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THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN ADULT DAUGHTERS' OBSERVATIONS – A CONTRIBUTION TO CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT FAMILY COMMUNICATION

WYCHOWAWCZA ROLA MATKI W PERCEPCJI DOROSŁYCH CÓREK – PRZYCZYNEK DO ROZWAŻAŃ O KOMUNIKACJI W RODZINIE

Keywords:
parenting, mother's
role, education,
educational role of
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educational care

Summary: The primary objective of the research presented in this article was to determine how adult daughters, in retrospect, see the educational role of their mothers. The method applied in the research procedure involved the Wheel Questionnaire of Ben Shalit – a modified version of Perception Survey Questionnaire. The research involved 91 female students of the Faculty of Education at the University of Rzeszów. One of the assumptions of this research was that parenting constitutes a fundamental dimension of adult functioning, whose quality depends on childhood experiences. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that women see the educational role of their mothers in the context of four main categories: togetherness, values, nurture and care, and bestowing emotions.

The issue not directly resulting from the research, which is nevertheless significant from the point of view of family communication problems, is the matter of fulfilling pro-parental

Słowa kluczowe:
rodzicielstwo, rola
matki, wychowanie,
wychowawcza rola
matki, opieka, troska
wychowawcza

education both in school and public space, which should involve transmitting knowledge on the development and upbringing of a child, and intended to shape parental competencies including communication and broadly understood pedagogical culture.

Streszczenie: Podstawowym celem przedstawionych w artykule badań było ustalenie, jak dorosłe córki, z perspektywy lat, spostrzegają wychowawczą rolę swych matek. W postępowaniu badawczym zastosowano „Koło” – Kwestionariusz stylu spostrzegania Bena Shalita w wersji zmodyfikowanej. Badaniami objęto 91 studentek z Wydziału Pedagogicznego Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego. Za przesłankę badań uznano fakt, że rodzicielstwo stanowi zasadniczy wymiar funkcjonowania człowieka dorosłego, którego jakość zależy od doświadczeń nabytych przez człowieka w okresie dzieciństwa. Na podstawie uzyskanych wyników można stwierdzić, że kobiety spostrzegają wychowawczą rolę matek w kontekście czterech głównych kategorii treściowych, tzn. „wspólnotowości”, „wartości”, „opieki i troski” wychowawczej oraz „obdarzania uczuciami”.

Kwestie niewynikające z badań, ale istotne z punktu widzenia podjętej problematyki, to te dotyczące realizowania edukacji prorodzicielskiej – zarówno w szkole, jak i w przestrzeni publicznej – która powinna obejmować przekazywanie wiedzy o rozwoju i wychowaniu dziecka oraz zmierzać do kształtowania kompetencji rodzicielskich, w tym komunikacyjnych i szeroko rozumianej kultury pedagogicznej.

Introduction

Parenthood marks a unique plane of adult functioning. It starts at the moment a child is conceived and includes many activities leading to their independent life, their readiness to play various social roles, and thus to their mature functioning in the world. Once started, it lasts until the end of the parent's life and is associated with satisfying the diverse needs of the offspring, both nurturing and educational, and providing the right conditions for their emotional, intellectual and spiritual development; it is also associated with support

and assistance (Śniegulska, 2017). For both mothers and fathers, parenting is a source of life experiences, as well as a fundamental developmental task they try to cope with. In this sense, progressing over the various stages of parenthood does not only involve the maturation of children, but also affects the parents, giving them a sense of fulfillment and joy at the same time. Parental roles do not end when the offspring reaches adulthood – although the extent of educational practice decreases, it is still present in parental experience (Cohen, 2015) and brings significant values and experiences to parents' lives (Bakiera & Stelter, 2010).

Parenthood manifests itself in playing the roles of mother and father. These are complementary ones which differ in some respects, but which also complete each other (Izdebska, 2015). The mother is usually assigned to affective roles (see Chomczyńska-Miliszkievicz, 1999); it is claimed that she is a hub of affection, one who creates the atmosphere of warmth, understanding, love, kindness and forgiveness (Wolicki, 1982). The basic element of the mother's role is love for her child. Significantly, it is a special kind of affection, as it also shapes the child's ability to love (Wilk, 2016).

