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Education through work as a consciously organized activity to prevent risky behaviours of children and adolescents

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Abstract

The article focuses on the issue of education through work as the subject of own research. The aim of the research procedure was to get to know the opinions of pedagogy students on the effectiveness of this form of education in the context of the prevention of risky behaviours. The following question was formulated for this purpose: Does, and if so, what are the advantages of education through work in preventing risky behaviours of children and youth? The study was conducted within the paradigm of pragmatism, using qualitative content analysis. The research project involved 45 students of part-time pedagogy studies. The analysis of the responses revealed a number of positive aspects of education through work in preventing risky behaviours of children and youth. The own research shows that engaging young people in responsible tasks develops their independence, responsibility and time management skills. In addition, education through work shapes social attitudes, such as cooperation, respect for others and a sense of belonging to the community. It also translates into a reduced tendency to deviant behaviours (aggression, ad-

dictions, belonging to inappropriate peer groups). Based on the opinions of pedagogy students, it was emphasized that the concept of education through work can support the preparation of minors for independent life after leaving the family or institutional environment.

Keywords: education through work, education for work, work, education, risky behaviour of children and youth.

Introduction

Life's difficulties are part of almost every person's life (Hayes, Ciarrochi, 2019). On the one hand, they can be a challenge that needs to be faced, but on the other hand, they are threats that are hard to escape from. There are cases in which escape is not a good solution, which is why an important educational task is to prepare a young person to cope with difficult situations.

The upbringing process involves not only those difficulties that directly concern young people themselves. Their parents, legal guardians and teaching staff also often have to deal with various problems. The more difficulties there are, the greater the likelihood that risky behaviour will occur among children and young people.

The issue of risky behaviours of children and adolescents is not a new phenomenon. The interest in this topic is reflected in numerous articles, books and fiction films, the main theme of which is the behaviours undertaken by adolescents (Dzielska & Kowalewska, 2014, p. 139). Analysing individual sources, one can see a change in the approach to risky behaviours of young people. This is primarily the result of updated, and often new, knowledge on their etiology, consequences, and phenomena accompanying the processes of adolescence. The knowledge obtained has to some extent translated into legislative, educational and preventive, educational, therapeutic and resocialization actions.

In the context of risky behaviour prevention, education through work becomes a particularly important tool in working with minors at risk of social maladjustment. Young people who grow up in families that are educationally inefficient or in a marginalized society can regain their self-esteem and integrate with a peer group that displays socially desirable attitudes through work.

The concept of education through work should not, however, assume treating work as a punishment for the improper behaviour of a young person. Otherwise, it could lead to the conviction that work is a form of punishment, not a socially useful activity. Work should be perceived as a value that gives a sense of fulfilment, enables personal and professional development, and allows for the satisfaction of basic life needs.

In practice, education through work is widely used in care and educational facilities, resocialization facilities and other institutions dealing with children and youth. Pedagogical programs based on education through work include var-

ious activities, from cleaning work, through manual work, to classes related to learning a profession. An example of this are programs implemented by resocialization facilities, which combine manual work with cooperation with representatives of various industries, enabling minors to acquire practical professional skills.

Risky behaviours, such as addictions, aggression, crime, and other forms of social deviations, pose a serious threat to the development of society and its stability. This text highlights that one of the solutions that can indirectly counteract these problems is education through work, which is a conscious activity aimed at preventing risky behaviours in children and youth.

Education through work

In pedagogy, there are many different terminological approaches to the role of work in the process of educating a person. T.W. Nowacki (2008, p. 75) stated that educational sciences perceive work from an anthropological perspective. Referring to the works of F. Schlieper, C. Baumgart and W. Stranetenwerth, he emphasized that in the pedagogical approach, work does not result from instincts or pleasure, but is the result of individual abilities, knowledge and will of an individual. Nowacki saw the educational source of work in its essence, in activities requiring both physical and intellectual effort, aimed at realizing valuable works and overcoming the resistance of matter, as well as in developing the ability to select appropriate means (Nowacki, 2008, p. 76).

