

THE ROLE OF A FATHER IN THE OPINIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING THEIR FIRST EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHOICES

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Summary. The article presents the issue of the role and importance of the father in the first educational and professional choices made by young people graduating from primary education. Therefore, in addition to the individual factors discussed, the importance of environmental factors – the family, and in particular the father – was emphasized. The research undertaken using the diagnostic survey method was intended to present how its role is perceived in the opinions of the surveyed students. The survey allowed to present to what extent fathers are present in the first life choices of children and whether they accompany them in making decisions related to the choice of further education. In the research material obtained, the phenomenon of unwillingness to continue the father's career path was observed. The surveyed teenagers express their desire to pursue their own ideas related to the choice of profession, taking into account the fathers' opinion on this subject. The father is present in the decision-making process of the surveyed youth, however, he is not a reference point when planning an educational and professional career.

ROLA OJCA W OPINIACH MŁODZIEŻY DOKONUJĄCEJ PIERWSZYCH WYBORÓW EDUKACYJNO-ZAWODOWYCH

Słowa kluczowe: młodzież, wybory edukacyjno-zawodowe, ojciec

Streszczenie. W artykule została ukazana problematyka roli, znaczenia ojca w pierwszych wyborach edukacyjno-zawodowych podejmowanych przez młodzież kończącą kształcenie podstawowe. Dlatego też oprócz omówionych czynników indywidualnych, wyeksponowano znaczenie czynników środowiskowych – rodziny, a w szczególności ojca. Podjęte badania metodą sondażu

diagnostycznego miały na celu ukazać, jak w opiniach badanych uczniów postrzegana jest jego rola. Sondaż pozwolił przedstawić, na ile ojcowie są obecni w ich pierwszych wyborach drogi życiowej i czy towarzyszą w podejmowaniu decyzji związanych z wyborem dalszego kierunku kształcenia. W uzyskanym materiale badawczym zaobserwowano zjawisko braku chęci kontynuowania ścieżki zawodowej ojca. Badana młodzież wyraża pragnienie realizowania własnych pomysłów związanych z wyborem zawodu, biorąc pod uwagę opinię ojców na ten temat. Ojciec jest obecny w procesie decyzyjnym badanej młodzieży, natomiast nie stanowi punktu odniesienia przy planowaniu kariery edukacyjno-zawodowej.

Introduction

Graduates of primary schools face the decision as to the further direction of education, the choice of profession and the school that will prepare them for it. Graduates are probably making the most important life decision. The choice of a specific field of education and thus a profession will be a special moment in the decision-making process due to the accumulation of environmental factors on the one hand and individual factors on the other. In the post-industrial reality of the “risk” society, not only employment and the co-occurring variable form of employment become uncertain, but also the occupation that may disappear or change the scope of activities over the years. The following questions arise: Which profession should I choose so that it becomes a pass to the future if the present is diverse and even the near future is unpredictable? What can young people be guided by when they are in the process of identity formation at the age of adolescence? Who can help them in their lifetime choices?

Modern psychological concepts of choice of profession emphasize mostly human traits and factors as those conditioning the choice of profession. The constructed list of features is the result of research on the relationship between possession of specific features and criteria for professional selection. Among them there are features such as: intelligence, abilities, needs, interests, values, level of aspirations, stereotypes, expectations, tendencies to take risks. According to these concepts, a profession is only a starting point, while a human being is a source of data needed for job profiling¹. In addition, some of the concepts go a step further and emphasize the structure of preferences and professional

¹ A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Psychologiczne podstawy wyboru zawodu. Przegląd koncepcji teoretycznych*, KOWEŻiU, Warszawa 2003, s. 29–30.

interests. Hence, various diagnostic questionnaires are used in their measurement². In psychodynamic concepts, emphasis is put on the impact of unconscious processes of choosing a profession that serve to satisfy the individual's aspirations for self-fulfillment and give gratification in the form of internal satisfaction. As part of the aforementioned trend, Anne Roe (1984) introduces a concept showing the impact of parental relationships on career development. The degree of satisfaction of needs resulting from these relations influences the formation of dominant, often unaware motives of action³. A different view on the problems of choosing a profession is included in developmental psychological theories. Some of them determine the type of change based on two dimensions: abrupt changes versus continuous, qualitative changes versus quantitative changes. Taking into account the above-mentioned criteria, linear, phase, cyclic, sequential and mixed models have been created that address the issue of the mechanism of individual developmental changes in the process of choosing a profession⁴.

