employees for their businesses.

¹ *Aktywność zawodowa i wykształcenie Polaków*, Raport z badania ludności realizowanego w 2013 roku w ramach IV edycji Bilansu Kapitału Ludzkiego, Edukacja a rynek pracy, Vol. II, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2014 (accessed on: 4 March 2015).

² S. Czarnik, K. Turek, *Wykształcenie, praca przedsiębiorczość Polaków*, Raport z badania ludności realizowanego w 2012 roku w ramach III edycji Bilansu Kapitału Ludzkiego, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2012, p. 9 (accessed on: 28 October 2015).

³ *Pracodawcy o rynku pracy*, Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego, 2012. www.bkl.parp.gov.pl (accessed on: 28 October 2013).

The competences of students and university graduates and the needs of the labour market

Baby boomers are currently entering the labour market, which further increases the competitiveness. Young people realize that, before choosing a future profession, they should learn about the expectations of employers and the prospects of finding employment. It should be emphasized that the education received in the school system is gradually becoming obsolete and inadequate. There is a stereotypical belief that a career is guaranteed to all university graduates. More and more students realize that the capital of a potential employee applying for work in the modern labour market comprises not only the ability to think analytically and a set of soft skills (such as communication skills, teamwork, and delegation of tasks and negotiation), but also experience. It must also be remembered that it is the quality, not the quantity of experience that counts. Employers appreciate experience gained in a well thought-out and continuous way, not focusing on insignificant episodes.

Students and graduates are aware that education is a starting point for further activity and professional life. University education can be seen as a minimum, which does not guarantee anything, but without which it is difficult to achieve anything in the labour market. Students and university graduates often report that the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their studies are inadequate to meet the needs of employers. They say that academic knowledge is far detached from professional practice, and that the current education system does not prepare graduates for the jobs they are offered. However, it is worth asking whether the mission of universities is to produce "ready-made employees" or to equip them with the skills to flexibly follow changes in the labour market. On this background, universities can choose to offer dual education. (This is already seen in some areas, mainly in vocational, technical training. However, more and more humanities faculties are also offering similar options). Dual education consists in combining theoretical knowledge with good-quality apprenticeships; however, this is difficult to implement in a situation where the market is dominated by small and medium enterprises that are not very innovative and whose owners are reluctant to invest in human resources⁴. The question is, how to support young people starting their professional lives in this context?

Among the major challenges not only of the economy but also the education system is to develop programmes and mechanisms that are better

⁴ J. Górniak, *Wprowadzenie, Kompetencje Polaków a potrzeby polskiej gospodarki*. Raport podsumowujący IV edycję badań BKL z 2013 r., Warszawa 2014, p. 7.

adapted to the needs of employers and the labour market⁵, and to develop entrepreneurial attitudes enabling the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises. As Kosala and Pichur (2008) have written, shaping the entrepreneurial society is a necessary basis for building a modern, innovative and highly competitive economy⁶.

It is important to strengthen entrepreneurial attitudes among young people and to combine science and business (R&D) at universities, as has been already mentioned. Developing small and medium-sized enterprises is beneficial not only to the people directly affected; to put the issue in the global context, the efficiency and innovativeness of small and medium-sized enterprises is crucial for the world economy in terms of reducing unemployment among young graduates. As noted by Drucker (2014), the dynamic development of small and medium-sized enterprises creates new jobs. This is one of the essential conditions for building an entrepreneurial society⁷. Self-employment is a strong alternative to paid employment. On the one hand, it creates new jobs; on the other (as shown by numerous studies), entrepreneurs are a group who retire very late in life⁸, which is not without significance for the state.

Building the entrepreneurial attitudes of university students

There are two trends shown in the literature on the entrepreneurial attitudes of students and graduates⁹. The first reveals that the highest levels of entrepreneurial activity are observed among students/graduates who experience the biggest problems finding a job, but also among students/graduates who have been studying entrepreneurship, or those from technical faculties.

The second trend was revealed by Deloitte, and shows that very few students and graduates (5.2%) stated an intention to run their own business. There are several possible reasons for the low activity in this area. It is worth noting that the survey was carried out among students and graduates cop-

⁵ *Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy. Międzynarodowe badanie studentów i absolwentów*, Deloitte i Katedra Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego Szkoły Głównej Handlowej w Warszawie, 2013 (accessed on: 11 November 2014).

⁶ M. Kosala, A. Pichur, *Analiza działań przedsiębiorczych i postrzeganie prowadzenia działalności gospodarczej przez młode pokolenie – wybrane aspekty*, *Przedsiębiorczość-Edukacja*, 4, 2008, p. 347.

⁷ P. Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Practice and Principles*, Routledge, 2014, p. 318.

⁸ J. Górniak, in: D. Anxo, A. Jolivet, T. Ericson, *Working Longer In European Countries: Underestimated and Unexpected Effects*, *International Journal of Manpower*, vol. 33, Issue 6, p. 86.

⁹ Cf.: J. Targalski, A. Pichur and M. Kosala and Deloitte's reports.

ing with the labour market relatively well¹⁰ (humanities represented only 5.1% of all the studied faculties), who most commonly emphasized the priority of finding work in large companies that ensure good conditions of employment. It should also be pointed out that a common cause of low activity in the field of entrepreneurship may be that the people in students' social environment (parents, immediate family, friends) lack experience in running a business, which helps lead young people away from developing a career based on self-employment. Another factor is the lack of predisposition towards an entrepreneurial approach.

The available literature highlights the dynamics in the social perception of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. In the 1980s, it was believed that entrepreneurs were less educated than the general population¹¹, but now the importance of education for entrepreneurial activity is emphasized¹². However, Timmons (1995) has argued that formal education at lower levels does not promote entrepreneurial attitudes; on the contrary, it helps propagate a "take-the-job" attitude, preparing people to work on someone else's behalf and stifling creativity and entrepreneurship¹³. Therefore, academic education begins to play a crucial role in promoting knowledge on entrepreneurship and building entrepreneurial attitudes.

Ibrahim and Ellis (2002) claim that the entrepreneurial skills of individuals can be predicted by considering their CVs and assessing the importance they attach to building entrepreneurial attitudes in the early and later stages of life, and by getting to know their significant others (mentors)¹⁴. Based on this conclusion, they emphasize that children's upbringing and the education given by parents have a significant impact on an individual's life. Entrepreneurial attitudes of parents should be considered part of children's education. These authors strongly emphasize the role of entrepreneurial education from an early age as an important supplement to training in adulthood. However, as Deakins (1995) observes, excessive focus on the "personality of the entrepreneur", innate predispositions and the professional history of significant others can distract from the process of learning and development in the field of entrepreneurship¹⁵.

¹⁰ The fields of study under analysis are: economics, accounting, finance, banking, technical studies, management and marketing, social science and humanities.

¹¹ Based on the study conducted by Jacobowitz and Vilder in 1982.

¹² Cf.: research on entrepreneurship and education: Bates (1995), Robinson & Sexton (1994), Timmons (1995) et al.

¹³ J.A. Timmons, *New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*, Burr Ridge, Irwin 1995, p. 65.

¹⁴ A.B. Ibrahim, W.H. Ellis, *Entrepreneurship and small business management: Text, Reading and cases*, Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, Iowa 2002, p. 46.

¹⁵ D. Deakins, *Entrepreneurship and Small Firms*, McGraw Hill, Maidenhead 1995.

It is worth noting that a number of training initiatives on entrepreneurship conducted during working lives are not able to respond to the real needs of the labour market. According to Andrzejczak (2008), the main characteristics of entrepreneurial individuals are as follows:

- they have an unconventional approach to solving practical problems;
- they are independent in making non-routine decisions, including proximal and distal conditions;
- they take into account a certain degree of risk and uncertainty;
- they take into account liability for the potential failure of their entrepreneurship and the resulting losses;
- they assume that their income will be higher than the costs incurred¹⁶.

Henderson and Robertson (2000) write that the "Austrian school" represents the contemporary model of entrepreneurship. This model is based on the perception of entrepreneurs as dynamic people whose activities cover many factors at once. So perceived, an entrepreneur is a catalyst of change, crucial for economic development. The entrepreneur is expected to be an innovator who deploys new solutions and technologies¹⁷.

Many researchers¹⁸ divide entrepreneurial competences into two main types: easy-to-learn competences (such as, for example, functional skills in management and business) and those that are more difficult to learn (such as creativity and innovative aspects of entrepreneurship). It is often argued that entrepreneurship education should focus on the necessary preparations to start one's own business, because knowledge and entrepreneurial skills are expected to motivate people to undertake entrepreneurial activities. Here, it is necessary to stress the importance of the cultural context for the development of entrepreneurial features. Following Hofstede's concept of cultural dimensions, it can be stated that societies characterized by low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, a masculine nature, high individualization, universality, and achievement orientation will constitute a better ground for entrepreneurial activity, characterized by proactivity, innovation and risk-taking¹⁹. This trend can be found in the latest study on students conducted within the framework of the Study of Human Capital in Poland (BKL) "The Future Executives of Polish Economy". The report shows that it is most common for men rather than women to opt for self-employment.

¹⁶ A. Andrzejczak, *Możliwości kształtowania postaw przedsiębiorczych w szkole*, (in:) A. Andrzejczak (ed.) *Przedsiębiorczość w edukacji*, AE, Poznań 2008, p. 38.

¹⁷ R. Henderson, M. Robertson, *Who wants to be an entrepreneur? Young adult attitudes to entrepreneurship as a career*, Career Development International, 5/6, MBC University Press 2000, p. 280.

¹⁸ For example, Shephard D. & Douglas E. (1996) or Rae D. & Carswell M. (2001).

¹⁹ G. Hofstede, *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related value*, Sage, Beverly Hills, California 1980.

Women more commonly choose to work in state-owned companies (22%) and the private sector (25%)²⁰. Reasons for this situation can be found in numerous publications on women in the labour market. Their authors emphasize the existence of such negative phenomena as the “glass ceiling”, the “escalator”, or the “sticky floor”, i.e., stereotypes that keep women from advancement and professional development²¹. Paradoxically, due to the situation of women in the labour market and the difficulties they encounter in breaking through the “glass ceiling”, nearly 35% of women decide to start their own business (often during their studies).

A student business idea, or step by step to your own business

According to Lee et al., education is one of the most important factors that distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. According to these authors, the education system plays the key role in anticipating and developing entrepreneurial features²². Educational programmes should focus on issues such as encouraging autonomous, independent and innovative challenges, and should pay attention to the development of creativity and risk-taking. Students should be encouraged to take decisions during classes, and, most importantly, their bad decisions should be accepted as valuable life experience. Lebret (2007) describes the value of experience gained by young investors from Silicon Valley in taking erroneous decisions in their first businesses. Lebret believes that such experiences are very significant for young people, and are actually assets, teaching young businesspeople the mistakes to avoid in the future and the measures to take in order to cope with difficulties²³.