The pedagogical significance of work was defined differently by W. Okoń (2007, p. 433), who considered it as a collective or individual activity aimed at obtaining a material or non-material product. Due to the value of this product for an individual or society and the need for effort, the work process is usually accompanied by a conviction about its usefulness, but also by an internal compulsion resulting from the requirements of collective life. In this definition, work is linked to economic and social aspects (Oleska, 2010, p. 14), and its undertaking is primarily the result of social obligations, and not only personal motivations.

The relationship between man – upbringing – work is undertaken primarily in the context of a pedagogical subdiscipline, referred to as work pedagogy (Szłapińska, 2015, p. 154). This is a field of knowledge with a relatively short history, as it is associated with the establishment of the Institute of Vocational Education in Warsaw in September 1972 (Baraniak, 2012, p. 5). The aforementioned Nowacki is considered to be the main forerunner of work pedagogy in Poland. The works of Z. Wiatrowski, who defined it as a “scientific subdiscipline, the subject of research of which are aspects of the relationship: man – upbringing – work, although the second three-part relationship: man – citizen – em-

ployee, is often emphasized, as also well reflecting the essential problems and tasks of this new pedagogical discipline" (Wiatrowski, 2005, pp. 32-33), contributed to its particular development. Taking into account the realities of the labour market, SM Kwiatkowski proposed expanding the indicated areas to include pre-vocational education, vocational education and professional development (Kwiatkowski, 2006, p. 241). This proves that the issue of work is developing dynamically and must respond to changes in the employment market (Wołk, 2018, p. 105). Pedagogy of work was also established to examine the attitude of a person in terms of their preparation for professional independence (Nowacki, 2004, p. 174), referring to its scientific theories (Wiatrowski, 2010, pp. 50-60). A. Solak emphasized that "we can talk about the relationship of work to a person and of a person to work, as long as they decide about it" (Solak, 2004, p. 64). The pedagogical significance of work was also considered in two ways, as it was reflected mainly in education through work and education for work.

Education through work begins in the youngest years of life, starting with the family, and then continues in kindergarten and at later stages of education. The family is the first environment in which a child comes into contact with education through work, which is why it plays a key role in shaping attitudes and patterns regarding work. It is in the family that a child makes its first attempts at independent work and experiences failures related to them. The work ethic presented by parents has a significant impact on these attitudes (Królicza, 2010, pp. 32-33; Sztaba, 2013, p. 101), because it determines the development of such traits as diligence, responsibility, punctuality, dutifulness, systematicity, and accuracy.

The family should provide the child with opportunities to undertake various jobs, adapted to the stage of their development. Thanks to this, the child develops the habit of work, a sense of responsibility and respect for others who do it. In kindergarten, education through work is carried out through self-service, cleaning, organizational, production activities and activities for the benefit of others. The next stages of education, based on education through work, consist in independent performance of various tasks and gaining practical experience related to work in various professions.

Similar views on education through work also appeared in the concepts of the forerunners of work pedagogy. Nowacki wrote that "the main principle of education through work should be the inclusion of children from the youngest years in the universal, social process of work in order to prepare a citizen-employee who is able to cooperate in the everyday creation of cultural life" (Nowacki, 1974, no p. no. in the typescript). In turn, according to Wiatrowski, education through work is "an intentional and purposefully organized type of educational activity, the special feature of which is the use of work in the processes of influencing an individual and making changes in his personality" (Wiatrowski, 2005, pp. 154-155).

The concepts of education through work have a long tradition. Their origins go back to the works of T. More, who saw work as a spiritual source of wealth, and to the views of utopians such as R. Owen and K. Fourier, who propagated the view that education through work should be based on the abilities, preferences and activity of children (Kaczor, 2015, p. 172). The basic tasks of education through work include (Piekarski, 2015, pp. 163-164): acquiring basic knowledge about human work, its essence and complexity, understanding the role it plays in human life and the conviction that work is one of the most important and inseparable elements of human functioning both physically and mentally.

