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RELATIONS BETWEEN MOTHER AND CHILD AND PARENTAL ATTITUDES ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to present the course of relations between mother and child, and adopted parental attitudes presented by mothers. The literature indicates that the correctness of relations depends on many factors, which lie both in the family and the whole social system. Therefore, the educational and professional activity of women has a significant impact on shaping relations between mothers and children.

The paper presents results from the research that was conducted among women-mothers, who are educationally and professionally active. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in the research. The survey was conducted using the M. Braun-Galkowska Scale of Parental Attitudes, and also open in-depth interviews with elements of narrations, parts of which were quoted in the paper, were conducted with chosen women-participants.

The analysis of the results proved that despite adopting and performing numerous roles by women (role of a pupil/student and a worker) their relations with children are correct. Women, who suffer from lack of time connected with performing roles of a pupil/student and also a worker, are always able to find time with their children. Their attitude towards children is always open, sincere and friendly and the other way round (children towards their mothers adopt the same attitude). The analysis of parental attitudes also points to those attitudes, which

are adopted by women and which are in the category of moderation, so they are characterized by the "mature, parental love".

The results induce to draw the following conclusion: women, despite adopting and performing numerous social roles, know which one is the most important to them – that is namely: being the mother.

Keywords: relations, intra-family relations, mother, child, parental attitudes.

Introduction

Correct interpersonal relations constitute an important part of every well-functioning system. They are of double importance in the family system, as they have influence not only on the correct functioning of the family, but also on the child's educational process. The family is the environment in which child grows, develops and shapes his/her personality. The family is "a place of support and development of child's skills and interests, and diagnosing his/her weak and strong sides" (Kołodziejski, 2009, p. 371). Numerous authors, who have conducted research on the intra-family relations, claim that there are different relations between mother and child and also between father and child. K. L. Buist, M. Decović, W. Meeus, M. A. G. Aken (2002); M. H. Gerrits *et al.* (2005); K. Renk, C. McKinney, J. Klein and A. Oliveros (2006) pointed out that relations of a mother and a child differ totally from the relations of a father and a child. According to these authors, mothers show much more positive acceptance of their children than fathers do. All of this has a favourable influence on their good interpersonal relations. P. K. Williams and F. D. Kelly (2005, p. 168-196) confirmed that it has an influence on a performed role and family-household duties, which are often treated as "women's private space". Women-mothers, as numerous researches have confirmed, devote much more time to family and household duties and children, and therefore, they have closer relations with children, they become much more open towards them and the other way round (Shearer, Crouter and McHale, 2005). In turn, researches conducted by D. M. Lawson, D. F. Brossart (2004); A. Russell, C. H. Hart, C. C. Robinson, P. F. Olesn (2003); C. L. Shearer, A. C. Crouter, P. M. McHale (2005) pointed out that mothers by much frequent contact with children have bigger experience in creating positive relations with children, while fathers create relations within instrumental aims, such as interests in sports, future plans connected with child's development, etc.

Fulfilment of some conditions, among which the most important are "mental and social maturity of parents, knowledge of standards connected with roles, correctly shaped parental attitudes, ability to love unconditionally, acceptance of role connected with own sex and marital role, having adequate motivation of fulfilment of parental role, acceptance of persons and partner's roles and children, mutual parents' adaptation consisting in role agreement" (Grochocińska, 1999, p. 16), are essential for effective performance of parental roles. P. Kawula (Kawula, Brągiel and Janke, 2009, p. 12; Dončevová, 2011, p. 181) proved that from the educational point of view the system of roles and child's place in the family are also important. The role of each child in the family is determined by what is expected from him/her, what rights and duties the child has. Parents and other family members, who require from children different things and have different expectations from them, have a great influence on shaping the children's role.

Therefore, intra-family relations can be shaped under influence of different factors, which are not only in the family environment, but also in the social one, so the professional and educational activities are of major importance. As the literature shows, the culture¹ (Mead, 1986, p. 25), in which family lives, is also very important. Y. P. Park, L. P. Vo and Y. Song (2009, p. 18–26) provided an example of raising children in the Asian culture, in which the mother is responsible for family's warmth, cordiality and creation of "heart and home", whereas the father, according to the traditional model of a family, is recognized as a strict, reserved person both towards his children and wife.