Entrepreneurship and innovativeness are the main factors which affect the dynamics of socio-economic development and create competitive micro- and macro-economic advantages²⁴. Therefore, significant emphasis should be placed on building and promoting entrepreneurial attitudes among the younger generation. As noted by Venkataraman (2000), entrepreneurship occurs where the two areas meet: opportunities, and the ability to achieve

²⁰ *Przyszłe kadry polskiej gospodarki*, Raport z badania ludności realizowanego w 2013 roku w ramach IV edycji Bilansu Kapitału Ludzkiego, Edukacja a rynek pracy, Vol. II, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2014 (accessed on: 4 March 2015).

²¹ Cf.: M. Weber (2001); A. Titkow, D. Duch-Krzysztożek, B. Budrowska (2004); E. Pietrzak (2008).

²² S. Lee, D. Chang, S. Lim, W. Li, *Impact of entrepreneurship education: A comparative study of the U.S., and Korea*, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 1(1), p. 28.

²³ H. Lebret, *Start-up. What we still learn from Silicon Valley*, Paperback 2007.

²⁴ *Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy...*, p. 29.

economic non-common benefits; and the presence and activity of entrepreneurial people who are capable of going beyond the common patterns of action²⁵. At the academic level, this project is implemented by universities developing entrepreneurial attitudes and activities together with pre-incubators and incubators. As noted by De Faoite, Johnston and van der Sijde, there are still very few programmes or initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and take into account the cultural, social and political aspects relating to the opportunities for cooperation between education and entrepreneurs²⁶.

In this situation, classes on academic entrepreneurship conducted in collaboration with the Academic Incubators and Pre-incubators of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (UAM) are a great way for students to acquire theoretical knowledge combined with practical skills and experience at the study stage. As shown by numerous researchers²⁷, few of those studying will take up the challenge to establish and run their own businesses. The most common concerns of young people are a lack of real business ideas, ignorance of procedures, a lack of positive experiences among people from their immediate environment, and a lack of information on support in establishing and running business (both in terms of procedures and financing).

The academic course at Adam Mickiewicz University (UAM) consists of 30 hours of lectures and classes conducted by business theorists and practitioners. They are designed to provide students with theoretical knowledge on entrepreneurship, business strategy, market segmentation (diagnosis of the needs of the target group of customers, particular characteristics of products or services, etc.), acquiring suppliers and business partners (e.g., Business Angels), knowledge of distribution channels for services and products, marketing, formal and legal regulations related to setting up a business, and familiarity with institutions supporting entrepreneurship. In addition to the theoretical part, the classes also provide workshops on self-presentation, negotiation with customers, or business presentations. Students learn how to properly develop a business plan in practice, how to set up a business step by step, how to raise funds for business, how to manage finances in one's own enterprise, and what insurance and taxes must be paid by business owners.

²⁵ Za: A. Koźmiński, *Zarządzanie w warunkach niepewności*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2005, p. 163.

²⁶ D. de Faoite, C. Henry, K. Johnston, P. van der Sijde, *Education and training for entrepreneurs: A consideration of initiatives in Ireland and The Netherlands*, *Education and Training*, 45, pp. 431-437.

²⁷ That is about 3.3% of the respondents in the Report „Pierwsze kroki na rynku pracy...”; see also: *Wykształcenie, praca, przedsiębiorczość Polaków*, Raport z badania ludności realizowanego w 2012 roku w ramach III edycji Bilansu Kapitału Ludzkiego, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa 2012.

Another advantage of this course is undoubtedly the opportunity to meet young entrepreneurs, who make students acquainted with the realities of starting and running a business. Participants learn about opportunities and the most common problems associated with self-employment.

According to the students themselves, business meetings in the Poznań Science and Technology Park, UAM, are particularly valuable, as they are given the opportunity to participate in workshops on entrepreneurship and learn about the opportunities offered to young entrepreneurs by academic institutions supporting student business.

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In the multicultural and multifunctional modern work environment, the role of entrepreneurial activity is becoming more and more important. This activity should be based on knowledge and dominated by modern information technology that is less dependent on local conditions and operates in global markets.

Unquestionable advantages of learning entrepreneurial skills during one's studies include opportunities to gain qualifications and work experience, to learn about social roles (giving employment to other people, etc.), to work towards greater financial independence, or, perhaps most important, to gain the ability to perform a satisfactory job earlier in life than students who work in a less independent way. According to research conducted by Deloitte among students and university graduates, 80% of people who gained experience in running a business during their studies indicated that this experience was useful in their later career, both in relation to looking for a job (they were more appreciated by potential employers) and in their subsequent work.

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A Coaching Culture – Towards New Organizational Challenges

We live in a dynamic world. Every day, we have to face various challenges, and the traditional silo or linear thinking is no longer sufficient to cope with them. The need for skilful adaptation to changes has never been as urgent and clear as it is today. Currently, all spheres of our lives are characterized by changing conditions. We have to face a lot of unknowns. How will we cope in the future? What role will we play? How will business respond to the ever-changing challenges it will bear responsibility for? Will big corporations fully conquer our souls by instilling consumerism, materialism, and the illusion of happiness? Or will some new leaders prevent them from doing so? Are there any leaders and visionaries out there who will stop this thoughtless rush towards technology and economic profit maximization, and, if so, where are they? There are many questions, and the uncertainty creeps into our daily lives and destabilizes the world of business. The traditional culture of businesses has to change if they are to survive.¹ Why? There are a number of pragmatic reasons. Globalization, demographic change, growing competency requirements, aspirations, migration, European integration, or even the internet require from enterprises constant adaptation processes and changes in performance. Regardless of the “cause” of transformation, any new structure will be forced to maintain competitiveness and achieve better results. This is mainly because economic calculation is still the basic criterion for organizational success. Hardly ever do companies choose to take risks only to benefit their employees or the environment.

¹ Cf.: J. Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*, London-Boston 2010, p. 27.

There are indeed organizations which declare that social responsibility is a priority for them, and that employees are their greatest asset.² Many also repeat the relatively new mantra of “releasing human potential,” which (especially in times of economic crisis) often sounds empty. It is much more often said than reflected in practice. The new coaching culture, however, can help businesses fill the words with content and indicate the direction for the development of workers and whole corporations.³ If it leads to a better performance of organizational tasks and staff development, it is economically justified and worthy of consideration from the point of view of management. However, fundamental changes in attitude, corporate governance, and organizational structure are necessary in order to achieve optimal results through coaching tools.⁴

Coaching can be considered a specific form of relationship based on the processes of learning, motivation, dialogue and support, which is conducive to the development of an organization. Managers should look favourably on Drucker’s vision of employee leadership in this process.⁵ According to this approach, which is more and more popular, and which I personally support, the competitiveness of a company resides primarily in the potential of its employees. From the point of view of management, the logical consequence of this would be investment in the workforce in terms of providing opportunities for their development. Unfortunately, some managers not only move away from self-improvement, maintaining often less efficient but well-known and traditional forms of management, they also prefer to invest in technology or improve existing formal procedures rather than implementing solutions to promote learning processes and raising the awareness of employees about their responsibility and self-belief.⁶ The main problem with the coaching approach is therefore often in the minds of managers themselves. Furthermore, the adoption of pro-development objectives and solutions with respect to subordinates can be seen as a threat to managers’ own position. For subordinates to develop self-belief, managers need to get rid of the desire to control their employees and refrain from trying to be omniscient. According to Whitmore, good managers are those who help their staff

² P. Drucker, *Managing in a Time of Great Change*, New York 1995; Peter Drucker on the Profession of Management, Boston 1998; *Management Challengers for 21st Century*, New York 1999; M. Kossowska, I. Sołtysińska, *Szkolenie pracowników a rozwój organizacji*, Kraków 2002.

³ More in: J. Whitmore, op. cit.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵ P. Drucker, *Managing*, op. cit.; *Management*, op. cit.; *The Daily Drucker*, New York 2004.

⁶ J. Whitmore, op. cit., p. 18.

become better. In practice, however, all too often managers are afraid of losing their power, authority, position, credibility, or self-belief.⁷ It is hard to resist the impression that this says a lot about the quality of the managerial “class.”

When discussing the difficulties of applying coaching methods, one should pay attention to the role of “specialist” that some managers play. Due to the nature and principles of coaching⁸, it is sometimes difficult for an expert to be a good coach, yet it is not impossible. Expertise is required in management, but the boss does not need to have specialized skills in a particular area; rather, he or she can create a space for their employees to learn, and encourage them to search for solutions, develop skills, and gain knowledge (even if he or she does not fully understand the specific context/issues). The assumption that a manager knows everything about any subject and does not have to develop expertise, and that everything he or she does is “the best,” is a nail in the coffin of any company that wants to grow. Where activities become increasingly complex in technical terms, specialization becomes more demanding and skills and knowledge quickly become outdated; permanent learning then becomes a condition for survival, and coaching starts to be an inherent feature of management, both in relation to managers’ competence and the skills of the whole team.

Adaptive problems of modern organizations are therefore the result not only of changing extra-organizational conditions, but also (perhaps primarily) the approach of managers themselves. New skills are required to function and deal effectively with unpredictable situations. There is a need for a system-wide approach involving personal growth, awareness, potential development, overcoming of personal fears, faith in people, and a climate of mutual trust. To enable greater efficiency in every aspect of human activity, the development of individuals should take the form of lifelong learning, understood as a process of the continuous renewal, development, and improvement of qualifications, knowledge and skills, both in personal and professional life.⁹ Activities associated with the learning process may relate to

⁷ Ibidem, p. 18.

⁸ J. Rogers, *Coaching Skills: A Handbook*, McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2012, pp. 14-15 et seq.; B. Piasecka (ed.), *O rozwoju mimo ograniczeń. Procesy wspierania jednostki i rodziny: wychowanie, edukacja, coaching, psychoterapia*, Kraków 2011, p. 99; J. Passmore (ed.), *Excellence in Coaching: The Industry Guide*, London 2010, p. 34 et seq.; J. Starr, *The Coaching Manual: The Definitive Guide to the Process, Principles and Skills of Personal Coaching*, Pearson Education, 2007; M. Sidor-Rządowska (ed.), *Coaching. Teoria, praktyka, studia przypadków*, Kraków 2009.

⁹ P. Tissot, *Terminology of Vocational Training Policy. A multilingual glossary for an Enlarged Europe*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg 2004, p. 10.

any role played by individuals, and may be related to their inner needs; but they can also be designed, organized, and funded by their employer. In this case, the lifelong learning of employees is an element of organizational learning (which, according to many, is the only legitimate organizational model¹⁰). From the point of view of a company's strategic objectives, it seems optimal to combine these incentives under a single organizational plane.