Another goal is to acquire practical work skills and motivation to do it, to develop a proper attitude towards one's own and other people's work, as well as towards the effects of human work. Another important element is the development of character traits necessary for effective work performance and the shaping of a work culture, treated as part of the general culture of society. The implementation of these tasks should be the task of the family, school and other environments in which the upbringing process takes place.

When considering the topic of education through work, it is impossible to ignore the issue of education for work. This aspect of education allows for the acquisition of basic knowledge about a specific profession, related duties, threats and working conditions. It also includes the development of professional qualifications and instilling the right approach to work and its social significance. The issue of education for work plays a special role in the works of A.F. Modrzewski, who repeatedly emphasized the educational role of work in his views. In one of his treatises, he encouraged parents "so that boys and girls do not spend their first years in idleness; let them always try to give them some work, and let them also demand that they give an account of this work" (Modrzewski, 1953, p. 113).

Education for work is part of education aimed at specific professions, therefore this process includes activities aimed at vocational preparation. These activities are largely organized, as they are defined by the core curriculum, which must be completed in an appropriate time. At subsequent stages, the knowledge acquired is assessed by conducting special exams.

The main role of education for work is realized primarily in schools and institutions that prepare for the profession (Baraniak, 2015, p. 144). However, the educational activities undertaken do not end in educational institutions, because the next area of their implementation is the work environment, in which a person fulfils himself professionally.

Education through work and for work is treated in work pedagogy as pre-vocational education and training. In principle, these are activities preceding pro-vocational and vocational education. The aim of pre-vocational education is to familiarize a person with work, to shape knowledge about work and a positive

attitude towards it (Surma, 2014, p. 33). Education through work and for work was one of the main slogans of the thinkers of the Polish Enlightenment (Opiela, 2015, p. 158), who considered diligence to be one of the most important secular virtues.

Analysing the two educational aspects of work, it can be stated that education through work is a process carried out primarily in the family and school. It takes place through work assigned by parents and teachers. This element of education is a kind of bridge to the next area, which is education for work. Its implementation is possible thanks to education preparing for the performance of a profession. Actions undertaken in this area are more organized, because they are educational in nature, which means that education for work is often identified with vocational education.

Work plays a unique role in the upbringing of children and young people. It can be assigned three basic educational tasks: activating (achieving results through activity itself, and the aim of introducing work is to develop positive attitudes towards the environment and the belief that changes are possible thanks to taking action), socializing (through work, the child is introduced to social interactions) and productive (shaping respect for work and the products that are created thanks to it) (Kukla, 2016, pp. 114-115).

One of the forerunners of pedagogy – J. Amos-Komeński, in his educational and didactic system placed great emphasis on preparing children and young people for manual work (crafts) (Szlapińska, 2015, p. 157). He believed that the most effective way to activate an individual and eliminate boredom is to engage them in work. He postulated that from an early age, children should be introduced to various types of work, which would allow them to discover their interests and professional predispositions. B. Suchodolski (1982) also referred to the educational aspect of work in the context of social participation, arguing that preparation for a profession should be an important element of this participation, at the same time enabling an individual to realize their own aspirations. In the process of education, human work is one of the most important factors shaping the comprehensive development of personality. J. Baran put forward the claim that work develops the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and physical spheres of people (Baran, 1989, p. 49; Chałas, 2007, pp. 72-80). It is difficult to argue with this way of thinking, because it integrates almost all the most important spheres of human functioning, provided that we assume that the cultural and moral factor refers to the social sphere.

The educational role of work is reflected in school. B. Śliwerski pointed out in this regard that “the school environment and the process of acquiring knowledge and skills must develop those features that enable a young adult to enter family, social and professional life without difficulty” (Śliwerski, 2001, pp. 6-15). In this approach, school plays not only an educational role, but also

an educational one. The activities undertaken by educators are not limited to imparting general knowledge, but also focus on preparing the student for professional independence.