The majority of these criteria can be found in the theory of Donald Super. The author captures the overall development of the individual and appearing tasks to be implemented in individual development phases, emphasizes the processual nature of changes in achieving maturity to choose a profession and changes in the process of crystallization of professional interests. He sees the constitution of a professional identity throughout the whole life, even after reaching adulthood⁵. In the process of choosing a profession, it is impossible not to mention the psychological cognitive and social theories, which are based on the broadly understood concept of learning through observation and imitation. They treat people as the subject of cognition, processing and integrating information, independently creating a belief system and standards of behavior⁶.

For the purposes of this article, it is particularly useful to present the theory of professional decisions from an interdisciplinary, also sociological and pedagogical perspective.

Making professional decisions is conditioned not only by permanent individual personality traits but also, and perhaps above all, by variables of a social

² See: B. Bajcar, A. Borkowska, A. Czerw, A. Gąsiorowska, C.S. Nosal, *Psychologia preferencji i zainteresowań zawodowych. Przegląd teorii i metod*, Min. Pracy i Polityki Społecznej Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 2006, s. 10–43.

³ A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Psychologiczne podstawy...*, s. 56–62.

⁴ Ibidem, s. 74–76.

⁵ D.E. Super, *Psychologia zainteresowań*, PWN, Warszawa 1972.

⁶ A. Paszkowska-Rogacz, *Psychologiczne podstawy...*, s. 101–102.

nature. As Krystyna Lelińska says, “from a sociological point of view, the choice of profession, school and work is [...] a sequence of many partial educational, vocational and employment decisions accompanying the professional development of an individual, leading to stability in a specific professional role, in order to take a specific professional position in the social structure”⁷. This sequence of life events ranging from educational roles to professional roles or role depends on the intermediary variable which is the cultural capital of the individual obtained from parents. The sociological concepts of professional development cited by Lelińska show the special characteristics of the family as a source of values and, above all, aspirations conditioned by the status of the family⁸.

In the rich literature, starting from the 1960s and 1970s, the issue of differentiating the professional perspectives of young people depending on the social position of the family was discussed (Tyszkowa 1990, Bańka 1983, Kłoskowska 1965, Kupczyk 1978, Kozakiewicz 1984, Sowa 1990, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 1974, Wołkowski, Trawińska 1965, Jastrząb, Suszek, Kosel 1974, Wesołowski, Sarapata 1974, Kozakiewicz 1989, Szczepański 1973 and many others)⁹. Currently, the issue of the role, significance and influence of the family on future generations is also taken up in the socialization, educational, service, caring, reproductive, psychohygienic and economic dimensions¹⁰. The literature on the subject includes works by Adamski (2010), Brągiel (2017), Cudak (2016), Danielewicz (2010), Dyczewski (2002), Izdebska (2015), Janke (2009), Kawula (2007), Krzesińska-Żach (2007), Pospiszyl (2007), Sobiecki (2016), Sosnowski (2011), Tyszka (2003) and others.

At the interface of formal education and various family functions, its educational function comes to the fore. As Lucyna Hurło (2010) reports, this function includes, among others:

“Expanding children’s knowledge about nature, society, technology and culture, stimulating the development of children’s interests, passions and abilities”¹¹,

⁷ K. Lelińska, *Znaczenie socjologicznych teorii wyboru zawodu w pracy doradcy zawodowego*, [w:] H. Bednarczyk, J. Figurski, M. Żurek (red.), *Pedagogika pracy. Doradztwo zawodowe*, WSP ZNP, ITE, Radom 2004, s. 115.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ See: D. Bańka, *Psychologiczne uwarunkowania perspektyw zawodowych młodzieży. Studium roli rodziny*, UŚ, Katowice 1983, s. 39–44.

¹⁰ See: A.W. Janke, *Rodzina w badaniach pedagogicznych*, [w:] T. Pilch (red.), *Encyklopedia Pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, t. V, Żak, Warszawa 2006, s. 356–362.