L. Dyczewski (2002, p. 12) pointed out that intra-family relations are tightly bonded with the family's bond², which is a kind of result of the internal forces existing in the family and external forces affecting its members – the whole family group. The family bond can be observed in various kinds of relations between spouses/partners, parents-children, dependencies and attitudes adopted by family members.

Summarizing the above mentioned information, one can state that correctness of the intra-family relations depends on various factors (not only on positive ones, but also on negative ones) sticking in the family system, but these relations can change in different phases of the cycle of the family life. Therefore, only families, which have a big potential of internal attraction, show a high degree of content and consolidation³. According to Dyczewski (2002, p. 11), "every family has its own, very intimate, internal life", which is not destructed by participation in different professional, educational, political or ideological groups.

Dyczewski in her researches refers only to presenting relations, as well as parental attitudes adopted by women, who are educationally and professionally active, because of the multiplicity and at the same time the diversity of factors, which influence shaping relations between mothers and children.

Methodological assumptions

The aim of the undertaken surveys was to learn the course of the intra-family relationships of women, who have children, work professionally and learn at the same time. The research investigations focused on two issues: 1. What is the course of the relations of a woman, who works professionally and learns with her child/children? 2. What parental attitudes do women adopt towards their children?

A total of 727 women from the Warmian-Masurian and Kujavian-Pomeranian Voivodships, which are situated in northern-eastern Poland, took part in the research. The choice of the sample had a target nature (Babbie, 2004, p. 205; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2001, p. 199) – respondents were chosen in a subjective way, on the basis of the

- 1 M. Mead defined *culture* as a systematized set of learnt behaviours handed down to children by parents.
- 2 *Family bond*, according to L. Dyczewski, is "the whole set of forces, which attract its members to each other and bonding them together and these forces result from marriage, awareness of genetic bonds, emotional experiences, dependency relationships, co-acting, legal, religious, convention factors, as well as similar attitudes of the family members towards social, cultural, economic conditions in which a given family lives". (See Dyczewski, 2002).
- 3 From the psychological and sociological point of view, it means that they are attractive for their members, whereas other families lack these values (Dyczewski, 2002, p. 12).

researcher's own knowledge, the analysis of the Polish labour market with consideration of women's professional and educational activity.

Quantitative and qualitative methodologies were applied in the research. The leading research method was the method of a diagnostic survey, which is also called a questionnaire survey. 710 women (aged 25–40), coming from rural and small town areas, answered the questions included in the questionnaire survey.

A subsequent method, which is set in the quantitative methodology, was the M. Braun-Gałkowska's Scale of Parental Attitudes⁴ (1985), which consisted of two parts. The first part concerned father's attitudes towards the child, whereas the second one was focused on mother's attitudes towards the child. Only the second part of the Scale of Parental Attitudes was used in this research.

According to M. Braun-Gałkowska (1985), a parental attitude is a relatively permanent way of treating the child. In case of examining parental attitudes, the problem constitutes a degree of its intensity. According to the author, it is appropriate to juxtapose two negative extremes consistently (e.g., lack of care – excess of care) and the state of correct attitude (e.g., mature love). The extreme attitudes are characterized from one side by excess and from another one by insufficiency and the attitudes, which are between them and which are the most appropriate ones. These positive attitudes can be defined as attitudes of mature love. Describing mature love, one should take into consideration emotional closeness, appropriate support, reasonable freedom, appropriate requirements. According to M. Braun-Gałkowska (1985), positive attitudes by their excessive increase become negative.

The Braun-Gałkowska's (1985) Scale refers to four attitudes:

- a) closeness – refers to the emotional distance between family members,
- b) helpfulness – defines a degree of sharing love,
- c) directedness – a degree of interfering in making decisions, a scope of left independence,
- d) requirements – requirements given to respective family members, expectations towards them.