Methodological foundations of own research

The subject of my own research was education through work. Its aim was to learn the opinions of female pedagogy students on the effectiveness of this form of education in the context of preventing risky behaviours. The research problem corresponded to the adopted aim and was formulated in the form of a question: Does education through work have any advantages in preventing risky behaviours of children and youth? The research was conducted within the framework of the pragmatism paradigm. Its main determinant is focusing on the research problem, which determines the selection of appropriate methods, which allows for flexibility in constructing methodological assumptions. Pragmatism also emphasizes the practical effectiveness of solving problems (Creswell, 2013, p. 37). It was assumed that the most rational methodological approach to the research problem would be to use a qualitative strategy. When adopting the methodological assumptions, we decided not to formulate initial hypotheses, because the selected qualitative research strategy allowed for this.

The answer to the adopted research problem was sought using the qualitative content analysis method, which can also be used in pedagogy (Gorisowski, 2006, pp. 18-24; Guzik-Tkacz, 2011, pp. 236-237). Qualitative content analysis is one of many research methods that involves the analysis of textual data, which occurs in oral, printed or electronic form. This data can be obtained using open questions, interviews, focus groups, observations or printed media such as articles, books or textbooks. Content analysis goes beyond simple word counting. Its main goal is to provide knowledge and understanding of the studied phenomenon through a systematic process of classification, coding and identifying individual topics (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, pp. 1277-1288).

In this work, text data were analysed. For this purpose, original research tools were constructed for the selected method, consisting of only one open-ended question – identical to the research problem – preceded by a metric (gender, age, origin). The task of the research participants was to provide a written response to an anonymous, specially prepared questionnaire. The research tool was distributed to each person taking part in the study for self-completion.

The research was carried out at the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, because one of the co-authors of the article is an employee of the local university. Due to the fact that qualitative research is characterized by a small number of research samples, it was not decided to include a larger number of people

from outside the indicated university. A total of 45 women joined the project. Only 6 of them came from the city, while 39 from rural areas. The average age of the study participants was approximately 27 years (26.86 years). All of them were third-year students of part-time studies in the field of pedagogy. This field is characterized by a large percentage of women, therefore the research group was represented exclusively by the female sex. The selection of the group was purposeful, because the participants of the research had to meet the criterion of a part-time student of pedagogy. It was assumed that people studying part-time have more professional experience, are more often professionally active and are more likely to be parents. These features were considered important in the context of the conducted study. The participation in the research was preceded by ethical issues. All students were assured that participation in the project is anonymous, voluntary, will not affect the final grade of the course, and the results obtained will be used only for scientific purposes.

Own research

Analysis of statements on the value of education through work in preventing the occurrence of undesirable behaviours in children and adolescents allowed us to distinguish several main themes and observations that appear in the written statements of the research participants. They can be divided into different categories, reflecting the positive effects of education through work.

According to the students, education through work teaches children and young people responsibility for the actions entrusted to them, which translates into conscious decision-making and taking care of their duties. Minors who perform household chores or participate in household work develop the ability to organize and manage their time. A tendency to avoid undesirable behaviours is often noticed when children and young people are involved in work and are responsible for specific tasks. The participants of the study pointed out that thanks to education through work, young people also learn to bear the consequences of their actions, which is an important element in the educational process.

Education through work has certain advantages in preventing the occurrence of undesirable behaviours. Thanks to this, children and young people learn responsibility for their actions, conduct and behaviour (...). [W¹_13, woman, 27 years old, rural area]

Education through work has positive aspects – children and young people learn responsibility for their actions through work, they learn to live in society. [W_27, woman, 25 years old, village]

¹ W_1-45 – essay number.

Raising children is a difficult and responsible task. Among the many methods supporting it, we can mention, among others, work, or rather entrusting the child with tasks to do. Household and small tasks that are assigned to the child, for example: collecting blocks, dusting, watering flowers, feeding the dog, make the youngest learn independence, responsibility, allow them to appreciate the value and burden of work that their parents bear. Education through work, i.e. entrusting children with certain activities, teaches them to organize, how to spend time efficiently. [W_33, woman, 25 years old, rural area]

A child who has tasks to perform reinforces certain patterns that are necessary in development and psyche. Having a task to perform, while completing it, the child does not think about things that are bad. The child learns how to perform certain activities. He takes responsibility for his actions and considers the consequences of completing the task. [W_34, woman, 35 years old, village]

Many statements emphasize that minors who have responsibilities do not have time to engage in negative behaviours, such as aggression and inappropriate company. Activities consisting of household chores or school duties result in a decrease in free time, which in turn reduces the possibility of engaging in destructive activities. Rational management of free time also helps children and young people not to spend too much time in virtual space (the Internet). Due to the lack of appropriately filled free time, children and young people may watch too much television or play computer games constantly.