Although managers are often aware of the arguments presented above, they are often more concerned about short-term profits than about education or the quality of results. This will have to change if companies are to meet market demands and beat the competition. However, the change should start from "the top": it is leaders who should set an example and initiate the mentioned processes of lifelong learning, building self-confidence, inducing motivation, and maximizing potential.¹¹ Managers should therefore pay attention to their own development and be willing to support others, while being aware that individuals will be able to evolve much faster if they want to learn. In practice the coaching process supports development, but it should be inspired by individual motivations, and cannot be imposed by force. The positive concept of man in humanistic psychology¹² assumes human potential and need for development, thereby providing managers with motivational tools beyond the carrot-and-stick method. This psychological optimism seems necessary to fully appreciate the coaching-based management style. New situations, however, are often accompanied by uncertainty, and managers commonly ask how they can maintain and improve their skills in their coaching work. According to Whitmore, they should develop greater awareness of themselves and other people in practice, and be committed to their own continuing personal development.¹³ From the viewpoint of managers, coaching can also be extremely helpful in discovering the true values and motivations of employees; not knowing these, it is difficult to optimize the business performance of a company. Coaching is a philosophy that is based on theoretical foundations and provides a set of practical tools

¹⁰ P.M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization*, New York 2010, pp. 34, 75-279 and others; B. Mikula, *Organizacje oparte na wiedzy*, Kraków 2006; *Elementy nowoczesnego zarządzania. W kierunku organizacji inteligentnych*, Kraków 2001; D.A. Garvin, *Building a Learning Organization*, Harvard Business Review, July-August 1993, pp. 78-91.

¹¹ See: J. Whitmore, op. cit., pp. 121-136.

¹² A. Maslow, *Motywacja i osobowość*, Warszawa 2013; *W stronę psychologii istnienia*, Poznań 2004; C.R. Rogers, *A Way of Being*, Boston 1980; F.S. Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, New York 1974.

¹³ J. Whitmore, op. cit., p. 3.

that can provide a foundation for management actions aimed at launching the potential of employees; this can enable individuals to bring out what is best in themselves. Similarly, as with any new skills, adapting coaching methods requires commitment, time, and training before these methods become a natural form of professional (managerial) everyday practice which optimizes efficiency.

The limited nature of this paper does not allow for a deeper analysis of this phenomenon, so the issues raised here are presented synthetically and the problems only outlined. However, considering the practical application of coaching in business, one should look a little closer at the concept of management. By making some simplifications, it can be assumed that traditional management styles and forms of communication to some extent form a continuum, as illustrated in the figure below.

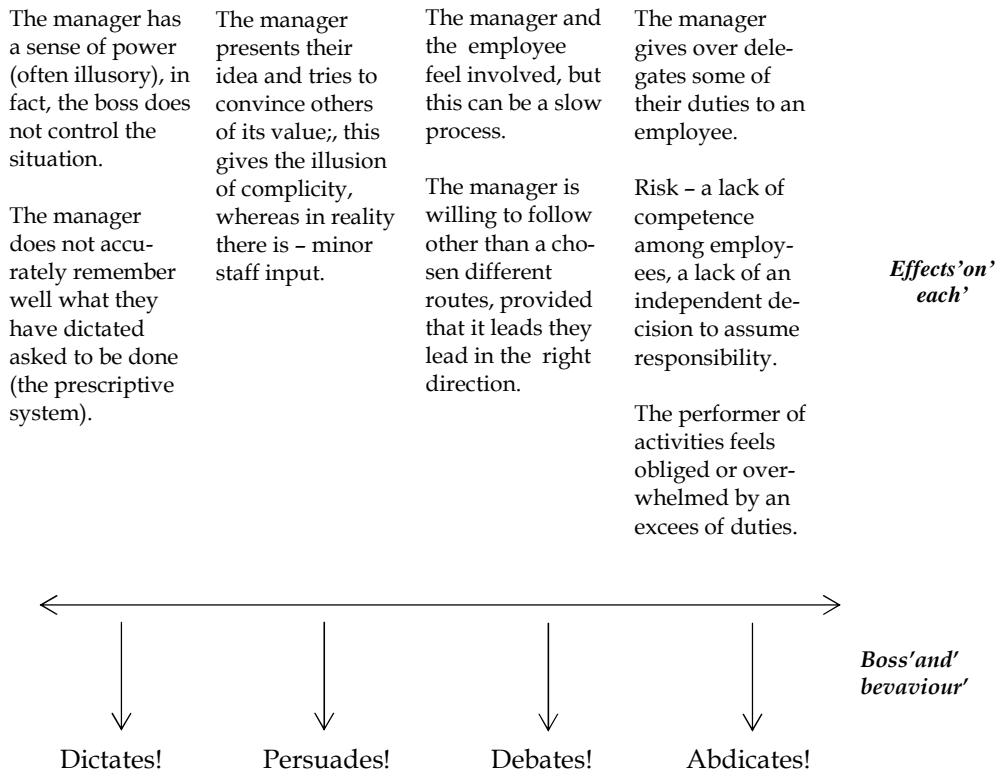


Fig. 1 Traditional Management

Based on: J. Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*, London-Boston 2010. p. 21.

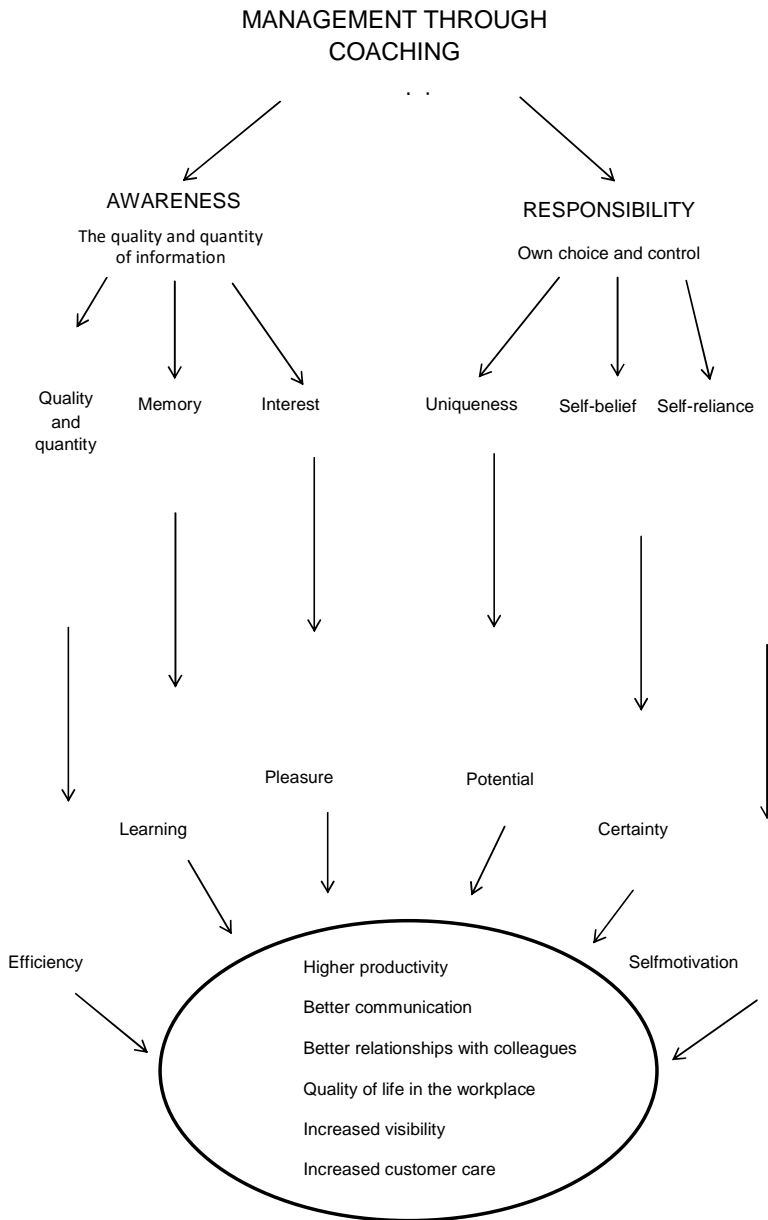
The autocratic approach is at one end of the scale, and laissez-faire at the other. Most managers fall somewhere in between. Coaching tries to combine the benefits of both extremes without the risks associated with them. The manager/coach presents a task, using coaching questions. By listening to an employee's response, they learn about the employee's proposals and plans of action, and the accompanying processes of thinking, and thus gain better understanding of the possible options. The employee takes the initiative by searching for solutions. Thus, coaching provides the manager with real, not illusory, control, and gives real responsibility to the subordinate. Work on self-development and development of subordinates brings tangible benefits. New skills and competences encourage employees to take on more challenges and to implement organizational tasks independently and effectively. The effectiveness of coaching is conditioned by several variables that apply to most situations in the workplace. The main ones are: time, the quality of results, and learning maximization. Unfortunately, business practice often gives the impression that time takes precedence over quality, and education is pushed into third place. Consequently, the results are often much worse than the capacity, and the competitiveness of the company is reduced.

The question that managers should ask themselves is this: How good do I expect results to be? Coaching can help achieve results that exceed the expectations of both the coach/manager and the employees.

In his article "How I Learned to Let My Workers Lead", R. Stayer describes his managerial practice.¹⁴ Though his company prospered, he noted that there was a gap between the potential of the enterprise and its efficiency – despite the satisfactory results and the competitiveness of the company. He decided to change the style of work. He switched from autocratic management to "autocratic abdication", acknowledging that people need to want responsibility – it cannot be imposed. This increased employees' efficiency, understood not only as a positive result¹⁵ but as an exceeding of expectations, setting and meeting the highest possible standards. Any leader seeking this kind of efficiency and a guarantee of survival in this uncertain market reality will therefore have to be ready to make changes in their management style. Bearing in mind the mentioned advantages of the coaching principle, the direction seems obvious. Coaching-based management can be represented graphically as follows:

¹⁴ R. Stayer, *How I Learned to Let My Workers Lead*, Harvard Business Review, 11-12.1990, pp. 66-87.

¹⁵ *Słownik języka polskiego*, Warszawa 2005, p. 184.



Based on: J. Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*, London-Boston 2010.

Many company owners are beginning to understand that they need to transform their businesses into knowledge- (reason)-based organizations, and that learning and continuous improvement have become necessities to

survive and remain competitive. Coaching-based management seems to be the best, most effective solution. However, even managers who use coaching on a daily basis will fail in their objectives if they focus solely on improving results and forget that efficiency, knowledge, and satisfaction are inextricably linked. All these three elements are reinforced by the high self-awareness of employees, which is the essence of coaching. Focusing on just one of the elements and neglecting the others will not bring a long-term positive effect. It is not possible, for example, to maintain efficiency in the absence of knowledge and satisfaction. Whether or not a manager is a good leader depends on their attitude; in my opinion, it boils down to asking *why* something needs to be done, rather than *how* it is to be achieved.

