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Intermentoring as a Technique of Sharing Knowledge by Employees of Different Generations (in Light of the Research Results)

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The labour market is constantly changing. There are changes in the age structure of economically active people as well as in their competences. The article presents intermentoring as a way of sharing information between people belonging to different age categories: 50plus (Baby Boomers) and 35minus (Generation Y). It also shows the results of a survey, which revealed the limited knowledge of respondents about mentoring, but also their need to participate in this training technique.

Keywords: generations in labour market, knowledge, intermentoring

Introduction

Knowledge[1], as it is known, is a major factor contributing to a success of entities functioning within the contemporary, competitive and dynamically

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[1] In the literature on the subject knowledge is perceived as, e.g. "set of information, most often linked to one another, concerning the whole or a party of reality" (Olechnicki, Załęcki, 1999, p. 242),

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changing environment. Therefore, it is of significance not only to identify its sources, acquiring it, updating, accumulating or using the knowledge to benefit and organisation, but also to share it among its members[2].

Knowledge transfer should be selective since the knowledge is not needed by all and employees in the same place and at the same time (Van Krogh et al., 2001). The transfer may occur making use of various communication tools and/or techniques of knowledge sharing (training): so called "hard" ones (bulletins, notes and official reports, discussion forums. Chat-rooms, electronic mail, knowledge bases, FAQ, etc.) and/or "soft" ones (conferences, seminars, workshops, work in project teams, coaching, assisting, instructing, etc.) (Brzeziński, Mietlicka, 2011; Potocki, 2011).

The choice of the transfer methods depends on, i.a. knowledge transfer objectives, kind of knowledge (official, secret), sources of knowledge, addressees of the transfer, communication tools and conditions (Potocki, 2011).

Mentoring is one of the techniques of knowledge – sharing. Its significance increases in the light of socio-economic problems of demographic nature, connected with ageing European society, including the Polish one. Life expectancy of Poles has been steadily growing, and concurrently the average number of children per a Polish female has been declining. Such processes might adversely affect not only economic growth, but also the system of social insurance. In such a situation importance is attached to such measures of both the state and employees that aim to encourage baby boomers to stay in the labour market (Eurostat, 2012). Those measures should not only be targeted at the issues connected with adjusting the workplace to requirements of the elderly, but also at, e.g., creating conditions facilitating the improvement of their competences and assisting the personal development of younger generation representatives. In the opinion of the authors of the article, it is mentoring that would help achieve these objectives. Thanks to it, it could be possible to reach synergy effect in the field of development of competences of both a mentor and a student through mutual knowledge and experience transfer.

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or as an intangible resource of an organisation, connected with the data, information and procedures possessed by the organisation, as well as experience and education of its members (Kisielnicki, 2004, pp. 29–30).

   [2] Knowledge sharing is a process of its proliferation within the set group of employees or its transfer between people and terms (Probst et al., 2002, p. 177). Sharing the official knowledge (organised, systematicised, recorded, being the property of an organisation independently of changing staff) is easier than sharing the concealed one (usually difficult to formalise: these are knowledge, competences and experience of individual members of organisation) (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 2000).

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The use of mentoring in organisations might enable both employees and employers to overcome barriers to knowledge transfer, that result from differences between generations[3] present in the current labour market. Therefore, there arise following questions: do members of the Lubuskie Province organisations (representing *35minus* and *50plus age groups*) know the concept of mentoring? Do they use this technique of improving their competences? To what extent? The objective of the article is to address the above questions. In order to reach the objective researches were conducted in the year 2015.

Generations in the contemporary labour market; their characteristics and expectations

The labour market is undergoing numerous changes. Not only does age structure of professionally active people change, but also their knowledge, competences, values important to them, reasons for their acting as well as the need they want to satisfy. Therefore, in the labour market representatives of different "generation" co-exist. This phenomenon has always been natural, yet, the XXI century is characterized by something still new – in the labour market as many as four generations co-exist (Stachowska, 2012), although the numbers of representatives of each one vary a lot (the oldest people constitute the smallest group). In the literature on the subject the four generations are called as follows: 1. *Radio Babies* (*Veterans*, *Mature*, Silent Generation, so called children of the Great Economic Depression and World War II; born within 1922–1944), 2. Generation of baby boom (and economic boom as well (*Baby Boomers*; born within 1945–1964), 3. Generation X (*Generation X, Baby Busters*; born within 1965–1980), 4. Generation e Y (*Generation Y, Millennials, WWW/Net/Thumb/Youtube Generation*, born after 1981[4]) (Hardey, 2011; Miś, 2011; Zagórowska, 2012).