Children and young people who have responsibilities and tasks feel appreciated, important and do not have much time to think about undesirable behaviours. [W_3, woman, 32 years old, city]

Children and young people learn responsibility and independence. If they are busy with work, they do not think or have no time for undesirable behaviour. They feel needed. [W_6, woman, 36 years old, city]

Education through work has a great impact on preventing undesirable behaviours. Children and young people, when they have responsibilities, are satisfied with their work and spend less time on the Internet. [W_28, woman, 24 years old, rural area]

Children or young people who do not have any household chores, mainly watch TV, play games or simply surf the Internet in their free time, and there they encounter various phenomena, such as aggression. [W_32, woman, 24 years old, rural area]

According to the students, education through work can have an impact on the development of social attitudes in children. In this respect, the youngest learn cooperation, work organization, and respect for others, which contributes to an increased sense of belonging to society. In this aspect, it is worth noting that people who feel needed and involved are less likely to isolate themselves or seek out inappropriate peer groups.

Children and young people <author's note> learn to cooperate, feel needed, appreciated and valuable. [W_13, woman, 37 years old, village]

Education through work is very important, because through their duties children and young people learn, above all, independence, organization and planning. These things

are needed in life, because they help in adult life choices [W_23, woman, 25 years old, rural area]

(...) duties introduced at the youngest age teach one to be conscientious, humble, they also teach one to be organized (...). [W_32, woman, 24 years old, village]

Education through work teaches pupils to respect others, which helps prevent undesirable behaviours. [W_35, woman, 28 years old, rural area]

The statements also indicate that working at a young age translates into the development of self-esteem. Participation in various tasks, rewards for completing them, and a sense of job satisfaction contribute to building strong internal motivation. Minors who are involved in work have a greater sense that their efforts are appreciated, which results in increased motivation to continue working and avoid undesirable behaviours.

The child learns to cooperate in a given society and feels needed there. [W_20, woman, 24 years old, rural area]

Thanks to being brought up through work, children/youth are less aggressive. Thanks to their duties, they feel that they are doing "something for something", they feel appreciated, thanks to which they are more motivated, they learn responsibility and independence, they have a higher sense of self-worth. [W_25, woman, 32 years old, city]

The participants of the research project noticed that education through work supports the development of many life skills, such as organization, planning, responsibility, and the ability to cope with difficulties. Work prepares children for adulthood, strengthens their sense of responsibility, which results in a lower risk of engaging in social or emotional problems.

Education through work has positive aspects – children and young people learn responsibility for their actions through work, they learn to live in society. [W_27, woman, 25 years old, village]. [W_25, woman, 32 years old, city]

Education through work prepares children for life in different environments, for life in adulthood. [W_37, woman, 37 years old, village]

Education through work teaches discipline, independence and responsibility. It introduces children and young people to the stage of adulthood, which to some extent reduces undesirable behaviours. [W_42, woman, 23 years old, city]

In some essays, a context emerged from which it resulted that education through work shapes in children a culture of work and respect for effort, both their own and that of others. Children and young people learn that everything they achieve is the result of their work and effort, and this can build their self-esteem over time.

Work ennobles, it allows a young person to understand that not everything comes easily. [W_10, woman, 34 years old, village]

Education through work has many advantages. Thanks to work, children and young people learn responsibility and understand the effort their parents put in to earn money to raise them. [W_41, woman, 22 years old, rural area]

Education through work teaches pupils to respect others, which helps prevent undesirable behaviours. The child learns that in order to have something, it must be preceded by appropriate effort. As a result, this can result in the occurrence of appropriate behaviours in the future. [W_35, woman, 28 years old, rural area]

Education through work also plays a role in preventing negative attitudes, including addiction to psychoactive substances. Keeping a child busy with duties and engaging them in various forms of work reduces the risk that they will seek destructive sources of satisfaction, such as drugs, alcohol or other addictions.