Changing the management style can lead to a transformation of the entire organization, whose new culture can then be characterized as follows: "Hierarchy gives way to support, blame gives way to honest evaluation, external motivators are replaced by self-motivation, protective barriers fall as teams build, change is no longer feared but welcomed (...) Secrecy and censorship are replaced by openness and honesty, pressure of work becomes challenging work, and short-term fire-fighting reactions give way to longer-term strategic thinking."¹⁶ An additional element of this characteristic is undoubtedly the need for engagement and choice, which is, according to some, an expression of the evolving consciousness of our collective society.¹⁷ Choice entails responsibility, or, in other words, responsibility demands choice. Choice implies freedom. Instead of feeling threatened, managers should recognise the profit that this freedom brings. Responsibility strengthens commitment and provides more guarantees that employees will do their best. In this case, everyone wins: both the individual and the organization.

What are some of the tangible benefits for an organization of adopting a coaching culture? Here are a few fundamentals:

- improved performance and productivity,
- staff development,
- improved learning,
- better staff relations,
- more creative ideas,
- better use of people and resources,
- higher employee motivation,
- greater flexibility, adaptability to change, etc.¹⁸

All these elements create a new quality and influence the development and competitiveness of an organization.

¹⁶ J. Whitmore, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 30.

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 156-158.

In summary, coaching and the principles on which it stands are global and timeless. Theoretical foundations and the methods and tools of coaching provide a kind of path for performance improvement, leading from rigid hierarchies and dependencies to individual responsibility, from autocracy to democracy, from quantitative consumerism to qualitative stabilization. To be successful, the leaders of the future will have to base their management style on coaching methods, avoiding direct commands and strict supervision. Keeping staff on side, especially the most talented employees, is now becoming crucial for the competitiveness or even the survival of businesses. The prescriptive system, pervasive control, and strong hierarchy are losing their *raison d'être*. Employees expect to be treated differently; they often wish to be more trusted, to have freedom of choice, and to be able to take responsibility for their actions. In addition, the external context in which organizations now have to operate is often dynamic and unpredictable, and remains outside the control of the company. Globalization, development of information technology, economic crises, social responsibility, and environmental degradation are just some of the factors firms have to deal with. Dealing with these challenges requires a new organizational culture and new leadership qualities. Pro-development leaders should have vision, be authentic, have a target, and believe in themselves and other people. Their objectives should include higher self-awareness, self-improvement, and maximum utilization of resources. These managers, irrespective of the market sector in which they operate, will create opportunities for learning/development, will increase awareness, and will help others in discovering their potential, offering them the ability to take decisions and make choices. These developments will contribute to building the foundations of a new class of leaders, and give the next generation the opportunity to shape and improve their leadership skills.

Currently, the context of leadership is undergoing significant changes, mainly due to two factors. Firstly, the old patterns, rules, and skills of leadership no longer seem efficient. Secondly, responsible leadership requires leaders to draw attention to global, social and environmental issues, and to treat them as equivalent to short-term financial successes of their organization. Becoming aware of these changes and dependencies will allow managers to adapt more quickly to the role of the coach, and be ready to face the challenges of tomorrow. Though it is no remedy for all the ills of the modern world, by increasing the personal satisfaction of employees an organizational culture of coaching can help in improving business efficiency and give a sense of control and some stabilization in these changing conditions.

We have reached the point in the evolution of corporations where the hierarchical past should be replaced by a new form of decentralized leader-

ship and collective responsibility. We need to look at the rapid evolution of the role of the coach over the last 25 years and start to acknowledge that it responds to the new need for self-responsibility and self-development – though of course it would be simplistic and perhaps naïve to suggest coaching represented a definitive answer. Many people are of the opinion that companies have to change their role and attitude.¹⁹ The subservient role of an individual with respect to the economy is less and less accepted; there are voices of opposition expressed by those who decided to quit their corporate “careers”. Issues of corporate social responsibility are being discussed more and more often in business environments. Will this be followed by some actual change in management, or will organizations continue to pursue their profits at all costs until obstacles are encountered, usually in the form of differently minded people with other needs, aspirations, and values? The answer is not clear, but it can certainly be said that the manager-leader now plays a leading role in the transformation of organizational culture: without a common vision, no change will be successful; with a lack of vision at the top, it will not even start.²⁰

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¹⁹ Cf.: S. Blanchard, M. Homan, *Coaching. Poznaj tajniki sukcesu*, Gliwice 2004; L.D. Czarkowska (ed.), *Coaching katalizator rozwoju organizacji*, Warszawa 2011; R. Dilts, *From Coach to Awakener*, Capitola 2003; R. Hargrove, *Masterful Coaching*, San Francisco 2008; M.B. O’Neill, *Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart: A Systems Approach to Engaging Leaders with Their Challenges*, San Francisco 2007; B. Mikuła, *Elementy...*, op. cit.

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Education of the European Public Employment Services as an exemplification of Lifelong Learning

Free movement of people (mostly workers) is one of the fundamental principles of European Union. In order to provide it, in European Union and European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, European job placement within EURES works. In its structure EURES advisers, mostly from Public Employment Services, work to provide services such as: job placement, recruitment, Job Fairs and recently more often on-line Job Fairs. This staff of over 900 EURES advisers within the UE structure and EEA (and Switzerland), through programs of education prepared by the European Commission is an example of Lifelong Learning of Public Employment Services. Starting from training candidates for EURES advisers, through advanced trainings in selected areas of job placement in UE structures to trainings for experts who educates the next generation of EURES advisers, European Commission implements the concept of lifelong learning from Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council (EU) from 15 November 2006 and the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EU) No 1288/2013 from 11 December 2013.

An important aspect of these trainings is that they are not run in every language of the European Union, but only in English, French and German. It means that EURES advisers from countries where English, French or German are not native, are being educated in foreign language.

Detailed analysis of EU legislation related to Lifelong Learning, strategic documents of UNESCO and OECD made by Solarczyk-Ambrozik (Solarczyk-Ambrozik, 2013) and these documents holistic approach demonstrates a new form of educational reality. Solarczyk-Ambrozik draws attention to two aspects of this new educational reality, which can be found in education of European Public Employment Services.

On one hand emphasis on individualization of educational path associated to educational lifestyle shaping up as a result of changes of contemporary world is characteristic (...) on the other hand – a constant focus on improving institutional forms creating frames for lifelong learning, improving and acquiring new skills necessary to navigate in contemporary, dominated by technological development world. (Solarczyk-Ambozik, 2013, p. 32)

Such educational reality is implemented by the training program for European Public Employment Services created by the European Commission along with Ernst & Young Company.

It is worth mentioning that for lifelong learning program for 2007-2013 7 billion Euros have been allocated (http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp_en.htm), while for the new program for 2014-2020 14,7 billion, therefore 40% more (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/index_en.htm).

An important aspect of education of EURES Staff is, as mentioned earlier, that it takes place only in three languages of the European Union, namely English, French and German.

Foreign language is a language, that an individual learns in an environment where it is not the primary means of communication between the majority of people, and its knowledge and its fluency is not necessary for survival (Oxford, 1999, p. 113).

Research on the impact of learning both foreign language and in foreign language is ambiguous. They show that some personality traits support these process while others have no influence. (Robinson, Gabriel i Katchan, 1993; Sharp, 2008; Oxford, 1999).

Therefore, one can argue that personality traits of EURES advisers may have direct impact on their work and education, while learning in foreign language will not have an impact on the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Outline of the history of the EURES

Council Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 established freedom of movement for workers as a fundamental right within the European Community. Article 1 of this Regulation states that „any national of a Member State, shall, irrespective of his place of residence, have the right to take up an activity as an employed person, and to pursue such activity, within the territory of another Member State in accordance with the provision laid down by law, regulation or administrative action governing the employment of nationals of that State.” (Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council).

In addition, the Regulation on the movement of workers guaranteed equal treatment for all Community workers, regardless of nationality. This increased mobility of citizens of the Member State, including the increase of job mobility. That is why, four years later, in 1972 SEDOC came into being (*Système européen de diffusion des offres et demandes d'emploi en compensation internationale*). SEDOC „developed European job offers coding, exchange of information on the vacancies and gathering information about the costs of living in each Member State country” (WUP Gdańsk, 2009, p. 6). At the beginning of SEDOC functioning, each Member State country was represented by one person, who was responsible for international mobility. It was not until the early 90s of the past century, the European Commission, together with public employment services and local partners brought into being the European Public Employment Services that under the amendment to Regulation 16/12.69 from SEDOC changed into the EURES (*EUROpean Employment Services*) having only 150 advisers at that time in its structure.

However, September 1994 is considered as the official date of the European Public Employment Services EURES to be born. EURES tasks are:

- „international selection of employees and job offers,
- counselling and job mobility support,
- international consultancy in recruitment and finding workers for specific employers,
- service provided by qualified Staff of public employment services,
- engaging key personnel derived from trade unions, employers and universities.” (WUP Gdańsk, 2009, p. 9)

Among the milestones of EURES vocation there are: joining in 1995 of Finland, Austria and Sweden as well as establishing of EURES network, in 1996 creating High Level Strategy Group within EURES. Later on more countries joined European Union. Poland joined UE in 2004. The last country to join EURES was Croatia in 2014.

Basic legislation, in addition to mentioned above, governing the functioning of the EURES are: the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community in 25th of March 1957, The Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EU) No 492/2011 on 5 April 2011 on the free movement of workers within the Union, Commission Implementing Decision of 26 November 2012 implementing Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the clearance of vacancies and applications for employment and the re-establishment of EURES (notified under document C(2012)) and the EURES Charter which provides guidelines and technical standards of implementing of the Regulation No 492/2011 and Decision No 2012/733/EU.

The functioning of the European job placement in Poland is additionally regulated by the Act on promotion of employment and labour market institutions of 20 April 2004 and the Regulation of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of 14 May 2014 on the detailed conditions of implementation and procedures and ways of conducting labour market services.

Continual education of EURES advisers

EURES advisers are employees of Public Employment Services or other partner organizations within the EURES network, who are specialists in European placement and counselling in the field of working and living conditions in UE/AEE countries (eures.praca.gov.pl).

Candidates for EURES advisers, qualified by the European Commission for Initial Training participate in two days' training in their native country. Such training, called Pre-Initial Training, is an introduction into EURES issues. It covers general information on EURES, but mostly the rules of functioning EURES network in certain country. Therefore, during these two days, polish candidates for EURES advisers learn about legal acts in Poland, polish EURES structure (The Ministry of Family, Work and Social Security, Voivodeship Labour Offices, Regional Labour Offices and from 2015 Volunteer Corps) and about polish EURES website. The pre-Initial training is designed not only to transfer knowledge necessary to start the full EURES adviser training, the Initial Training, but also getting to know with other candidates for EURES advisers from the same recruitment year. Moreover, it is an opportunity to meet experienced EURES advisers who participate in pre-initial training as trainers. It is the first stage of building social network, so important in the work of EURES advisers.