Representatives of the Silent Generation are – in literature – referred to as: fatalists, conventional, disciplined, serious, well–organised, appreciating the so called "hard work", accustomed to authoritarian management style, preferring official methods of communication and formal appreciation for a well-accomplished task. They are motivated by a chance of having a job

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[3] The term "generation" refers to people born within the same time-span, who – especially because of their similar age – have similar experience and were brought up under alike circumstances (Baran, Kłos, 2014).

[4] In literature on the subject there are insignificant difference concerning the time span of births of representatives of the set generation (Kotler, Armstrong, 2010).

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and earning wages allowing them a decent living standard (Chomątkowska, Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013; Marston, 2007; Olson, Brescher, 2011).

Representatives of the baby boom and Generation X[5] have numerous strenghts (Lichtarski, Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2011, based on: Chomątkowska, Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013; see: Baran, Kłos, 2014; Marston, 2007; Olson, Brescher, 2011; Woszczyk, 2013): comprehensive professional experience, knowledge of their branch and past activities of competitors, developed interpersonal skills, complex opinion on operations of their firm, loyalty to employers and workmates, motivation to work, rational decision taking. On the other hand, representatives of generation Y – contrary to baby boomers – appreciate much more their education, an interesting job, a lot of money and interesting lifestyle. They feel less attacked with traditional communities (religion, nation), yet, they feel a need of strong relations with their peers. Personal and affiliation values (happiness, love, family) are of significance to them, and they perceive their jobs as a determinant of their successful (i.e. decent, enjoyable) life and a source of personal satisfaction (Chomątkowska, Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013; Marston, 2007; Olson, Brescher, 2011). Since they are the people whose personal development took place in the era of globalisation and common access to the Internet and personal computers, they are able to use media and handle digital technology. They are task-oriented at work, independent and ambitious, take care of their personal development, are open up to change, have high self-esteem, get engaged in work willingly (however, only in the kind of work which is interesting to them and provides self-satisfaction). They also attach importance to the reputation of the company they work for and good atmosphere at work, they try to strike work-life balance, they easily establish global interpersonal relations, expect flexibility at work, rapid promotion, high remuneration, they are more mobile and team-work oriented (Baran, Kłos, 2014; Czapiński, 2012; Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013). The results of the analysis concerning the writings on the subject prove that generation Y representatives are also characterised with negative qualities, e.g. they are reluctant to comply with rules and principles, present demanding attitudes, advocate the necessity of obtaining permanent feedback and stimulation to take action. They also have difficulties with direct interpersonal communication (prefer the communication via the Internet), trend to take high risk, are reluctant to accept criticism. Moreover, they

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[5] The most common features of this generation are: skepticism, lack of evidence and alertness to symptoms of incompetence and inconsistency among people surrounding them. They are less committed to their organisations than baby boomers, yet, more committed than generation Y. Workoholism, job ethics, the feeling of the need to support their team and the feeling of usefulness, appreciation of feedback, job satisfaction as motivational tool to action-taking are also their qualities. They opt for a stable and secure job (compare: Baran, Kłos, 2014; Smolbik-Jęczmień, 2013).

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present insignificant loyalty to their employers, give priority to their own comfort over dedication and commitment to organisations they work for, they are rarely consistent and patient, self-disciplined and self-dependent. In comparison with representatives of elder generations they are less willing to share their knowledge. In teams whose members are of different age their interpersonal skills are not sufficiently developed (Baran, Kłos, 2014; Czapiński, 2012; Jankowska, 2015; Kmiotek, Piotrowska, 2013).

The discussion in the article is focused on employees representing two age groups: 35 minus (generation Y) and 50 plus (baby boomers)[6]. Both groups, as proved by the analysis of the literature on the subject differ in the aspects of, e.g. knowledge, appreciated values, psycho-physical features, personal and professional needs, notably in the area of the wages they are paid as well as their career path (the characteristics presented are to some extent simplified and not all representatives of each group should be described in this way). The differences indicated contribute to triggering inter-generation conflicts among employees of an organisation. Therefore, is there a chance despite the differences – to bridge the generation gap through mentoring?