Children who have responsibilities and are involved in “something” are less likely to reach for stimulants. [W_11, woman, 32 years old, rural area]

If children can find something to do, they will be less likely to reach for drugs and spend time in inappropriate company. [W_22, woman, 32 years old, rural area]

Too much fragment time can lead to various types of addictions. [W_32, woman, 24 years old, village]

The statements also indicate the importance of education through work in the context of learning about social responsibility. Children and young people who learn about work and responsibilities are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour because they understand the value of engaging in various activities that are important not only for them, but also for other members of society.

Children learn responsibility, bearing the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour for society. [W_5, woman, 36 years old, rural area]

Summary

Our own research shows that education through work was recognized by students of pedagogy as an effective method of preventing risky behaviours of children and youth. Analysis of the statements of the research participants reveals a number of positive effects resulting from this form of education, which translate into the development of young people in various aspects of their lives. In the opinion of the students, education through work contributes to the development of responsibility and independence, allowing children and youth to make conscious decisions and manage their time. Engaging charges in responsible tasks reduces the tendency to deviant behaviours, such as aggression, addictions or belonging to inappropriate peer groups. In addition, minors learn to bear the consequences of their actions, which is an important element of the educational process.

Education through work helps shape appropriate social attitudes. In its assumption, it is based on cooperation, respect for others and a sense of belonging to the community. Children and young people involved in various duties feel appreciated and needed, which reduces their tendency to social isolation and

searching for destructive sources of satisfaction. Additionally, they develop a sense of self-worth and internal motivation, which can translate into their further personal and professional development.

Education through work also supports the development of life skills, such as organization, planning or coping with difficulties, preparing children and young people for adult life after leaving the family home or institutional environment. It shapes the culture of work, respect for effort and teaches that achieving success requires commitment. To sum up, we can support the thesis based on the opinions of pedagogy students that education based on work helps to develop social, professional and emotional competences in minors, and this supports the prevention of deviant behaviours.

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Wychowanie przez pracę jako świadomie organizowana działalność w zapobieganiu ryzykownym zachowaniom dzieci i młodzieży

Streszczenie

Artykuł koncentruje się na zagadnieniu wychowania przez pracę jako przedmiocie badań własnych. Celem postępowania badawczego było poznanie opinii studentek pedagogiki na temat skuteczności tej formy wychowania w kontekście profilaktyki zachowań ryzykownych. W tym celu sformułowano następujące pytanie: Czy, a jeśli tak, to jakie walory ma wychowanie przez pracę w zapobieganiu ryzykownym zachowaniom dzieci i młodzieży? Badanie przeprowadzono w ramach paradygmatu pragmatyzmu, stosując jakościową analizę treści. W projekcie badawczym wzięło udział 45 studentek niestacjonarnych studiów pedagogicznych. Analiza odpowiedzi ujawniła szereg pozytywnych aspektów wychowania przez pracę w zapobieganiu ryzykownym zachowaniom dzieci i młodzieży. Z badań własnych wynika, że angażowanie młodych osób w odpowiedzialne zadania rozwija ich samodzielność, odpowiedzialność oraz umiejętność zarządzania czasem. Ponadto wychowanie przez pracę kształtuje postawy społeczne, takie jak współpraca, szacunek dla innych oraz poczucie przynależności do społeczności. Przekłada się również na zmniejszenie skłonności do zachowań dewiacyjnych (agresja, uzależnienia, przynależność do nieodpowiednich grup rówieśniczych). Na podstawie opinii studentek pedagogiki podkreślono, że koncepcja wychowania przez pracę może wspierać przygotowanie nieletnich do samodzielnego życia po opuszczeniu środowiska rodzinnego lub instytucjonalnego.

Słowa kluczowe: wychowanie przez pracę, wychowanie do pracy, praca, wychowanie, ryzykowne zachowania dzieci i młodzieży.