Starting from 2016, the education of EURES advisers will take place within „EURES Academy”. This idea brings together all the existing forms and levels of education of EURES staff, such as Initial Training, Advanced Training, Ad hoc and Virtual Training. Additionally it incorporates new forms of education, such as Organisational Training or Hands-on Communication Training. Consequently, in the educational offer for European advisers there are four paths:

1. Initial Training activities.
2. EURES Academy Training.
3. Organisational training.
4. Hands-on Communication training.

All the above mentioned forms of education form a coherent system of lifelong learning available for both current and future EURES advisers,

stakeholders cooperating with the EURES network derived from the Public Employment Services as well as from outside this network.

All the education within EURES network is carried out in three languages: English, French and German, and it is run by the Ernst & Young company, which provides trainings services for the European Commission.

1. Initial Training – training candidates for EURES advisers

The main objectives of Initial Training is to create new EURES staff by providing the participants of the training with tools and by familiarizing them with procedures binding in composite working place, such as European job market, also familiarizing them with job mobility issues as a consequence of functioning of European Public Employment Services. Formally, graduating from Initial Training guarantees incorporation in the EURES advisers network, which means becoming a certified EURES adviser.

Educational trail of the candidate for the EURES adviser participating in Initial Training is built from three elements: *preparatory, classroom, follow up*.

Preparatory phase, a part of formal application through EURES portal after prior registration of user, is designed to collect from candidates essential information used to adjust the program of the training to their needs as well as introducing them to: first of all their role as EURES adviser in the structure of European Employment Services, second of all with the functioning of the network itself, third of all with the functioning of the EURES portal. It is all done through platform LMS – *EURES Learning Management System* on EURES portal.

Several tools have been designed to achieve the above three aims. First, candidates for EURES advisers fill „*Starting Point Questionnaire*“, which collects information about professional experience and various technical issues related to candidate’s work. Second is the „*Diary*“, which records all the candidate’s impressions, opinions and suggestions regarding their everyday work related to European job placement services. The third is a document „*In my own country*“, which candidates have to prepare before the training session. It has to contain information about the candidate’s country in certain areas: employment strategy and employment policy, labour market trends, the functioning of the Public Employment Services and the EURES network. The results of working on these documents are presented during the second stage of the education path, namely the training session. These three tools used together allow gathering knowledge about the candidate, the reality of her or his work in order to adapt better the training session.

The fourth tool helping to achieve the goal of introducing candidates to their role as EURES advisers, functioning of the network itself and the EURES portal, is „*Preliminary Virtual Module*”. It is a one day session, available on EURES portal for one month (therefore the candidate decides about the day to participate in it). During this session, candidates gain knowledge about the role of EURES adviser, their duties and possibilities, the EURES reform and about using the EURES portal.

Only completing the whole program of the preparatory phase, using all available tools, allows joining the second stage of Initial Training, namely training session (classroom).

Classroom contains two stages: five days stationary training that takes place in various capitols of UE and two days summary conference.

The coordinator from Ernst & Young decides about the allocation of candidates to certain capitol for their training session. The first allocation criterion is declared level of foreign language (English, French, German). The second criterion is the principle of the greatest diversity of participants, therefore in a certain training session (classroom), in certain city different candidates form the most possible different number of countries of UE participate. One country is represented by maximum four candidates.

The main contents of five days classroom is: EURES reform, practical tools for EURES actors (promotional tools, helpdesk, fairs), social media strategy and the new communication tools (including the EURES visual identity), EU Labour Market (presentations of homework of participants about labour market from preparatory phase), study visit to the Labour Office of the country where classroom takes place to get to know the work of EURES advisers for jobseekers, presentation of the strategy and policies of labour market, EURES portal to optimize matching skills, tools for matching skills and competencies, practical advice for cooperating with employers, social security systems (including unemployment benefits and taxation).

Some of the issues are carried out by the trainer from Ernst & Young, some by invited specialists (including experienced EURES advisers), practitioners and employers.

On the last day of the training session participants are divided into international project groups. Their task is to prepare a final presentation as a result of their project for given issue, for two days final conference. Mentor is assigned to each group. His task is to supervise the project. Mentors are experienced EURES advisers from across the European Union. Groups use modern means of communications with mentors (using Internet), such as Skype, e-mails etc. to consult their projects. At this stage of educational process of EURES staff project management components are included (project manager is selected to be responsible for contact and reporting on the im-

plementation of the project, tasks are divided, the work is done according to the specific schedule, etc.). Due to international nature of the project and its educational values, it can be considered in terms of an educational project (see Rosalska, Wierzbicki, 2014).

All candidates for EURES advisers present their projects during the two day final conference. The best project, evaluated and selected by the committee (in which representatives of EURES and European Commission sit) will be implemented, as the winner. The final conference is by assumption a place for discussion, for sharing ideas about the future of European Employment Services. Moreover it is a great opportunity to build a more extensive social network thorough making contact with EURES adviser from across the UE.

Participation in the final conference ensures receiving a certificate of EURES adviser, which confirms knowledge and competencies in the area of European job placement within EURES network.

The final stage of Initial Training is the follow up phase. It involves the assessment of each project made by experts from Ernst & Young and providing feedback on: content (merits) and structure, as well as on the possibility of implementing it. In follow up phase, each EURES adviser also takes part in four hour webinars with employers. The aim of the webinars it to highlight the prism of perception of the labour market by employers and HR managers.

It is assumed that the classroom and follow up phase will cause achieving following learning outcomes: the ability to recognize the most important EURES tools to be used in daily work, understanding data and trends related to labour markets in UE and using them skillfully in job placement, recognizing the most important tools in matching

2. EURES Academy Training – individualized development path for EURES advisers

Only after completing Initial Training one can proceed with their education within the EURES Academy trainings, which includes Advance Training and a series of Ad hoc and Virtual Trainings. EURES Academy training is by definition short forms of education (from a few hours to three days of training) aiming at the development and transfer of important skills and knowledge, as well as facilitating the usage of new tools and instruments in EURES advisers work.

Every form of education within EURES Academy Training responds to different educational needs of advisers (and stakeholders), and meets other, defined by the advisers themselves, „training gaps” (Rae, L., 2006).

Advanced EURES Training

Advanced Training lasts for three days and as Initial Training, takes place in various European capitols. They are addressed to EURES advisers willing to expand their knowledge and skills used in everyday work. Therefore, the main objectives of Advanced Trainings are: providing advisers with tools, methods and knowledge that can be used in their work within the EURES network (working with other advisers, jobseekers) and outside the network (with employers). They can choose from the following trainings: *Communication tools, Matching and placement: tools and strategies, Negotiation skills for EURES advisers, Services to jobseekers, Services to employers, Social security and taxation issues, Strengthening collaborations for job mobility, Qualification recognition workshop.*

Sims, main contents, learning outcomes and duration of the above trainings are gathered in the Table 1.

Table 1. Advanced training – aims, main contents, learning outcomes and duration

Training	Aims	Main contents	Learning outcomes	Duration
Communications tools	Providing tools and methods to communicate inside and outside the EURES network. Sharing good practices on communication with stakeholders with a certain multicultural background.	Communications in EURES in the context of the EURES reform. European Online Job Days Platform. Social media and EURES social media strategy: best practices in communication, adjusting social media to national needs.	Is able to apply the EURES communication strategy in daily communication activities. Understands the communication strategy and how to implement it nationally. Understands the social media strategy and how to use it to promote national services. Is aware of the importance of branding and visual identity to the credibility of EURES at corporate and national level.	3 days
Matching and placement: tools and strategies	Providing techniques to match supply and demand of the jobs in an efficient and effective way.	Evaluation of the effectiveness and the vacancy validity, mapping needs on the basis of sectoral point of view, mapping vacancies, coaching tools, job matching techniques, EURES portal.	Is able to use different matching techniques for engaging employers in strategic partnerships. Is able to match employers' and jobseekers' needs. Knows matching activities in the framework of EURES reform.	3 days
Negotiation skills for EURES advisers	Providing participants with tools and methods for promoting EURES among employers	Marketing tools, techniques for promoting and negotiating, negotiate agreements, handling opposition.	Is able to recognize promotion and communication approaches, to identify the right style for the right employer. Can apply negotiation tech-	2 days

	(using marketing, negotiating and selling techniques in order to create a permanent and effective relationship).		<p>niques on the basis of different personality styles.</p> <p>Identify EURES added values to be shared during the promotion and negotiation process.</p> <p>Is able to define a promotion and negotiation plan for enhancing the collaboration with employers.</p>	
Services to jobseekers	Providing participants with techniques and methods for better understanding and managing with services provided to jobseekers.	Profiling jobseekers: detecting and advising different types of jobseekers, using competency portfolio, drafting an effective CV.	<p>Knows methods for profiling jobseekers and identifies their main features.</p> <p>Knows methods for job placement also using ICT tools.</p> <p>Is able to identify the right steps of preparing a competency portfolio.</p> <p>Is able to use different approaches to support jobseekers in drafting an effective CV for placement.</p> <p>Can define a coaching plan taking into consideration jobseekers' needs.</p>	3 days
Services to employers	Providing participants with tools and techniques for improving and increasing services provided to employers (with particular attention to profiling employers writing a vacancy and supporting recruitment process).	Tools and methods for profiling employers, acquiring knowledge on employers' needs, writing a vacancy notice, action points for maintaining long-term relationships with employers.	<p>Is able to apply the main techniques for profiling an employer.</p> <p>Recognizes the best tools for acquiring and translating employers' job needs.</p> <p>Is able to write a vacancy in an effective and clear way.</p> <p>Identifies tools and instruments useful for matching taking into account real needs of employers.</p> <p>Is able to carry out recruitment activities on the basis of job profiles recognised by employers.</p>	3 days
Social security and taxation issues	Providing participants with specific and detailed knowledge on the main systems of social security and taxation applied in UE and EEA countries.	EU social security coordination. EU regulations regarding: contributions, special non-contributory benefits and contribution exemptions, categories of benefits, additional benefits in UE/EEA countries.	<p>Understands how the EC jurisprudence is impacting on national taxation and social security systems.</p> <p>Recognizes a frame reference for taxation and social security systems in every EEA country EURES adviser has to deal with.</p> <p>Recognizes the main types of problems deriving from the</p>	3 days

			misalignment between taxation and social security systems.	
Strengthening collaborations for job mobility	Providing participants with tools and methods to foster engagement and cooperation with stakeholders for enhancing geographical and job mobility.	Identification of stakeholders at EU and local level, planning and implementation of engagement activities with stakeholders. Networking with stakeholders.	Develops a complete understanding of the links between EURES and the main key stakeholders useful for job mobility. Acquires tools and methods to design and implement effective engagement activities with other stakeholders and key actors. Recognizes IT tools and social media useful for enhancing cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders.	3 days
Qualification recognition workshop	Development of a concrete project that could help EURES advisers to better inform jobseekers on steps needed for the validation and recognition of their qualifications.	EQF, analysis of sectors with most frequent need for qualification recognition within Europe, recognition of higher education qualifications in the EU. Recognition of regulated professions, best practices for managing recognition of qualifications in EU.	Understands basic principles of the European qualification framework. Recognizes main rules related to European recognition of qualifications. Is able to use the most common EU resources and networks for verifying recognition of qualifications. Develops suitable support plans for jobseekers and employers to face qualification issues.	2 days

Source: own study based on EURES Training Catalogue 2016.