Mentoring and its kinds; specifics of *intermentoring*

Mentoring[7] might be understood as "a process of knowledge and experience transfer conducted by elderly and experienced employees to the younger ones (…) and concerns providing hints and pieces of advice as well as sharing life experience and wisdom" (Mesjasz, 2013, p. 74; see: Król, Ludwiczyński, 2006, p. 468; Luecke, 2006). A mentor transfers his/her knowledge to someone who "is less experienced and the transfer is based on mutual confidence" (Clutterbuck, 1991; Parsloe, Wray, 2002, p. 78). A false conclusion could be drawn that the transfer benefits its beneficiary only, who acquires the knowledge about the specificity of functioning of a company or a branch, corporate culture, ways of taking decisions and problem-solving, opportunities for career development, etc. (Nawrat, 2011; Sołtys, Tarkowska, 2008). However, it should be noted that mentoring is an example of "relationship between the mentor and the disciple within which there is a transfer of defined values" (Mazur, 2008, p. 110). It is not only the student who

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[6] Researches on generation differences and managers' role in intergeneration dialogue, in the same age groups (35minus and 50plus), i.a.: Gojny and Zbierowski (2013).

[7] The concept of mentoring has been developing since 1980s in reaction to the need of implementing more personalised forms of working with both individuals and teams facing lack of progress in personal and professional advancement (Sołtys, Tarkowska, 2008).

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the relationship benefits, but a mentor as well. It return for the "care" the mentor gains respect, recognition and loyalty as well as technical support and information concerning what is going on within their organisation (what is necessary for the accomplishment of the delegated task). The prestige and satisfaction of the mentor are growing as well (especially when the student is successful) (Bąk, Bednarz, 2013; Blikle, 2000; Mesjasz, 2013).

Mentoring aims not only at spending knowledge, but also at creating the new one, thanks to experience and idea sharing. It can be used in various areas of human activity and includes variety of kinds, e.g. academic mentoring (Grewiński, 2012), social, branch, corporate one (Parsloe, Wray, 2002). Academic mentoring takes place at universities (a faculty member is a mentor, a student or a less experienced faculty member is a beneficiary). Social mentoring is targeted at people in difficult life situation and most often concerns personal life of its beneficiary; branch mentoring is targeted at candidates preparing themselves to taking up jobs requiring formally proved qualifications and its usually organised within associations of professionals and government agencies. Firms usually make use of corporate mentoring dedicated to providing support to employees at different stages of their professional career.

Considering the way mentoring relationship is organised and the form it takes, two kinds of mentoring could be distinguished in a company – formal and informal one (Bąk, Bednarz, 2013; Mazur, 2008). The former one is initiated by an employer (e.g. HR Departmenr), who officially establishes the rules selecting the participants of mentoring, sets objectives, determines procedures and selects tools of mutual co-operation, defines the ways of mentoring the progress in professional development of the beneficiaries (the mentored)[8]. Menetoring of that kind could be used, e.g. within and induction programme or as an element of preparing members of an organisation to take over managerial posts.

On the other hand, informal mentoring of carried out spontaneously, with no specific rules determined by an employer. Such kind of mentoring is a result personal, confidence and respect-based relations between a mentor and the mentored one, as well as the effect of the approval given by the mentored to competitive adventage of the mentor. It i salso the afetrmath of the mentor's attempts to enhance professional advancement of the mentored as well as readiness to dedicate time and care by the mentor (Bąk, Bednarz, 2013).

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[8] Delegating the task of mentoring by an employer may be perceived by some employees as a "trap" (preparing a successor to take over your position because of your potential e.g. dismissal), which triggers your resistance resulting in, i.a. a drop in job security, shrinking job satisfaction, growing frustration and destructive conflicts.

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If the partners to such mentoring are members of the same team – this is the case of *intrateam* mentoring, if the case is reverse – *interteam* mentoring (Mazur, 2008). The real life situations is what mentoring takes place in ("traditional" mentoring; partners are in the same room and hold "face-to-face" conversation). In case of virtual mentoring (e-mentoring: takes places via computer, the Internet or software; see: Bąk, Bednarz, 2013).

Partners to mentoring could be members of the same or different organisation (cross-mentoring), therefore business relations between them either exist (Brewiński, 2012). Working for the same company they can occupy post on the same (lateral mentoring) or different level of organisational structure (Kram, Izabella, 1985; Mazur, 2008). If the mentor is ranked higher in the structure – this is the case of hierarchical mentoring, if the mentor is ranked lower – reverse mentoring takes place [then junior employees, at lower levels proliferate knowledge among senior employees (Mazur, 2008)].