The mother plays the first and the most important role in the life of her offspring (Śledzianowski & Bębas, 2016). It is worth emphasizing the key tasks she has to fulfill particularly in raising daughters, because she is the one who prepares them for motherhood (Łobocki, 2004).

Elusive as it is, in Joanna Ostrouch's phrasing (2004), the mother-daughter relationship requires in-depth analysis also for the reason that a mother used to be a daughter herself. This experience is later transferred to her own family and affects the attitude of mothers to their daughters. Therefore, there is a relationship between the relationship with the mother and the daughters' behavior and their perception of the world (Ostrouch, 2004). This relationship is, therefore, an important research category.

Bearing in mind the pedagogical significance of the mother-daughter relationship, let us mention that the momentous issue nowadays seems to be pro-parental education, leading to the development of a pedagogical culture among both current and future parents. This education, based on the views of various authors, should include scientific knowledge about upbringing, including, e.g., knowledge about marriage, family, and children, e.g., their needs, development conditions and possibilities, their activity, education, possible threats and pedagogical principles (Opozda, 2012). Family training for the role of the mother is of fundamental importance here (Parysiewicz, 2000),

which in its deepest sense should lead to fulfilling the educational role in a valuable and responsible manner, based on proper and constructive – from the pedagogical point of view – relations between mothers and their children.

Research method

The article attempts to sketch the educational role of the mother in the subjective perspective of adult daughters. The presented results come from pilot studies preceding broader explorations regarding young women's perceptions of the role of mother in raising a child. In presenting the results obtained, I try to answer the following questions:

- What is the content of the examined women's observations on the educational role of the mother?
- What is the importance and emotional saturation of the distinguished attributes of the mother's educational role?
- Do the perceived importance and emotional saturation of the educational elements of the mother's role depend on the environment in which the respondents lived in their childhood (village/city) and on whether they were raised in a full family or by a single mother?

The study used a modified version of Ben Shalit's Wheel Questionnaire which belongs to the group of non-standardized methods with many-sided application possibilities. Generally, it serves to quantify the degree of the structuralization of a person's perception of a particular area or aspect of reality, as well as to perform a qualitative analysis of the content of the insights that relate to that particular area or aspect of reality. Depending on the purpose of the study and the type of study population, significant modifications to the questionnaire are allowed (Czapiński, 1985).

The questionnaire has the form of open questions, the answers to which are inscribed in the segments of the circle. In the general version, the question is: "What factors do you think characterize the world you live in?" The question can be freely modified depending on the research needs. In this study, the respondents were asked to enter into the circle segments their answers to the question: "What do you feel characterizes the educational role that your mother performed for you in your childhood?"

Next, the women were to assign a rank to each aspect of their mother's role. The respondents were also asked to evaluate each element listed on the value dimension and decide to what extent they perceived it as positive (pleasant) and

to what extent as negative (unpleasant), based on a 5-point scale: ++, +, 0, -, -- (Czapiński, 1985, p. 285). The indications included in the questionnaire could have had the same number indicating the rank (importance) and the same evaluation. As already mentioned, the questionnaire can be freely modified. During the first stage of the analysis of the results, I generalized and reduced the respondents' statements, thus creating categories in which the respondents perceive the role of the mother. Next, the range of ranks and the affective load for each category were determined. In the cases where indications falling within the same category had different ranks, the higher rankings were used for calculations.

When performing statistical calculations, the rho-Spearman correlation and the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test (for two samples only) were used. Statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS program (all relationships are statistically significant when $p < 0.05$).

Ninety-one students of the Faculty of Education of the University of Rzeszów, ages 20–25, participated in the study. The selection of the group was based on the availability of respondents. This is an example of a non-probabilistic selection that does not offer the possibility of generalizing conclusions (Babie, 2008). The results obtained, therefore, refer only to the study group, i.e., they cannot be applied to all UR students or to a broader category of young women. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous; participants were informed about the purpose of the study.