As the above table shows, the goal of Advanced Trainings is to increase knowledge and acquisition of skills in many areas of work in European placement.

All the trainings last for at least two days, mostly three days, which means that their content is comprehensive. Issues discussed on Advanced Trainings equip EURES advisers in a number of skills utilizing knowledge from placement, services for jobseekers and employers as well as knowledge from reinforcing job mobility or negotiation skills.

An important fact is that EURES advisers are free to choose from the trainings described above, therefore the final decision on specialization path belongs fully to them.

Ad hoc

The aims of Ad hoc trainings is not only equipping with knowledge about EURES but also collecting ideas and suggestion on possible ways to start cooperation and finding connections between different actors of the EURES network. It is made to improve the functioning of European placement as well as improving cooperation with other institutions. Therefore, private sector related to placement and private employers can take part in Ad hoc trainings.

Table 2. Szkolenia Ad hoc – aims, main contents, learning outcomes and duration

Training	Aims	Main contents	Learning outcomes	Duration
Training for EOJD organisers	Equipping participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and use all the functionalities of the European Online Job Days. Acquiring skills of using tools, such as: Livestream, Netop in recruitment events. Providing information on procedures of online events organisation.	European Online Job Days lifecycle, roles and responsibilities of EURES advisers. Communication strategy linked to EOJD, introduction to EOJD, Livestream and Netop platform.	Is able to identify and comprehend the organisational lifecycle of EOJD. Understands how to prepare step by step a recruitment event using the EOJD platform. Understands how to use Livestream studio and Netop.	3 days
The Matching Lab	Enhancing the level of exchange and interaction between EURES actors and significant stakeholders (PES, social partners, European and national labour market institutions).	EU scenario for matching activities to jobseekers and employers. Experiences and practices, ideas and solutions for better job matching to jobseekers and employers.	Is able to recognize experiences and good practices developed for matching activities in public or private employment services with a view of the enhancement of geographical and job mobility. Identifies new ideas and solutions for matching to be implemented in EURES services.	2,5 day
Transnational projects' workshop	Promoting activities related to international projects within EURES network. Increasing knowledge sharing and finding new opportunities for collaboration.	Sharing ideas on common specific issues. Focusing on creating partnerships and transnational projects on mobility issues.	Shares knowledge and good practices to manage transnational projects. Is able to individualise common approaches to develop projects on European level. Defines and recognizes possible areas of cooperation and project development at European level.	2 days

Source: own study based on EURES Training Catalogue 2016.

When taking part in Ad hoc trainings one can be educated in the following areas: *Training for EOJD organisers, The matching lab* and *Transnational projects' workshop*.

Aims, learning outcomes, main contents of the above mentioned trainings, as well as their duration are presented in Table 2.

When analyzing the aims and contents of Ad hoc trainings and also expected educational results one can say, that this is an educational offer that supports more and more narrow specialization of EURES advisers. The path of acquiring knowledge and skills, starting from Advanced Trainings, through Ad hoc trainings resembles the shape of a funnel: from very general issues related to EURES to issues more detailed and specialized related to European job market.

Virtual Training

Unlike the other forms of education, Virtual Trainings do not require leaving by the EURES adviser their office or leaving their daily duties for more than a few hours. That is way they are addressed to EURES advisers which cannot, by various reasons participate in stationary trainings (Advanced and Ad hoc trainings).

The subject matter of Virtual Training coincides with Advanced and Ad Hoc Trainings. Their main aim is to equip advisers with necessary knowledge needed to perform their daily activities and duties.

Virtual Training is technically arranged on two platforms. The first one was already mentioned before LMS (*EURES Learning Management System*), the second one is Blackboard Collaborate (*BbC*).

Trainings within platform LMS are compact teaching units using animated sides, video transmission and activities requiring users' activity (online quiz, additional documents). Blackboard Collaborate in turn uses interactive audio-video transmission.

Virtual Training provides trainings in the following areas: *Blackboard Collaborate basic course, Blackboard Collaborate for matching and recruitment, Online interview simulator, European resources for job mobility, Matching skills: strategies and tools, Practical tools for EURES Advisers* and issues implemented in Advanced Training: *Communication tools, Services to employers, Social security and taxation issues*.

Aims, learning outcomes, main contents of the above mentioned trainings, as well as their duration (excluding those described in Table 2 covered during Advanced module) are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Virtual Training – aims, main contents, learning outcomes and duration

Training	Aims	Main contents	Learning outcomes	Duration
Blackboard Collaborate basic course	Providing participants with information and knowledge for using Blackboard Collaborate (BbC) in their matching and placement activities.	Creation of collaborative sessions, uploading and navigation of whiteboard content, file transfer, application sharing, quiz manager, Activity Window.	Is able to set up BbC session using Blackboard Collaborate. Can use the three main functionalities of BbC (whiteboard, application sharing, web-tour). Can exchange files through BbC. Develops survey and elaborates results. Creates and manages breakout sessions for working groups.	4 hours
Blackboard Collaborate for matching and recruitment	Transferring knowledge on the advanced functionalities of Blackboard Collaborate for matching and recruitment activities.	Developing recruitment project using BbC, uploading and sharing contents, use of break-out rooms, managing tests with BbC, video and recording with BbC.	Is able to present, share and upload documents and/or websites through the advanced functionalities of BbC. Understands how to develop online sessions for interviewing jobseekers. Delivers online interactive recruitment sessions.	4 hours
Online interview simulator	Providing participants with information on how to deliver online interviews with jobseekers and employers using BbC.	Online job interview, employer's/jobseekers profile managing.	Knows basic rules and approaches to deliver an online interview with employer/jobseeker. Knows basic communication styles used in online tools. Delivers an online job interview through BbC focusing on: employer or jobseekers profile, timing, relevant information to pick up, environmental setting.	4 hours
European resources for job mobility	Providing participants with information, tools and knowledge for using European resources for job mobility in an effective and efficient way.	EU resources as a tool for European Labour integration, EU resources for gathering information about EU objectives, policies and services. Issues regarding: Your Europe, Europe Direct, European youth portal, Eurodesk, Lux, Solvit, Scadplus, Citizens Sugnpost Europe.	Knows main European Facilities for job mobility, their role and aims. Recognizes the links between EURES and the main European facilities for job mobility. Understands purposes and activities of some of the most representative European facilities.	4 hours

Matching skills: strategies and tools	Providing participants with techniques and tools for improving and increasing their knowledge on jobseekers' and employers' services targeting job matching.	Methods and tools for profiling employers and jobseekers. Methods of writing a vacancy note, filling in a competency portfolio, job matching and recruitment activities.	Identifies main techniques for profiling employers and jobseekers. Applies methods for writing vacancy. Knows techniques for drafting an effective CV and a competency portfolio. Applies basic tools for engaging employers in long term partnerships. Identifies tools for coaching jobseekers.	4 hours
Practical tools for EURES Advisers	Providing participants with information, tools and knowledge about the management of daily and monthly activities of EURES advisers (cooperation within the network, cooperation with other EURES stakeholders).	EURES advisers tasks and roles, general advise for increasing effectiveness and efficiency, tools provided by EURES network for advisers' activities.	Is able to analyse vacancies posted on EURES portal. Designs and implements an efficient working attitude. Reduces time in managing high workloads. Gains awareness of instruments provided to EURES advisers by the EURES network.	4 hours

Source: own study based on EURES Training Catalogue 2016.

As mentioned above, Virtual Training is a path that is designed for EURES adviser who cannot, for various reasons, participate in stationary Advanced and Ad hoc trainings. Apart of issues coincides with mentioned educational offer, Virtual Training focuses mainly on using modern technology in work of EURES advisers.

The training cycle provides EURES advisers with support in using platforms prepared for EURES network (i.e. Blackboard Collaborate), and also shows how to use them in efficiently implemented placement, recruitment or promoting mobility workers.

3. Organisational Training

Organisational Training is a series of courses deemed essential for the EURES network, however not considered as a part of paths of „EURES Academy“ described above. These courses are open to targeted stakeholders internal and external to the EURES network. Their objectives are: increasing awareness on EURES in Europe, opening the network and implementing the reform.

Organisational Training includes three paths of education.

The first one includes training aimed at improving cooperation between EURES and stakeholders. These are for example trainings addressed to line managers of EURES aimed at equipping them with knowledge and tools necessary for strengthening and increasing cooperation between national Public Employment Services within the network by using the facilities and services offered by EURES. These are also Train the Trainers courses addressed to experienced EURES advisers who want to become trainers within the EURES network.

The second path covers national trainings in the field of cross network practices and skills and it is addressed to EURES assistants. It aims to increase the possibility of organizing training sessions targeted at specific needs of individuals within the EURES network.

The third one includes webinars from Recruitment placement and matching 3.0 (their aims are: transfer of knowledge, experience and trends relating to new forms and innovative methods of recruitment and placement) and from services for the employers (technical sector) (their aims are: transfer of knowledge, experience and the point of view of the employers from the technical sector).

4. Hands-on Communication Training

Hands-on Communication Training is a series of courses focused on different issues related to the new communication strategy of EURES in 2015-2020 and to social media. They are designed to equip EURES advisers with the knowledge needed to implement communication and social media activities at national level.

Hands-on Communication Training is divided into two categories of courses. First category is the traditional media, second is the social media.

Education in the traditional media category includes: improving communication skills, promoting events and online events, assuring the implementation of national communication plans.

Social media courses on the other hand, focuses on providing EURES adviser with the necessary tools and competencies for ensuring a EURES social media presence in the Member States and also on supporting a group of front runners on EURES social media to lead the way for the network.

Hands-on Communication training is lead only in English. This path of education is currently not a part of „EURES Academy“, however, future trainings will be carried out under and in accordance with two paths: EURES communication strategy for 2015-2020 and „EURES Academy“.

„EURES Academy” as Lifelong Learning

As shown in the overview of the educational offer prepared for the EURES advisers by the European Commission and Ernst & Young company, the idea of Lifelong Learning is inscribed in being an EURES adviser.

EURES adviser is an European citizen, as described by Solarczyk-Ambrozik, he or she is therefore „creative, innovative, learning throughout life, participating in intercultural dialogue, fulfilling his or her own potential, producing particular skills, active” (Solarczyk-Ambrozik, 2013, p. 30)

The official European Commission portal defines the EURES adviser in the following way:

EURES advisers are trained specialists who provide the three basic EURES services of information, guidance and placement, to both jobseekers and employers interested in the European job market. They have developed specialized expertise in the practical, legal and administrative matters relating to mobility at national and cross-border levels. They work within the Public Employment Service of each member country, or within other partner organizations in the EURES network.