¹¹ L. Hurło, *Znaczenie rodziny w życiu dziecka. Rzeczywistość i oczekiwania*, PROSPEKT, Olsztyn 2010, s. 97.

i.e. those individual factors that directly determine the path of further education, and “preparation to work by orientating the school path, shaping professional interests and creative attitude to work”¹².

Parents participate in career path programming. They decide about the educational path, its start, course and end. Hurlo emphasizes that this is possible thanks to the emotional bond of family members as a factor influencing the child’s personal patterns. According to her “the identification process, taking over the ways of behavior and attitudes from parents [...] is stimulated and animated by the person’s affection for the child”¹³.

The attitude of parents to the professional career of their children depends on wealth, but also on their preferred lifestyle. Tomasz Szlendak noticed that middle class representatives treat their own children as a kind of investment. In addition to the time devoted to the child, they invest in their skills and knowledge, which are necessary in the future adult professional life. This would translate into results in coping with the open labor market. The center of gravity is somewhat differently distributed in working-class and farming families. According to the author, parents “do not even think that a child can achieve a status higher than their own”¹⁴. Despite this, “children should study well, they should go to a good school, and then – if there is enough funds – study”¹⁵.

Comprehensive research on psychological analyzes of the role of the family in determining the professional perspectives of youth in the 1980s was carried out by Daniel Bańka. One of the aspects of the research was the role of professional family patterns in shaping the professional perspectives of young people. The author assumed the phenomenon of inheritance of the profession in families with a high social status and in families with a strong emotional bond. He assumed that the formation of specific professional interests takes place in the family home. “According to the assumptions, the phenomenon of the willingness of children to inherit the parents’ professions is quite common, as it covers 1/5 of the cases studied. With the increase in the social position of the family, the tendency to inherit professions increases”¹⁶.

¹² Ibidem, s. 97.

¹³ Ibidem, s. 127.

¹⁴ T. Szlendak, *Zaniedbana piaskownica. Style wychowania dzieci a nierówność szans edukacyjnych*, Instytut Spraw Społecznych, Warszawa 2003, s. 243.

¹⁵ Ibidem, s. 245.

¹⁶ D. Bańka, *Psychologiczne uwarunkowania...*, s. 159.

In addition, Henryk Pielka's study recognizes the close relationship between parents' education and the professions that require studying at a particular type of school. As a rule, children of parents with higher education chose general and technical high schools or vocational high schools. This also largely concerned the children of parents with secondary education. On the other hand, "the children of parents with basic vocational and primary education were sent mainly to basic vocational schools and partly to technical colleges or general secondary schools. Educational aspirations in this group were primarily held by children, not their parents"¹⁷.

The role of a father in the educational and professional choices of the child

Recognition of the social role can take place in the sociological and psychological trend. On the one hand, "the concept of social role is associated with the concept of social position (status). A social position is a way of positioning a person in a community [...] A social role is a set of rights and obligations related to a given position. [...] it is a pattern of behavior related to the position"¹⁸. On the other – psychological »the role is a spontaneous, free action of a person, conditioned by his individual, unitary characteristics«¹⁹.

The concept of the father's role in the modern world is becoming more and more difficult. This is primarily due to the diversity of family life forms, the modernization of the family, which multiformity is becoming an alternative to the nuclear family²⁰. Different understanding of the concept of fatherhood "is determined by the place occupied by a man in the family and by the relationships he develops with children. On this basis, we distinguish four types of paternity: biological, legally recognized, social, psychological [...]. The point of reference is no longer male – fatherly power but a family structure in which a man fulfills the role of a father"²¹.

¹⁷ H. Pielka, *Rodzina – wybór zawodu – szkoła*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny” XII, UAM, Poznań 2000, s. 102.

¹⁸ B. Szacka, *Wprowadzenie do socjologii*, Ofic. Nauk., Warszawa 2003, s. 144–145.

¹⁹ M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca w poglądach i planach życiowych młodych mężczyzn*, WSNHiD, Poznań 2013, s. 17.

²⁰ A. Żurek, *Przymus kreowania ról rodzinnych*, [w:] I. Przybył, A. Żurek (red.), *Role rodzinne. Między przystosowaniem a reakcją*, UAM, Poznań 2016.