Inter-mentoring is quite common as well – the idea is for employees to swap their roles, which takes place smoothly and could occur many times until the partners do not need mutual support any longer (Rosa-Chłobowska, 2008).

Considering the fact that the partners to mentoring might swap their roles and the mentor is not always ranked higher within the organisational structure, it is worth nothing that technique could be applied in order to transfer knowledge and corporate values among representatives of different generations. Such mentoring is then referred to as *intermentoring*. According to Gojny i Zbierowski (2013, p. 159) it is a training technique thanks to which both generations (the researches of the above mentioned authors focused on people aged 35 minus and 50 plus) learn how "surmount unwillingness and prejudice through more profound recognition of mutual motivation and characteristic resulting from representing the set age group", which allows to improve knowledge management within an organisation. In the opinion of Baran (2013, p. 268) intermentoring allows to "make use of knowledge, skills and experience of employees of a company, representing different age groups and to ensure their effective transfer among employees of different age". That inter-generation transfer of knowledge and values provide opportunities for using potential of representatives of different generations, on various levels of their personal and professional development, possessing knowledge in different fields. Such co-operation plays also an inter-generation conflict – preventive role (Gojny, Zbierowski, 2013; Lieber, 2010).

In its further part the article discusses methodology and findings of the authors' own researches concerning intermentoring. The researches were conducted in the Lubuskie Province organisations among representatives of age groups: 35minus (generation Y) and 50plus (baby boomers).

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Methodology of researches and characteristics of two research samples

The researches were conducted in 2015. A direct survey was used, including two categorised and standardised questionnaires [prepared on the basis of knowledge acquired through literature studies; the questionnaires were targeted at representatives of two different age group (35minus and 50plus), each questionnaire included 16 closed questions (half)open and metric ones]. Among others ordinal bipolar, position and the Likert scales were used. Because of lack of a possibility of identifying an organisation the surveyed of 35 minus and 50 plus age groups had a job with the idea of a random choice of the sample was abandoned and the target choice was applied.

The survey was done in 109 organisations: micro (14.7%), small (33.9%), medium (28.4%) and large-sized ones (22.9%). The profile of their operations concentrated primarily on industrial processing (23.9%), wholesale and retail trade (16.5%), public administration and national defence (13.8%), construction industry (10.1%), transport, warehousing and telecommunications (9.2%) or education (8.3%). Other branches were represented not in such large numbers (hotels, restaurant, health care, agriculture and others – totaling 18%)[9].

109 people were addressees of the first questionnaire, representing the sample population aged below 35, almost half (46.8%) were aged below. One out of the ten surveyed (9.2%) had overall work experience shorter than a year, every third (29.4%) longer than a year, but shorter than 3 years. The largest number of the surveyed (37.6%) had worked from 4 to 10 years, and the remainder (23.9%) – longer than 10 years. Among the surveyed of this age group there were more women (61.5%) than men, more employees in subordinate posts (92.7%) than in managerial positions, having permanent contract of employment (71.6%) than other kinds of job contract (e.g. temporary job contract – 17.4%).

The second questionnaire was responded to by 109 employees aged 50 plus, the overwhelmingly majority of whom (90%) did not reach 60 year of age. There were slightly more women (52.3%) than men (47.7%). One in four respondent (23%) was employed in a managerial post. The majority of the surveyed (82.6%) were on payroll.

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[9] Those organisations were mainly located in towns within the Lubuskie Province (91.7%) or neighbouring provinces (the Wielkopolska and the Lower Silesia Province, overall 8.3%).

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Baby boom and generation Y employees on mentoring and knowledge sharing between different generations members of an organisation

The findings of the researches proved limited knowledge of the surveyed of what "mentoring" is. Almost two thirds of them (64.7%) failed to try to explain the idea of mentoring. Every tenth respondent (11.5%) claimed that mentoring might be pursued by senior employees only and every fourth one (23.4%) presented a short explanation of that kind of training technique, indicating that mentoring facilitates knowledge transfer to less experienced by more experienced employees. In the case of same respondents they emphasized that mentoring is only conducted during an induction programme. A few respondents (0.5%) noted that mentoring is a long term, partnership relations between two employees with different work experience and is a technique to be used by either of two persons.