(<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/pl/eures-advisers>)

To meet the requirement of being an expert, with extensive knowledge of both practical as well as legal and administrative it is necessary to continuously educate themselves, especially in two areas that Solarczyk-Ambrozik (2013) draws attention to.

Individualization of the educational path through the selection of the preferred issues offered within „EURES Academy”, Organisational Training or Hand-on Communication Training. On the other hand, improvement and acquisition of the new skills necessary to navigate in the contemporary world, which for EURES advisers is the reformed reality (The EURES reform entered into force on the 1st of January 2014), constantly improving and dynamically reactive to changes in the labour market.

All the learning paths prepared by the European Commission for EURES advisers give opportunity to the employees of Public Employment Services of each country to extend their knowledge, improve their skills, gain knowledge and by these means to brevet in line thanks to institutional trainings inside EURES network.

EURES advisers do not have to look for learning opportunities outside EURES. It is a great facilitation, combined with the fact that all training costs are covered by the European Commission causes greater comfort of work and development of EURES advisers compared to employees of private sector.

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Development of Teachers' Competences Using Virtual Teaching Resources

Development of teachers' competences as a part of a lifelong learning process. A teacher has always been associated with a person who imparts knowledge and skills on their pupils and shapes certain attitudes in the process of education. At the same time, they provide care for their pupils and look after their safety. The main purpose of these two complementary assignments is to prepare their charges to carry on independently in the future¹. Teacher's career is mainly connected with the degrees of professional advancement which are equated with increasingly higher position in a hierarchy. However, looking at teacher's career purely and simply in abovementioned formal perspective hinders reception of its complex nature.

Teacher's job is mainly identified with predilection for working with another person and necessity to take responsible tasks which are viewed as a mission, or even vocation². Effective teacher's work with a pupil cannot be restricted only to such activities as didactics (realization of a teaching process and its individual elements), care (looking after pupils' health and safety, satisfying their essential needs) or mentoring (fostering certain attitudes, values and norms of conduct). Another crucial task for teachers is of exemplary and instructional nature³. In the first situation, a teacher is a role model to be imitated by pupils. In the latter, a teacher is supposed to be a person who manages the process of attainment and improving pupils' skills in an

¹ H. Kwiatkowska, *Pedeutologia*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008, p. 24.

² T. Lewowicki, *Problemy kształcenia i pracy nauczycieli*, Instytut Technologii i Eksploatacji, Warszawa-Radom 2007, p. 57.

³ J. Targońska, *Wiedza czy umiejętności? Czego potrzebuje dobry nauczyciel języka obcego?* [w:] *Nauczyciel języków obcych dziś i jutro*, red. M. Pawlak, A. Myskotowska-Wiertelak, A. Pietrzykowska, Wydział Pedagogiczno-Artystyczny UAM w Poznaniu, Poznań-Kalisz 2009, p. 14.

effortless manner. A teacher is a person responsible for arousing pupils' interests and preparing them for further self-development.

Standards of professional training do not determine the ultimate level of teachers' knowledge and skills, whereas their ongoing development has a positive impact on discovering their own potential, as well as the potential of their pupils. A teacher ought to have a consolidated knowledge about the role of development of their own competences in line with the requirements of an information society. These days it is possible due to an online space, which is becoming a well-developed didactic area, whereas a teacher is a digital savvy, not a stranger⁴.

In accordance with a lifelong learning idea, also teachers – and teachers in particular, are faced with a constant need to update of their knowledge and work on their competences. An educator who is familiar with mechanisms regulating his or her development, as well as the importance of ongoing development of their competences, is able to avoid difficulties connected with ever-changing job market. Nowadays, a common access to information which is not limited anymore or restricted by time and place creates favourable conditions for lifelong learning which more and more often is perceived as an intrinsic element of functioning in unstable and unpredictable job reality⁵.

Implementing lifelong learning has been a cardinal rule of modern educational system referring to pupils and teachers alike. The term itself is not new as it goes back to ancient times and views of Confucius and Plato. A vital need for lifelong learning was propagated also by Medieval thinkers such as Simon Marcius Pilsnesis, and then foremost educators such as Jan Amos Komenský who had claimed that people's development is a process extended over their entire life and conditioned by nature, culture and society⁶.

According to the concept of lifetime learning, two elements play a key role: competences and qualifications which constitute essential categories of describing professional roles. In specialist literature, the concept of competence has been defined in a various manner. In a succinct presentation it can be understood as 'possibilities that work'⁷, i.e. predisposition to take an action in such a way so as to achieve the expected results.

⁴ L. Hojnacki, *Pokolenie m-learningu*, <http://www.e-mentor.edu.pl/artykul/index/numer/13/id/239>, [access: 26.10.2015].

⁵ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w perspektywie globalnej i lokalnej: między wymogami rynku a indywidualnymi strategiami edukacyjnymi*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Poznań 2004, p. 17.

⁶ Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Kielcach, Centrum Informacji i Planowania Kariery Zawodowej, *Kształcenie ustawiczne i jego rola w rozwoju zawodowym człowieka*, http://www.wup.kielce.pl/images/stories/CIZ/Kształcenie_ustawiczne_www.pdf, [access: 26.10.2015], p. 11-12.

⁷ M. Adamiec, *Potencjał ludzki w organizacji*, Difin SA, Warszawa 2011, p. 126.

Other definitions of this term refer to it as 'a collection of knowledge, abilities, style of conduct, personality, beliefs, interests and other features which used and developed in the process of work lead to achieving results in conformity with strategic objectives of an enterprise'⁸, in this particular example they meant educational institutions such as school.

In a perspective given by Maciejewski, to 'efficiency factors at workstation', apart from means of work, legal and in-house regulations, organizational culture and manager's style of work, one must add workers' motivation and their competence⁹.

Teachers, according to their professional role, should have the following, most desirable competences:

- interpretation and communication competences which are responsible for giving meanings to interactions between a pupil and a teacher, taking right actions and conveying messages to given recipients in a comprehensive manner by means of verbal and non-verbal communications,
- creativity understood as creative thinking, beyond the established algorithms, giving an original meaning,
- collaboration expressed by shaping and reinforcing positive activities within a group and motivating one's charges to engage in teamwork,
- pragmatic competences which are expressed in an ability to manage educational process and include such actions as: planning, organizing, controlling, and assessing in conformity with previously agreed objectives,
- information and media competences which aim at proper development of charges and bestowing skills on them related to using the latest technologies¹⁰.

Additionally, teachers' competences can be examined in terms of substantive, didactic and methodological, and educational categories. The first one refers to expertise teachers of a given subject has and therefore they are regarded as specialists and experts in a particular field. The second category includes mostly skills connected with methods and techniques of teaching which a teachers utilizes in the process of teaching. Whereas the third category refers to the notion of influencing a younger generation in which a key

⁸ T. Oleksyn, *Zarządzanie kompetencjami: teoria i praktyka*, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków 2006, p. 18-19.

⁹ T. Maciejewski, *Zarządzanie kompetencjami*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 2012, p. 28.

¹⁰ J. Szempruch, *Funkcjonowanie nauczyciela wobec współczesnych wyzwań edukacyjnych*, [w:] *Edukacja jutra: XI Tatrzańskie seminarium naukowe*, red. F. Bereźnicki, K. Denek, Instytut Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2005, p. 263.

role is associated with ability to communicate with pupils and sorting out educational issues¹¹.

In specialist literature there are two ways of developing competences which a teacher should also be subject to – intensive and extensive development¹². The first one focuses on reinforcing and improving the existing competence, whereas the latter consists in obtaining new skills which contribute to expanding the set of skills by a teacher and provide him or her with new professional opportunities.

One of the places where one's skill can be refined, including the ones set forth above, is a virtual space. Exchange of best practices and experiences as well as making contact with other teachers or pupils via the Internet are indispensably connected with appearance of innovative, virtual teaching resources which enrich the entire process of teaching and learning. Taking advantage of an online space enriches traditional training for teachers. It makes training more friendly, attractive, less costly, effective and efficient.

Availability of teaching resources in a virtual space

Extensive popularization and penetration of websites into various areas of person's life has greatly contributed to considerable changes of its functioning. It has influenced new forms of off-duty time, using the Internet at work, but mostly in a generally understood education. Teachers are now allowed to make use of extensive publication bases, teaching materials and tools designed for creating films and games to support the process of modern learning, and what is more, they impart this knowledge and skills on their pupils and most of all, they can show that the Internet resources are varied space of expertise in particular fields.

A computer has become a tool in organizing a teaching process in an orthodox manner. Tanaś shows that due to using an IT network, one can benefit from the following advantages:

- there is teaching known as telematic, from a distance or remote (e-learning, e-teaching, e-education),
- transformation in traditional teaching have been optimized (*flexible education*),
- complementary, blended variant have began (*blended education*)¹³.

¹¹ W. Strykowski, *Kompetencje współczesnego nauczyciela*, „Neodidagmata” 2005, nr 27/28, p. 17.

¹² M. Adamiec, op. cit., p. 139.

¹³ M. Tanaś, *Teoretyczno-metodyczne uwarunkowania rozwoju kształcenia na odległość*, [w:] *Teoretyczno-metodyczne podstawy rozwoju e-learningu w edukacji ustawicznej*, red. Z. Kramka, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Technologii Eksploatacji, Radom 2007, p. 60.

The Internet, i.e. a global network of linked computers worldwide¹⁴ has become a space offering a wide range of possibilities through quick and easy access to professional information.

The Internet can be defined taking into account a variety of activities it offers:

- as a medium to foster an environment of mutual interactions between users,
- it has economic significance as it affects the international market,
- it is of social nature as it joins together a certain community of people due to specific activities and interests,
- it also has educational property as it often serves as a cognitive tool,
- it is of social nature as a place to arrange entertainment for groups and individuals alike¹⁵.

The Internet serves also as a complex communication medium which requires mastering some elementary skills including:

- ability to use new media, especially the Internet, in order to acquire relevant information and possibility to transfer it. In specialist literature it is referred to as technology literacy,
- ability to manage information, especially when it comes to its acquisition, organization, selection, assessment, formation of appropriate opinion based on it. It is so called information literacy,
- ability to create right messages on the Internet independently,
- social competences and responsibility – it is vitally important, especially when it come to communication via the Internet by underage users who not only create contents, but also receive them¹⁶.

The Internet is currently an invaluable information base which is used to realize educational purposes, therefore such terms as *virtual learning environment*, *VLE*, *managed learning environment*, *MLE*, *learning management system*, *LMC*, or *learning content management system*, *LCMS*¹⁷ are becoming increasingly common. Whereas the process of teaching online is becoming an outcome of cooperation of various specialist which come up with e-learning offers. Such group of specialists include an instructional designer, e-mentor,

¹⁴ M. Karolczuk-Kędzierska (red.), *Encyklopedia Powszechna*, Wydawnictwo Kluszczyński, Kraków 2003, p. 403.