Among the surveyed students, 65.94% were women from a rural environment and 34.06% from an urban one; 80.21% of the women were brought up by both parents, and 19.79% by their mothers alone. The chi-square test showed no statistically significant differentiation between the subjects' coming from a full family or a single mother's family, nor regarding their place of origin (village/city). By age, 19.70% of the respondents were 20–21 years old, 48.35% were 22–23 years old, and 31.86% were over the age of 24.

Findings

The surveyed women gave a total of 724 answers. The indications were then categorized, resulting in 12 content categories. The distinguished categories have fluid, contractual boundaries, because it was difficult to precisely classify some of the respondents' answers in a given category. The frequency of occurrence of individual categories with the content assigned to them (selected examples) is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
Frequency of occurrence of individual categories and their content

Category	Content (selected statements *)	N	%**
Togetherness	Spending time together: she spent time with me, we had fun together, we talked to each other, vacationed together, spent every free moment together, we took trips together, played board games with the whole family, joint dinners, reading books, joint jokes.	58	63.73
	Joint work for the family: joint housework, cooperation, shopping together, baking cakes, preparing holidays, consulting family matters, solving problems together, performing duties, cleaning the apartment/house together.		
Values	She taught me respect for all people, helping others, religion, responsibility, respect for elders, truth, self-respect, justice, love for all people, faith and prayer, conscience, forgiveness, honesty, truthfulness, economy.	57	62.63
Nurture and care	Ensuring a sense of security and stability, taking care of health, care for my start in life, making sure that nothing is missing, financial security, taking care of learning aids, constant feeling of care, caring for me, satisfying all my needs.	54	59.34
Bestowing feelings	Love, warmth, warm atmosphere at home, caresses, hugging and stroking, kisses goodnight, a sense of great love and acceptance, emotional bond, tenderness, she loved me.	50	54.94
School education	She helped me with homework, she went to parents' meetings, checked notebooks, studied with me, helped me with various schoolwork, paid great attention to learning and grades, helped me in solving school problems.	39	42.85
Help and support	Selfless help and support in difficult times, certainty that I could count on her in every situation, I always knew that she would help and defend me, the awareness that she was supportive of me, kept encouraging me, supported my dreams.	33	36.26
Punishment	Spanking, reprimanding, detention, occasional corporal punishment, unfair punishment, yelling, provoking remorse.	31	34.06
Rigor and discipline	Discipline, obedience, control, determination, firmness, a lot of do's and don'ts, control, no whims.	26	28.57
Requirements and obligations	Implementation of household chores, expectation that I help in household chores, setting duties, division of duties, high requirements, learning how to deal with duties, setting tasks, high expectations.	25	27.47
Inadvisable in mother's role	Incompatibility of decisions (mom's different from dad's), tenacity, it irritated me that my mother worked a lot and did not have time for me, quarrels, wrong to impose her point of view on me, forcing me to go to church, high change of mind, forcing me to eat, forcing me to play the guitar, lack of conversation and interest in my education, lack of consistency, letting dad make all decisions, putting off difficult conversations, when you are older, rarely praised me, lack of interest, loneliness, lack of support, arbitrariness, not caring about problems, lack of physical intimacy, comparing me to my siblings.	25	27.47

Rewards	Rewarding, praise, praise for minor achievements, rewarding with sweets, verbal rewards, occasional material rewards, gifts.	23	25.27
Principles and norms	Taking care of punctuality, teaching me how to behave, teaching me cultural principles, explaining how to behave properly, complying with the law, living in accordance with the rules, teaching good manners.	17	18.68

* Statements in the original version from questionnaires.

** Since the respondents' statements were put in several categories, the sum of interest is greater than 100.

Source: own research.