Despite such limited knowledge of the surveyed (both generations) concerning mentoring, the majority of the respondents of generation Y (90.8%) considered at least one of their senior workmates the one who shared their knowledge as well as their professional and life experience (rules by which the transfer was conducted were not identified). Slightly fewer respondents (89%) would like at least one of more senior employees to become their mentor. Moreover, the bulk of the baby boomers surveyed (95.4%) stated that they had shared their knowledge as well as professional and life experience with at least one employee less prepared to fulfil their role in their organisation. Many respondents (85.3%) of this age group would like to be a mentor of a junior organisation member. It is also worth noting that the majority of the respondents aged 35minus (88.1%) and 50plus (77.1%) appreciated the opportunity of a feedback concerning their work provided by the employees of different age group. Thus, a conclusion could be drawn that the surveyed wanted to make use of mentoring although they knew not enough about its specificity. Such findings of the researches correspond to the way the representatives of the surveyed generations evaluated one another. It was confirmed that majority of respondents of both age groups perceived their workmates representing the different generations as an asset to the employer, although such opinions were more often presented by baby boomers (90.8%) than of generation Y (85.4%).

The scope of knowledge that – in the opinion of the surveyed – employees could acquire from one another was also identified basing on the findings of the researches (Table 1). It could be confirmed that baby boomers were more often than generation Y employees indicated the scope of knowledge they could acquire from their younger workmates (respectively, on average: 4 and 2 scopes). Most of 50 plus

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respondents indicated that they could gain theoretical and practical knowledge from their younger workmates in the area of operating a computer (56.9%), technological innovations connected with operations of their current employer (56%), using computer software (50.5%) and communicating via the Internet or mobile phone (50.5%). Yet, the most seldom they had a chance to acquire the knowledge concerning values[10] and patterns of behaviour of importance in private and/or professional life.

It was also found out that respondents of 35minus years of age were able to acquire the information about the specificity of an organisation they worked for from the 50plus the organisation achievements and/or failures – 60.6%, binding procedures – 55.1%, less often (47.7%) about the branch their entity was operating in[11]. They could also find out what values (45.9%) and patterns of behaviour (53.2%) were preferable in their organisations.

Thus, the analysis of the research findings has proved that employees of both age groups did not have sufficient knowledge about mentoring, but would like to use mentoring in practice. People aged 50plus more often than those aged 35minus identified an opportunity of acquiring knowledge from the younger ones. The opportunity usually regarded both professional knowledge and skills, whereas the 35minus group of respondents identified a chance for gaining information about their organisation and the branch it operates in as well behavioural patterns and values preferred in their organisation (the 50plus being the source of the information).

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[10] Within the researches, i.a. systems of values of the two generations were also analysed. Significant differences in this area might considerably hinder bridging the generation gap through intermentoring. It was found out that both age groups indicated the same 5 (out of 11) values of significance to them, although their hierarchy was different. More senior employees gave priority to health (89.9%), job (78%), family (77%) and money (57%) as well as love (38.5%). Junior employees most appreciated health (78.9%), family (76.1%), job (69.7%), followed by money (68.8%) and love (52.3%).

[11] On the basis of the analysis of V-Cramer coefficient value there is no high corelations between the choice of younger respondents (concerning knowledge they could acquire from the elder ones) and their socio-demographic variables [the article uses the following correlation scale: $|r|=0$ (correlation does not exist), $0<|r|<0.3$ (is weak), $0.3\leq|r|<0.5$ (medium), $0.5\leq|r|<0.7$ (significant), $0.7\leq|r|<0.9$ (high), $0.9\leq|r|<1.0$ (very high), $|r|=1$ (full, function-like); Stanisz, 2006]. The strongest correlation was identified in case of a possibility of gaining information in the area of using computer software in industrial processing companies (V-Cramer=0.46). The accomplishment of manufacturing processes required both the preparation and application of specialised software tailored to the set organisation only (with unique configuration), in majority of cases determining the competitive edge. The methods of using the software could be learnt from employees with profound knowledge and long experience in managing production processes.