¹⁵ Internet okiem na świat edukacji, http://www.projekt.sil.radom.pl/internet_w_educacji.html, [access: 15.01.2015].

¹⁶ A. Drzewińska, *Internetowe platformy edukacyjne a proces uczenia się i nauczania języka obcego*, <http://www.e-mentor.edu.pl/artukul/index/numer/27/id/593>, [access: 26.10.2015].

¹⁷ A. Drzewińska, op. cit.

e-learning consultant, as well as a tester and a evaluator of e-learning contents¹⁸.

It should also be noted that a computer together with IT network enables:

- realization of teaching and learning processes in a synchronous and asynchronous mode,
- enhancing efficiency of educational process,
- including emotional zone into educational process due to fostering certain values and attitudes,
- having an impact of non-verbal resources on knowledge assimilation¹⁹.

Contemporary society is increasingly more interested in issues connected with expanding their professional knowledge which can bring tangible results and increase efficiency as far as their work and education are concerned. The Internet is therefore becoming a good and desirable place of gathering, selecting and processing information, but most of all obtaining it. The Internet is more commonly used at various stages of education since it offers numerous teaching resources that can be used to improve competences of a teacher, but also enrich the process of teaching.

The purpose of using teaching resources available in the virtual space is to optimize teaching and learning, but also have a positive impact on the increased efficiency of these two processes²⁰. In this context, the teaching resource is defined not only as an object which main task is to provide a learner with certain sensor incentives affecting their senses, particularly sight, hearing, touch, but most of all to use such resource which will engage all senses simultaneously. This way a learner will be able to learn about his or her reality in a more effective manner²¹. Particular benefits result from using in the process of learning complex teaching resources which include, among others, audio-visual aids (which combine an image and a sound, including various kinds of educational films, multimedia images), as well as resources which automate the process of learning, which also include a computer. These day, the Internet has become a space which combines visual, audio, or

¹⁸ B. Morka, *Kompetencje nauczycieli prowadzących zajęcia on-line*, [w:] *Teoretyczno-metodyczne podstawy rozwoju e-learningu w edukacji ustawicznej*, red. Z. Kramka, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Technologii Eksploatacji, Radom 2007, p. 112-113.

¹⁹ Z. Kramek, *Wykorzystanie technologii e-learning w placówkach edukacyjnych w Polsce*, [w:] *Teoretyczno-metodyczne podstawy rozwoju e-learningu w edukacji ustawicznej*, red. Z. Kramka, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Technologii Eksploatacji, Radom 2007, p. 147-148.

²⁰ W. Okoń, *Wprowadzenie do dydaktyki ogólnej*, Wydawnictwo Impuls, Kraków 2011, p. 275.

²¹ Cz. Kupisiewicz, *Podstawy dydaktyki ogólnej*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1976, p. 242.

audiovisual resources and thus has a greater influence on recipients and users, and it especially enables polysensory attainment. Such complex teaching resources are becoming increasingly popular among learners to replace so called simple resources which include, among others, verbal resources in a written form, or simple visual resources making use of only one element of sensory effect, namely vision²².

Examples of virtual teaching resources for developing teachers' competences

A significant role of teaching resources is unquestionable, especially that their application brings about certain experience and creates certain attitudes. Properly prepared and selected resources serve different functions in the process of learning – cognitive, educational, and didactic. The first one states that learners can directly get to know the surrounding reality. Educational function is responsible for using resources to absorb new knowledge. They foster development of new cognitive abilities of a learner (for instance, they develop their perceptiveness, imagination, thinking and memory) and shaping certain skills and abilities of an individual. Whereas didactic role of the resources emphasises that in many cases they become for a learner a main source of acquiring knowledge, but also they facilitate their understanding, consolidating, as well as checking the level of mastering the knowledge. Abovementioned functions ought to be internally interwoven and mutually complementary²³. Currently, the Internet is offering a number of various possibilities which can be successfully implemented by teachers to develop their competences. In this context, the Internet teaching resources can be divided into three main groups:

- electronic publications for teachers: Scholaris (Internet Centre of Educational Resources MEN) and Khan Academy,
- educational portals for teachers: www.nauczyciel.pl, www.edunews.pl,
- methods of educational project: eTwinning and kn.edu.pl,
- e-magazines.

Electronic publications for teachers are usually a free base of educational publications aimed at representatives of all stages of Polish educational system. Not only do they contain educational and methodology materials (including lesson plans, ready-made exercises, quizzes, progress tests, multi-

²² W. Okoń, op. cit., p. 277.

²³ F. Bereźnicki, *Podstawy kształcenia ogólnego*, Wydawnictwo Impuls, Kraków 2011, p. 196.

media presentations, didactic films and games, etc.) indispensable in teachers' work, but also they constitute a great source of improving their own skills and professional workshop. The main purpose of the Internet publication resources is to support teachers in creating and producing more interesting lessons with the use of new technologies, and simultaneously arousing higher motivation in pupils for ongoing development and searching for new, often alternative to school, knowledge. They also allow teachers to supplement their knowledge with new information and tidbits. Further, they help teachers modernize their knowledge, but most of all, they greatly contribute to conveying this knowledge in more attractive – and more accessible for pupils – manner.

An example of such electronic publication is Scholaris, a project carried out by Education Development Centre as a part of Human Capital Operational Programme, Priority III, Measure 3.3, Sub-measure 3.3.3, co-financed by the European Social Fund. Scholaris is also a part of a governmental programme of developing teachers' and pupils' competences in applying information and communication technologies – a Digital School. According to the principles of the programme, various teaching materials are published to support the process of teaching and improve teachers' skills (scholaris.pl). The second example is Khan Academy, which is a non-governmental and non-profit organization. The representative of Khan Academy in Poland is Mr Lech Mankiewicz from Centrum Fizyki Teoretycznej PAN (Centre of Theoretical Physics of Polish Academy of Sciences). The base offers over 4000 films in the field of science such as mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics²⁴. Their use during the lesson can bring real results by increasing motivation and arousing interest of pupils in science, as the author himself used to say 'between old and new methods of teaching there is a system gap, which children and young people all over the world fall into every day'²⁵. Khan Academy also has its own channel on YouTube²⁶.

Another group of virtual teaching resources are educational portals which constitute a certain source of knowledge and materials to be exploited in teachers' everyday work and which cover all levels of learning. Besides, educational portals contain a wide variety of articles written by teachers at different levels of education which provide information about their own teaching practices and possibilities of build up their competences. A prime example of abovementioned portals is *nauczycie.pl* published by Young Digital Planet SA, an exporter of interactive educational programmes in sev-

²⁴ <http://www.edukacja.przyszlosci.pl/index.php/projekty/khan-academy-polski/o-akademii>, [access: 15.01.2015].

²⁵ P. Khan, *Akademia Khana: szkoła bez granic*, Media Rodzina, Poznań 2013, p. 10.

²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/user/khanacademy>, [access: 15.01.2015].

eral dozen countries. The publisher promotes an extensive base of multimedia materials and tools which enable teachers to enrich their teaching process. The base includes illustrations, animations, films, maps, simulations, sets of educational programmes and interactive exercises²⁷. Another example of a portal designed for teachers is edunews.pl. The portal about modern education contains not only ready-made lesson plans and teaching materials (exercises, didactic games, animations, films, etc.), but it also publishes specialist articles, research and numerous debates concerning the future development of education. Moreover, the portal encourages to use the latest technologies in the process of teaching and learning and promotes various guides connected with increasing external motivation²⁸.

Another group of resources which can be used by teachers in their development process contains methods of educational projects. Thanks to using proper tools and portals, they enable implementation of educational projects in the process of teaching. The projects refer to pupils' actions which essential goal is to solve a certain problem through applying different methods, techniques, and they are all applied during teamwork. The main benefit of such methods is subjective treatment of a learner. Not only do teachers develop themselves and their competence, but provide their students with support²⁹.

One of the portals which provides project method in teaching is eTwinning which lists the following advantages:

- using modern devices, including computer, Internet, appropriate software, camera, i.e. all tools which are commonly available, and most of all, accepted by pupils,
- practicing foreign languages during realization of international projects. Speaking foreign language is necessary for direct communication. Pupils therefore are motivated to learn languages.

Additionally, eTwinning offers teachers specific solutions in the area of their personal development, in particular it promotes via its portal such initiatives as:

- promotional conferences, workshops and local trainings for teachers of certain specializations in Poland and abroad,
- Internet courses for teachers of various subjects and teaching levels as well as weekly course on Moodle platform in many languages, for instance, *Learning outside the classroom, Leadership in a changing context*³⁰.

²⁷ <http://nauczyciel.pl/help.php/help/section>, [access: 15.01.2015].

²⁸ <http://www.edunewp.pl/system-edukacji>, [access: 15.01.2015].

²⁹ <http://www.ore.edu.pl/strona-ore/phocadownload/EFS/projekt%20edukacyjny%20jako%20metoda.pdf>; [access: 15.01.2015], p. 19.

³⁰ https://www.etwinning.net/pl/pub/progress/learning_eventp.htm [access: 15.01.2015].

In addition, there are also European workshops, seminars and e-Tuesdays, e-Thursdays, e-Fridays and e-breaks (free trainings concerning programmes and its tools)³¹.

Whereas the example of an e-magazine is E-mentor published by Warsaw School of Economics³². Its co-publisher is the Foundation for the Promotion and Accreditation of Economic Education. The first issue was released in 2003. Other magazines of that kind are for instance: *Życie szkoły*³³ (*School's Life*), *Dyrektor szkoły*³⁴ (*Principle*) or *Remedium. Profilaktyka problemowa i promocja zdrowia psychicznego*³⁵ (*Remedium. Problem Prevention and Mental Health Promotion*).

On the basis of abovementioned examples it can be stated that the Internet is nowadays becoming a well-developed didactic space. Educational messages presented online force users to make an intellectual effort, they arouse interest and inspire change giving a new character to teacher's job and shape their professional future. Virtual didactic resources are to support modern ways of sharing knowledge while remaining its theoretical and practical aspects, but most of all they develop competences, which is crucial in contemporary society. Exploiting diverse teaching resources in the process of learning has a positive impact on interests in a given subject, higher motivation and cognitive activity of a learner. Especially, when these resources activate more than one sense at a time. Moreover, didactic resources have an influence on increasing sensory resources, number of experiences and updating previously acquired knowledge³⁶, there for using resources available online can revolutionize Polish system of education.

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³¹ <http://www.etwinning.pl/czym-jest-etwinning>, [access: 15.01.2015].

³² <http://www.e-mentor.edu.pl>, [access: 15.01.2015].

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LIFELONG LEARNING FOR LABOUR MARKET NEEDS



ISBN 978-83-232-3084-7
ISSN 0083-4254



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