In accordance with the rank attributed to the perceived aspects of the role of the mother (1 meant the highest rank), these were ordered as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Categories of the educational role of the mother according to the ranks assigned to them

Categories of the educational role of the mother	Average	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Bestowing feelings	1.88	1.00	1.902	1	9
Togetherness	2.62	2.00	1.890	1	8
Help and support	2.67	2.00	2.203	1	10
Nurture and care	2.69	2.00	2.082	1	10
Values	3.14	2.00	2.580	1	11
Principles and norms	3.82	2.00	3.264	1	12
Requirements and obligations	4.36	4.00	2.998	1	12
School education	4.77	5.00	2.497	1	10
Inadvisable in mother's role	4.80	5.00	2.661	1	10
Rigor and discipline	4.85	4.00	3.209	1	11
Punishments	5.42	4.00	3.053	2	12
Rewards	5.61	5.00	2.904	1	10

Source: own study.

The analysis of average values and medians indicates that the respondents gave the highest ranks to “affection,” and slightly lower ones to “community” and “help and support.” They perceived these categories as the most important

ones for the role in question. On the other hand, they saw “punishments” and “rewards” as the least important. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, no statistically significant differentiation was found regarding the ranking of these categories due to the upbringing environment (full family, single-mother family). However, taking into account their place of origin (village/city), the analysis showed one statistically significant differentiation, namely, a slightly higher rank attributed to “bestowing feelings” (city: average 1.29 +/- 0.90; village: average 2.31 +/- 2.30) by the respondents from the city ($p = 0.05$).

The next step in the study was to determine the emotional saturation of individual dimensions of the educational role of the mother.

Table 3

Emotional saturation of the perceived dimensions of the educational role of the mother

Categories of the educational role of the mother	Average	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Bestowing feelings	1.84	2.00	0.422	0	2
Help and support	1.82	2.00	0.392	1	2
Togetherness	1.72	2.00	0.555	-1	2
Nurture and care	1.59	2.00	0.740	-1	2
Principles and norms	1.59	2.00	0.618	0	2
Values	1.42	2.00	0.706	-1	2
Rewards	1.17	1.00	0.576	0	2
School education	1.03	1.00	0.932	-2	2
Requirements and obligations	0.56	1.00	1.121	-2	2
Rigor and discipline	0.12	0.00	1.177	-2	2
Punishments	-0.65	-1.00	1.112	-2	2
Inadvisable in mother's role	-1.04	-1.00	0.978	-2	2

Source: own study.

The dimension most saturated with positive emotions turned out to be “bestowing feelings” (average: 1.84 +/- 0.42), while the least saturated, quite predictably, were the elements perceived as “inadvisable in mother's role” (average: -1.04 +/- 0.98). The highest consistency of assessments was observed in the “help and support” category.

Analysis by the Mann-Whitney U test did not show a differentiation of assessments indicating affective load due to the upbringing environment (full

family, single mother family). In relation to the place of origin, one statistically significant difference was observed, which indicates that the category of "punishment" is rated lower by the respondents living in the village (city: average 0.11 +/- 1.26; village: average: -0.95 +/- 0.89).

When undertaking the task of examining the educational role of the mother in the perception of the surveyed women, it was advisable to determine the correlation between the ranks attributed to the elements of this role and their emotional saturation. This correlation is evidenced by the situation when, along with the increase in rank, there is an increase in the saturation with positive or negative emotions of a given dimension of the role. Considering the research group (N = 91), a fairly strong correlation occurred with "requirements and obligations" (Spearman's rho-coefficient: -0.531 at $p = 0.006$), and a slightly weaker one with "principles and norms" (Spearman's rho-ratio: - 0.541 at $p = 0.025$). In these cases, along with the higher rank of "requirements and obligations" and "principles and norms," the values of saturation with positive emotions increase (the minus sign at the values of rank correlation coefficients and value assessments is related to the fact that a higher rank means a decreasing numerical value approaching 1, while a better rating indicates a greater number of pluses; due to these inverse scales, the sign "-" informs us that the increase in rank is accompanied by an increase in emotional saturation).