²¹ A. Koroneou (red.), *Rola ojców. Rola ojców w równowadze życia zawodowego, rodzinnego i osobistego*, Ośrodek Badań nad Równością, Ateny 2007, s. 19.

Marta Majorczyk, when reviewing various approaches to understanding the role of the father, recognizes that the term “father” should be understood as a man who decided to fulfill the role of father in his life in relation to the child (to be a father), performs tasks and activities the purpose of which is ensuring the child’s survival and development (to fulfill parental duties). Performing the role of a father in this case will be a method (specific, because individual) of implementation of the developmental task, which is paternity, achieved by the man in the process of working on himself, the identity determined by the needs and personality of the child (fathering). At the same time, this means that this role will be very diverse due to the child’s age and time of its fulfillment²².

With regard to the above, the issue of being a father appears as an element of identity and the topic of becoming a father as “a series of practices and behaviors characterizing someone as a father”²³. According to Marta Majorczyk, there are two ways to fulfill the role of father: positive and negative – “a good father is the one who is simply physically and mentally present, available and close in the child’s life. Such a father is compassionate, caring, patient, consistent, firm and communicative towards the child”²⁴.

The concept of fatherhood often appears in the statements of the fathers themselves. Most of them understands fatherhood as a responsibility and authority, respect and recognition. Many equate the role of the father with the need to make decisions, ensure security, support and stability. We are dealing here with the traditional understanding of fatherhood²⁵. In addition, in the literature of the subject, the deformed role of the father is characterized, distinguishing the authoritarian, egalitarian father, the weak and the father of the supplier – otherwise an accidental viewer or father – phantom²⁶.

Tomasz Szlendak recognizes the changing role of the father observable since the early eighties. It takes place in connection with the phenomenon of mass participation of women in employment. A “new” fatherhood has appeared. According to the researcher, the so-called “new fathers” are those “who take care of children, take care of them much longer than the old ones and have a much

²² M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca...*, s. 24.

²³ A. Koroneou (red.), *Rola ojców...*, s. 20.

²⁴ M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca...*, s. 34.

²⁵ A. Koroneou (ed.), *Rola ojców...*, s. 115.

²⁶ M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca...*, s. 35.

greater impact on children than traditional fathers”²⁷. In the model of “four walls” presented by the author, in which men (fatherhood-marriage-professional work-running a house) are locked, there is also the role of a care provider and role model²⁸. Fathers want “children to have as many possibilities as possible and at the same time not be forced to choose [...]. They want children to make their own choices, but not make too many mistakes in life.”²⁹. In turn, Henryk Cudak draws attention to the father’s personality traits conducive to the intellectual development of the child. It would be “a rational and benevolent control over the child, upbringing and educational attitude, consistent behavior, skillful motivation of the child.”³⁰.

The thesis cited by Kazimierz Pospiszyl resulting from the research of J. Nash (doctoral dissertation at the University of Edinburgh) about the significant, desirable influence of the father on the child, says that “identification with the father and strong attachment to him is never harmful to child, while a strong emotional relationship with the mother, in some cases can clearly delay the child’s socialization process [...]”³¹.

According to Kazimierz Pospiszyl, the father’s important role appears in the context of the need for achievements:

“The need for achievements is one of the most important ones in the structure of human motivation, its proper formation depends primarily on the father’s attitude and his educational interactions”³². Further reviewing the results of American research, he indicates that fathers have a significant impact in particular on sons. The independent and entrepreneurial fathers “develop their sons’ need for achievements to a greater extent [...] they create a “cult of achievements” at home, which is passed to children and above all to their sons.”³³. Referring to the classic class division of society (“white” versus “blue collars”), he points out that not only entrepreneurship has a character that differentiates the need for achievement. Class affiliation and the material position acquired are also important. This is

²⁷ T. Szlendak, *Socjologia rodziny. Ewolucja, historia, zróżnicowanie*, Wyd. Nauk. PWN, Warszawa 2010, s. 447.

²⁸ Ibidem, s. 449.

²⁹ Ibidem, s. 448.