The analysis of individual cases (case study) was also used in the paper. The technique of the open, in-depth interview with elements of narration directed retrospectively⁵ was used and the interview was carried out with 17 women in total.

The analysis of research results

The correct process of child's socialization depends on "healthy" intra-family relations. Sometimes parents transfer their behaviour and attitudes towards children unconsciously (Ostrouch, 2004, p. 56). Further relationships of children with other members of family and other people are based on the relation of a child with his/her mother (Braun-Gałkowska, 1985). Researches have showed that relations of mothers, who are educationally and professionally active, were correct: 16.4% of women have a very good contact with their children, talk to them openly and sincerely, both mothers and children do not have any secrets. All, even the smallest problems that constitute the everyday life of the family, are topical for conversation

- 4 Because of the use in the research of only the second part of the tool referring only to adopted by women/mothers attitudes towards child/children, the author will use the notion *parental attitude/parental attitudes*, because a mother for a child is one of the parents.
- 5 It is a quality interview, which does not have close structure of questions (or issues) or choice of possible answers, giving at the same time possibilities of asking additional questions.

and discussion, what leads to finding a solution together. 18% of women participated in the child's life actively, and 13.2% were always ready to help and support it.

The material obtained from the interviews confirmed that women, who fulfil themselves in the role of a pupil/student and a worker, fulfil the mother's role perfectly. The following statements of the speakers confirm it:

I and my daughters understand each other very well... We have a very good contact. My daughters come to me, ask about various things, we talk [Kasia, 40 years old].

My teenage son comes to me more and more often with his problems – my husband, as the teacher, often adopts the judging and moralizing attitude. We like “talking to each other”, sometimes I “come down a peg” on purpose, let my son “cross the barrier like parent-child.” It gives us sense of unity, understanding, support [Agnieszka, 37 years old].

I have very good relations with my daughters, we talk a lot, in fact, we are on the same wavelength, especially with my eldest daughter. We organize plays together, we have fun. I trust my daughters and they trust me. It is obvious that there are misunderstandings, quarrels, arguments, but a conversation always helps. Together with my husband, we assume that the conversation is the basis of our relation. The family life without conversation is poor and very often faked. I try to protect my daughters against the evil of this world, but at the same time I do not limit their curiosity [Beata, 40 years old].

Mothers' engagement in the child's matters provides them with suggestive context, which makes them learn by means of observation. The child acquires some kind of psychological qualities, concerning, among other things, spheres of the philosophy of life and social relations through observation, imitation, modelling and identification (Bulla, 1987). The conducted researches pointed out that women recognize child's rights (6.8%), let them have a free hand (4.1%), but obey the above mentioned rules consistently (4.8%). In few cases, women neglect their children (1.7%), do not show them love and support and are not guided by love. They separate themselves from children by means of “helpers”, such as grandparents, various institutions or most frequently babysitters. The fact of separation of mother and child/children can be justified by the lack of time of women, who are educationally and professionally active, as they are tired and they shift off the responsibility of being a mother to different persons.

According to E. Napora (1995), proper relations with a child depend on the attitude adopted by a mother⁶, which has a substantial influence not only on the further child's intra-personal relations, but also on their self-assessment. The mother transfers to her child various models of behaviours and ways of solving the problems, which have an influence on shaping the child, and at the same time adequate image of themselves through the adopted attitude (Ostrouch, 2004). According to M. Braun-Galkowska (1985), the attitude of the mother to the child can be described on the basis of analysis of the degree of intensification of the attitude of closeness, helpfulness, directing and requirements. On these measurements, one can mark opposite attitudes, which are unfavourable as far as education is concerned: rejection, strangeness – excessive closeness, emotional stickiness; lack of help and care – excessive protectiveness; lack of standards, total freedom – supervising, excessive supervision; total

6 A parental attitude is defined as a character of emotional attitude of parents towards children. The tendency for specific behaviours towards a child and tendencies for expressing opinions about a child are within the frames of this definition. D. Fontana defines bases as quite durable attitudes, units of which are developed towards different objects and issues encountered during the whole life, and are expressed verbally as opinions (Fontana, 1998, p. 248).

lack of requirements – excessive requirements. The attitudes which are in the middle on the continuum as proper attitudes (mature parental love) are characterized by proper moderation. They are not placed in one defined point, but in the area close to the centre and can change their location depending on the child's age, parent's personality and situation. Mature parental love, which is expressed in positive, proper attitudes, is bound with a better understanding and greater respect of children's needs and definitely determines their functioning in a family. Table 1 contains data concerning parental attitudes adopted by mothers.