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Table 1. Scope of knowledge that might be mutually transferred between employees of different age groups: *35minus* (generation Y) and *50plus* (baby boomers)

Percentage of 35minus employees' responses concerning co-operation with the 50plus group	Scope of knowledge	Percentage of 50plus employees reponses concerning co-operation with the 35minus group
1. Specifics of company and branch it operates in		
60.6	a. Achievements/failures of organisation they currently have a job with	6.4
22.9	b. products/services offered by their current employer	0.9
55.1	c. procedures applied in the current workplace	16.5
47.7	d. specifics of branch the organisation (current employer) operates in	9.2
8.3	e. new trends in the branch	39.5
2. Knowledge and skills, and their development opportunities		
29.4	a. knowledge and skills connected with the job performer (e.g. accountancy, Logistics, sales techniques, advertising)	8.3
9.2	b. practical application of technological novelties connected with the job performed	56.0
34.9	c. operating specialised machinery and equipment	23.9
7.3	d. operating a computer	56.9
10.1	e. using computer software	50.5
9.2	f. communication via the Internet or a mobile phone	50.5
7.3	g. communication in a foreign language	36.7
18.4	h. methods of development of professional competences	12.8
3. Values and behavioural patterns of significance in private and/or professional life		
45.9	a. values of significance in professional life	4.6
44.0	b. values of significance in private life	3.7
19.3	c. combining professional life with private life	11.0
53.2	d. behavioural patterns preferred by employer	15.6
0.9	Lack of possibility of acquiring knowledge	2.8
1.8	Answer "difficult to say"	6.4

Source: the author's own research-based work.

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In the organisations surveyed there are at least some circumstances enabling inter-generation knowledge and values transfer (streamlined in both directions). Such mutual transfer could provide opportunities for using potential of representatives of different generations, each being on different level of personal and professional development and having knowledge in various areas. However, the effective accomplishment of the transfer requires organising training courses for employees and focusing on the specifics of the discussed technique of knowledge sharing (e.g. concerning: setting objectives of intermentoring, stages of their accomplishment, behavioural patterns typical for mentoring meetings and intermentoring culture) as well as developing such techniques that would enhance openness of both generations to diversity.

In case of both generations it is also worth raising their awareness of the impact of historical and socio-economic context on the development of junior/ senior workmates and the specifics of their functioning in both private and professional life. Therefore, it is quite likely that both generations will not assess each other only from the perspective of their own experience, being driven by stereotypes (Rzechowska, Garbacz, Kajda, Zaborek, 31.08.2016).

The realisation of formal inter-mentoring in the entities surveyed should be supported by employers, through e.g. appropriate selection of the participants in mentoring programmes (taking into consideration the mentoring objectives; bearing in mind that being involved in this relationship should be voluntary), establishing rules of the procedure, monitoring it and evaluating the results obtained. It is also worth encouraging partners involved in mentoring to establish mutual co-operation rules (frequency of meetings, code of good practice, methods of communication, etc.)[12].

Conclusions

The analysis of the findings of the survey researches has indicated that both junior and senior employees of the Lubuskie Province had limited knowledge on mentoring. However, the majority of the generation Y employees surveyed considered at least one of their more senior workmates the person to have shared knowledge and life and professional experience with. Moreover, the bulk of baby boomers surveyed stated that they had shared the knowledge, life and professional

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[12] It should be noted that in an organisation, under specific circumstances (i.e. in mentoring culture), informal mentoring can take place, and this kind of mentoring, despite involvement of an employer, also facilitates inter-generation knowledge transfer.

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experience with at least one employee, less prepared to fulfil their role in the organisation. The result of the researches have also proved that the Lubuskie Province surveyed employees representing both generations identify their need for mentoring in the future. People aged 50plus more often than those aged 35minus perceive a possibility of acquiring information from their workmates of different age group. Elder employees would like to gain knowledge regarding professional competences, while the younger ones concerning the enterprise and the branch it operates in as well as values preferable in their workplace.

Therefore, mentoring might be and important method of sharing knowledge between employees, especially when they represent different generations. The effects of mentoring can be more spectacular if it is not a single act, but a process incorporated in to functioning of a company, i.e. if within the company there is a specific corporate culture. It should be added as well that popularising mentoring in an organisation might not be easy as it is connected with a necessity of eliminating sources of resistance on the part of employees. The sources could involve, i.a. insufficient knowledge about mentoring (e.g. perceiving it as an extra duty and not a training technique facilitating learning from each other), insufficient communication skills (i.a. in the aspect of active listening, providing feedback, interpreting non-verbal messages, formulating written statements, paraphrasing, mutual inconfidence of an organisation's members, fear of negative consequences of knowledge – sharing and being fearful of the new/failure, etc. Limiting the number or offsetting some of the sources of the new resistance requires, e.g. holding information events and training courses as well as justifying the necessity of creating the mentoring in an organisation.

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