³⁰ H. Cudak, *Rola ojca we współczesnych rodzinach polskich*, [w:] M. Kątny, Ks. J. Oleszko (red.), *Ojciec na rozdrożu. Socjologiczne, pedagogiczne i kulturowe wymiary ojcostwa*, Apostolikum, Ząbki 2011, s. 7.

³¹ K. Pospiszyl, *Ojciec a wychowanie dziecka*, Żak, Warszawa 2007, s. 115.

³² Ibidem, s. 138.

³³ Ibidem, s. 139.

conducive to identification with the father and “additionally correlates with the high development of achievement needs in children, especially boys”³⁴. Also Henryk Cudak draws attention to the fact that “the influence of the father on the need for achievements in children, especially sons, is more significant when they have a high social and professional position”³⁵.

Discussing the issue of the father’s role in making the first professional decisions is related to the change of the father’s role in the modern family. As noted by Stanisław Kawula (2006), there was a change in the real dimension of the roles resting on parents. The observed changes take place in such areas as:

- a. Departing from the traditional dimension of ‘economic fatherhood’
- b. the birth of the dimension of ‘caring and social fatherhood’
- c. the emergence of a new dimension of the role – ‘parenting fatherhood’³⁶.

In addition, the author draws attention to the fact that “it is worth to empirically test the hypothesis about the sensitivity of the position and prestige of a modern father in the formation of the offspring’s life paths (e.g. in terms of success or failure)”³⁷. At the same time, the test results cited by priest Jan Śledzianowski show that as many as 70% of young people indicate a real and accepted role of their father in development at various stages of their life (also during adulthood)³⁸.

Own research methodology

The changing social reality and the associated change in the patterns of social roles assigned to their individual members forces reflection on their perception, scope and scale of impact on future generations. Undoubtedly, the role of the father is significant in influencing the offspring and can affect the decisions of young people leaving primary school. In numerous studies, the presented reports deal with the issues of parents’ educational and professional aspirations towards children (such as in the report from studies conducted in 2011 by the Educational Research Institute). It is interesting, however, how the importance

³⁴ Ibidem, s. 140.

³⁵ H. Cudak, *Rola ojca...*, s. 79.

³⁶ S. Kawula, *Kształty rodziny współczesnej. Szkice familologiczne*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2006, s. 137.

³⁷ Ibidem, s. 138.

³⁸ J. Śledzianowski, *Ach! Ten tata*, Kuria Diecezjalna, Kielce 2000, s. 111.

of their parents, and in this case the father, is perceived by the students making their first professional choices.

The uncertainty, fear of the unknown, lack of experience that accompanies the choice of a new school may lead young people to seek advice, but also create conditions for the special impact of significant people, connected with a strong emotional bond. When planning their own career paths, young people can rely on the experience, observed attitude and beliefs of their relatives, and as literature shows, the father has a special impact.

In the own research, the issue of the importance of the father's role in the opinion of students making professional choices was discussed and how this role is perceived by young people at the time of making their first decisions related to further education, in particular:

1. Youth views on the attractiveness of the father's profession.
2. Youth opinions about the father as a role model.
3. Declared students' attitudes towards their father in making their first life decisions.

The research used the diagnostic survey method using a specially designed questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 9 closed questions and three open-ended questions. The first four questions included basic information about the family (the first concerned its composition, number of siblings, the second asked about the decision structure in the family, i.e. who makes the most important decisions, the third required the answer to the question about education and the fourth about the father's profession). Further research areas addressed the following issues: youth views on the father's profession – question number 5 (What is your opinion about the father's profession?) and question number 8 (Would you like to do the same profession as your father?), attitude towards the father as a role model – question number 6 (Do you consider your own dad to be a role model?) and number 7 (What features of your own dad would you like to have?), the influence of the father on professional decisions – question number 9 (How often do you talk with your dad?), 10 (Have you talked with your dad about choosing education?) and 11 (If you have a problem or any trouble, can you count on your dad?) and finally question number 12 about the type of school chosen after graduating from junior high school. Question number 6 was taken from the publication of Marta Majorczyk³⁹.

³⁹ M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca...*, s. 25.