Table 1. Parental attitudes of women/mothers who are educationally and professionally active

Attitudes	Categories	N	%
Closeness	Excess	248	34.9
	Moderation	261	36.8
	Deficiency	201	28.3
	Total	710	100
Helpfulness	Excess	258	36.4
	Moderation	277	39
	Deficiency	175	24.6
	Total	710	100
Directing	Excess	224	31.6
	Moderation	270	38
	Deficiency	216	30.4
	Total	710	100
Requirements	Excess	270	38
	Moderation	218	30.7
	Deficiency	222	31.3
	Total	710	100
Together	Excess	1000	35.2
	Moderation	1026	36.1
	Deficiency	814	28.7
	Total	2840	100

Source: Worked out on the basis of own research (n=710).

According to the above presented data, women, who are educationally and professionally active, adopt most frequently parental attitude in the moderation category (36.1%). This category was pointed most frequently by women, who adopted the attitude of helpfulness (39%), directing (38%) and closeness (36.8%). A smaller group (35.2%) was created by persons adopting the attitude in the category of excess, which was most frequently pointed by mothers adopting attitudes of requirements (38%), helpfulness (36.4%) and closeness (34.9%). The smallest group was the attitude in the category of deficiency (28.7%), which was most frequently adopted by women representing the attitude of requirements (31.3%) and directing (30.4%). The attitude of closeness and helpfulness in this category has a slightly smaller index (attitude of closeness – 28.3%, attitude of helpfulness – 24.6%).

The respondents adopted a major attitude in the category of moderation, which, according to M. Braun-Gałkowska (1985), is characterized by mature love. Adopted by women, the attitude in the moderate category dominates in nearly all attitudes shown by mothers, i.e., the attitude of closeness, helping and directing. It can be assumed that the above mentioned attitudes, which are adopted by women in the moderate category, can result from their activity, which can be bound with their educational and professional activity. The category of excess of adopted attitudes was also observed in the group of women. It dominated mainly in the category of requirements.

* * *

The parental attitudes adopted by educationally active women were examined by the author of the paper in other researches⁷. The statistical analysis confirmed the proposed hypothesis, pointing out that there is dependency between obtained education by women and adopted parental attitudes. The obtained results were shaped in the following way: requirement attitude – $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{emp.}} 16.56 > \text{Chi}^2_{\text{tab.}} 15.49$; $\text{df}=8$; $\alpha=0.05$; V-Cramer coefficient 0.108; helpfulness attitude – $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{emp.}} 54.50 > \text{Chi}^2_{\text{tab.}} 15.49$; $\text{df}=8$; $\alpha=0.05$; V-Cramer coefficient 0.196; closeness attitude – $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{emp.}} 46.38 > \text{Chi}^2_{\text{tab.}} 15.49$; $\text{df}=8$; $\alpha=0.05$; V-Cramer coefficient 0.181; management attitude – $\text{Chi}^2_{\text{emp.}} 58.76 > \text{Chi}^2_{\text{tab.}} 15.49$; $\text{df}=8$; $\alpha=0.05$; V-Cramer coefficient 0.203. The parental attitudes of mothers, who are educationally active, were located mainly in the middle of continuum, so they were correct and were characterized by moderation.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the presented research:

1. Women, who fulfil themselves in educational-professional roles (role of a pupil/student and a worker), also fulfil themselves in the role of mother perfectly.
2. Relations between mother and child/children were correct. They were based on support, trust and conversations with children. The mature, parental love is shaped by giving warmth and love to children. Children are not afraid to come to their mothers with problems, which they experience, and talk to them openly. It is supported by the parental attitudes adopted by women.