In the case of people brought up by both parents, the highest degree of correlation concerned "principles and norms" (Spearman's rho-coefficient: -0.644 at $p = 0.033$) and "nurture and care" (Spearman's rho-coefficient: -0.559 at $p = 0.000$). In these dimensions of the role, the value of positive emotional saturation increased with a higher rank. Importantly, in the case of women raised by single mothers, the correlation concerned only in relation to "bestowing feelings" (Spearman's rho coefficient: 0.736 at $p = 0.004$). Regarding the other elements of the mother's educational role, high ranks were not associated with their saturation with positive emotions. Taking into account the place of origin, no statistically significant relationships were observed in the group of respondents from the city. In the group of women from a rural environment, the highest degree of correlation concerned "values" (Spearman's rho-coefficient: -0.613 at $p = 0.000$), "requirements and obligations" (Spearman's rho-coefficient: -0.532 at $p = 0.016$), and "nurture and care" (Spearman's rho-coefficient: -0.535 at $p = 0.001$). In the case of these dimensions of the perceived role of the mother, as the rank increases, saturation with positive emotions increases, too.

Comparing the observations made by women raised in the countryside and in the city, it is noteworthy that in the case of the first group, the rank of the “school education” category is associated with saturation of positive emotions, although there is no statistically significant correlation (rho-Spearman ratio: -0.456 at $p = 0.025$) when compared to women raised in the city (Spearman’s rho-coefficient: 0.300 at $p = 0.271$). In the course of the analysis of the empirical material, other significant correlations were revealed. Namely:

- as the ranks attributed to “school education” increase, the ranks associated with “rewards” (rho-Spearman coefficient: 0.862 at $p = 0.001$) also increase, which means that if subjects perceive “schooling” as important, they consider “rewards” important, too. Weaker correlations occurred with the “help and support” and “togetherness” categories (Spearman’s rho-coefficient: 0.702 at $p = 0.001$), as well as with “rigor and discipline,” and “requirements and obligations” (Spearman’s rho-coefficient: 0.764 at $p = 0.017$);
- high saturation with positive emotions in “togetherness” is accompanied by low saturation with these emotions in the dimension of “rigor and discipline” (rho-Spearman coefficient: -0.696 at $p = 0.012$).

Conclusion

The article presents the problem of the educational role of the mother in the view of 91 students of the Faculty of Education of the University of Rzeszów. The content of their observations, the rank of individual dimensions of the educational role, and their emotional saturation were comprehensively included.

Summing up the results, it should be noted that the respondents perceive the role of mothers in the context of four main content categories, namely, “togetherness,” “values,” “nurture and care” and “bestowing feelings.” Therefore, taking into account these categories and the content attributed to them, it should be emphasized that an essential element of the perceived role of the mother is a certain closeness between the women, expressed primarily in being together and spending time together. When analyzing the image of the educational role of the mother, it should be stated that the most important attribute of this role is “bestowing feelings,” i.e., expressing love. This category was ranked slightly higher by students brought up in the city. The research also shows that the perceived aspects of the mother’s educational role are generally

saturated with positive emotions. This applies most to the dimension related to “bestowing feelings,” although there were also indications that “continuous hugging” and “caressing by force” aroused negative emotions. Additionally, for women from the countryside, the dimension of “punishment” is saturated with negative emotions to a greater extent than for women from the city. However, the conducted studies do not provide grounds for any unambiguous answer to the question about the reasons why it is so.

Comparing the observations made by women from the countryside and the city, the noteworthy tendency is that the dimension of “school education” is accompanied by positive emotions for women raised in the countryside rather than for those from the city. This means that education-related aspects of the mother’s role are often seen as unpleasant by women from the city. Interpreting this result, it can be said with great caution that in a rural environment, helping a child to learn can be perceived by them as something pleasant, as being with each other while doing homework. Meanwhile, in the city, this help can be associated by children with high demands in an atmosphere of rigor and parents’ focus on school successes. To sum up, let us also pay attention to the fact that in the case of women raised only by their mothers, high rank was associated with greater saturation of positive emotions only in the dimension of “bestowing feelings,” while in the case of respondents from a full family, this also referred to the category of “principles and norms” and “nurture and care.” As before, we cannot clearly explain why this is happening. Thus, the issues raised here will hopefully inspire further research.

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