The study covered students graduating from primary education who were facing the choice of a further field of education. These students attended a school located in a large voivodeship city. In total, 124 surveys were conducted among students of third grade junior high school and eighth grade primary school. The age of students participating in the study was between 14 and 16 due to the fact that some of them started schooling at the age of six. They are students who finish the educational stage and are at such a point in their life path that requires the first decision related to the field of education.

Own research results

The social conditions in which young people grow are reflected in life choices, recognized authorities, and values. Of all the factors conditioning educational and vocational decisions, the most important are those related to significant people. It is the family (immediately after peers) that turns out to be most often mentioned as having influence on the choices made⁴⁰. The father, as traditionally the “head” of the family, can create a diverse relationship due to the composition of the family or their mutual kinship (so-called patchwork families – reconstructed or multi-family). Therefore, it is important in what family structure a young person is brought up.

Table 1. Family composition

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Both parents	103	83,1%	46	85,2%	57	81,4%
Just mom	14	11,3%	5	9,3%	9	12,9%
Second mom	1	0,8%	0	0,00%	1	1,4%
Just dad	2	1,6%	2	3,7%	0	0,0%
Second dad	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
No answer	4	3,2%	1	1,8%	3	4,3%
Total	124	100,0%	54	100,0%	70	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

⁴⁰ A. Klementowska, *Czynniki warunkujące podejmowanie decyzji edukacyjno-zawodowych przez gimnazjalistów (analiza wyników badań)*, „Problemy Profesjologii” 2016, nr 1, s. 130.

As one can see in the table above, students mostly have full families. Both parents bring them up (over 80%). Only 16 students are raised by a single parent, including two single fathers. Nearly half have one sibling, nineteen declare more than three siblings and a quarter are the only children. In addition, almost 60% indicate the possession of both grandparents, which gives multigenerational families and among the respondents only two people have only a grandfather.

Table 2. Family decision maker

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dad	14	11,3%	3	5,6%	11	15,7%
Mom	33	26,6%	18	33,3%	15	21,5%
Both parents	49	39,5%	24	44,5%	25	35,7%
All family members	23	18,6%	8	14,8%	15	21,4%
Kids	5	4,0%	1	1,8%	4	5,7%
No answer	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Total	124	100,0%	54	100,0%	70	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

In response to the next question, it was necessary to indicate who exercises power and makes decisions about the whole family, fulfills the role of the “head” of the family. According to the answers given, the advantage of families making joint decisions is perceived. Most families deal with a partnership type of relationship and both parents make decisions about everyone. Other responses show a significant advantage of mothers over fathers. If a parent makes a decision alone, the woman (mother) takes over the dominant role. Only in 14 families did the students demonstrate the patriarchal nature of the relationship in the family, in which the father is indicated as a decision-maker, thus having one-man influence on the affairs of the whole family. The difference in perception of the decision-making role of parents by boys and girls is interesting in the number of indications. In the opinion of girls, the role of mother is clearly marked, in boys this difference is less visible – as if fathers more often interfered in families with a son.

Table 3. Father's education

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher	44	35,5%	22	40,7%	22	31,4%
Higher vocational (diploma)	16	12,9%	4	7,5%	12	17,1%
Secondary	30	24,2%	14	25,9%	16	22,9%
Professional	13	10,5%	6	11,1%	7	10,0%
Primary	6	4,8%	0	0,0%	6	8,6%
No answer	15	12,1%	8	14,8%	7	10,0%
Total	124	100,0%	54	100,0%	70	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

Answers to the third question revealed that the fathers of the surveyed students mostly have higher education (Table 3). Significant over-representativeness of fathers with a university diploma may result from the specificity of the studied environment. The school attended by the surveyed students is located near a significant university center in a large voivodeship city. Fathers with vocational education have a small representation – only fourteen fathers graduated from industry schools, and among the surveyed boys there are only seven such fathers.

Vocational education is mostly associated with working on specifics: materials, devices or machines. Therefore, boys will not have the opportunity to experience specific activities and watch their fathers during their performance (low representativeness of fathers with vocational education). The currently introduced change in vocational education (since 2012 there has been a change in the Act on the education system), aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education, due to the lack of role models in the home environment may not be very effective. This is confirmed by the answer to the question about the declared path of education after graduating from junior high school (question number 12: What school are you going to choose after graduating from junior high school?). Most of the young people intend to continue their education in general high school (as many as 63 people declare such a choice), 29 people choose a technical secondary school and only 1 person plans to continue their education in an industry school. A large percentage of the undecided (25% of respondents did not provide an answer) may indicate an ongoing decision-making process and therefore the lack of a clear declaration.