⁷ Shaping of parental attitudes because of the kind of led education underwent analysis. The results were presented in the paper: Przybysz-Zaremba, M. Parental Attitudes of Mothers Who Are Educationally Active. *Studium Vilnense A.* 2013, 10. See also: Przybysz-Zaremba, M. *Family, Work, Education – Spheres of the Women's Life. Successes, Conflicts, Problems.* Elbląg: PWSZ Publishing House, 2013.

3. Women, despite having limited time, adopt in the socialization and education process of their child/children attitudes of moderate nature, which, as M. Braun-Gałkowska indicated, belong to proper ones.
4. The multiplicity and diversity of adopted roles by the respondents do not exclude carrying out and performing the most important role, which is cast on women by the society, i.e., the role of a mother. The presented researches (including the research results, which the author quoted in the paper) pointed out that women do not forget about tasks and the role of being a mother, but try to fulfil them as good as they can.

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MOTINOS IR VAIKO SANTYKIŲ BEI TĖVYSTĖS NUOSTATŲ TYRIMAS

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Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas yra pristatyti motinos ir vaiko santykių dinamiką bei patekti motinų priimtas tėvystės nuostatas. Literatūroje apibrėžiama, kad teigiami šeiminiai santykiai priklauso nuo daugelio veiksnių, tiek nuo pačios šeimos, tiek nuo visos socialinės sistemos. Tad moters edukacinės ir profesinės veiklos aktyvumas turi reikšmingą poveikį vystant santykius tarp motinos ir vaiko.

Straipsnyje pateikiami tyrimo rezultatai, apklausiant moteris motinas, kurios yra aktyvios edukacinėje ir profesinėje veikloje. Tyrime dalyvavo 727 moterų iš dviejų – Varmijos Mozūrų vaivadijos ir Kujavijos Pamario vaivadijos, kurios yra šiaurės rytinėje Lenkijos dalyje. Tyrimo imtis buvo sudaryta tikslingai. Tyrimui atlikti buvo taikyta kiekybinio ir kokybinio tyrimų metodologija. Buvo atlikta anketinė apklausa, naudojant „Tėvystės nuostatų skalę“ pagal M. Braun-Galkowska (1985), taip pat su pasirinktomis moterimis buvo atlikti giluminiai interviu su naratyvų elementais, kurių fragmentai yra pateikiami tekste.

Rezultatų analizė parodė, kad, nepaisant to, kokius vaidmenis moteris atlieka (pvz.: mokinės / studentės; darbuotojos), jos santykiai su vaikais išlieka teigiami. Šie santykiai remiasi abipusiu pasitikėjimu ir parama bei pokalbiais su vaikais. Šilumos, meilės ir pasitikėjimo rodymas formuoja brandžius tarpusavio santykius. Moterys, kurios yra labai užimtos dėl aktyvios edukacinės ir profesinės veiklos, visada atranda laiko ir skiria dėmesį savo vaikams. Bendraudamos su vaikais jos yra atviros, nuoširdžios ir draugiškos, vaikai su jomis elgiasi taip pat. Be to, tėvystės nuostatų analizė parodė, kad moterų priimtoms nuostatom patenka į nuosaikumo kategoriją, todėl jas galima apibūdinti kaip „brandi tėviškoji meilė“.

Tiriamųjų vienu metu atliekamų vaidmenų gausa ir įvairovė, netrukdo joms realizuoti motinos vaidmens. Tą patį patvirtina ir kiti straipsnio autorės tyrimai, kurių rezultatai yra minėti straipsnio pabaigoje.

Apibendrinti tyrimų rezultatai leidžia daryti išvadą, kad moterys, nepaisant atliekamų skirtingų socialinių vaidmenų, motinos vaidmeniui teikia prioritetą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: santykiai, šeiminiai santykiai, motina, vaikas, vaidmenys šeimoje.

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