Lack of unambiguous opinions and decision uncertainty also appears in the responses assessing the father's profession due to the attractiveness of the profession (question 5). The results of the responses are presented in the table below.

Table 4. The attractiveness of the father's profession in the opinion of students

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
It is of little interest	22	17,7%	10	18,5%	12	17,1%
It is very interesting	35	28,2%	12	22,2%	23	32,9%
I don't care	40	32,3%	16	29,6%	24	34,3%
I don't know, I don't know what dad does.	23	18,6%	13	24,1%	10	14,3%
No answer	4	3,2%	3	5,6%	1	1,4%
Total	124	100,0%	54	100,0%	70	100,0%

Source: own elaboration.

The surveyed teenagers are very critical of the attractiveness of their fathers' profession (Table 4). Only less than 30% find the parent's profession interesting. Indifference or total ignorance of the father's professional activities is declared by more than half of the respondents. It is interesting that as many as 24 boys considered their father's work completely indifferent and this is the highest result for individual indications.

Table 5. Willingness to perform the same profession as the father

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	14	11,3%	3	5,6%	11	15,7%
No	69	55,6%	33	61,1%	36	51,4%
I do not know	32	25,8%	15	27,7%	17	24,3%
No answer	9	7,3%	3	5,6%	6	8,6%
Total	124	100%	54	100%	70	100%

Source: own elaboration.

A complementary issue, being a consequence of the previous question, was the declaration regarding the desire to continue the father's profession (question 8). The answers of the surveyed students are presented in Table 5.

Only fourteen out of 124 students expressed a desire to continue their father's profession. Only 5% of girls and about 16% of boys were in this group. It follows that, despite some students perceiving the father's profession as interesting (see Table 4), there were some who did not intend to continue it. This is evidenced by the discrepancy between the choices about the attractiveness of the profession (for example, in the case of boys even 30% finds it attractive) and the actual declaration of continuation of the profession (for boys it is only about 16%). The remaining nearly 56% of the surveyed students do not plan to pursue the same profession, and 25% were unable to clearly define their attitude towards following the father's career. Thus, 81% of students express a negative or indifferent attitude towards the parent's profession.

Table 6. Comparison of opinions about attractiveness with the desire to continue the father's profession

Would you like to perform the same profession as your dad?	It is of little interest			It is very interesting		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Yes	0	1	1	2	8	10
No	7	8	15	5	7	12
I don't know	1	0	1	5	7	12
No answer	2	3	5	0	1	1
Total	10	12	22	12	23	35

Source: own elaboration.

The numerical comparison of the number of people expressing the opinion about the attractiveness of the father's profession with the desire to perform the same profession shows that while the negative perception of the profession is definitely consistently negatively determined, in the case of a positive opinion about the profession, the case turns out not so obvious. Here the declarations were clearly divided in half. Perceiving the attractiveness of the profession is not associated with a simultaneous desire to perform it in the future.

The next question was of evaluative nature (question 6). It concerned the issue of whether young people perceive their father as a role model. In earlier responses it is noted that young people are not going to continue their fathers' profession. However, do they still recognize their father as a model for themselves? It is interesting whether the boys declare a desire to be like their own fathers and whether the girls see the model of the father in them (and perhaps even the model of the future father of their own children). The results are shown in table number 7.

Table 7. Father as a role model in the students' opinion

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I think my dad is totally worth following. In the future I would like to be exactly like him.	23	18,6%	6	11,2%	17	24,3%
I think my dad is worth following. In the future I would like to act like him in most situations.	35	28,2%	16	29,6%	19	27,2%
I think my dad is partly a role model. I see in him many behaviors and features that I do not accept.	36	29,0%	16	29,6%	20	28,6%
I believe that my father has more features and behaviors that I don't accept.	12	9,7%	6	11,1%	6	8,6%
I don't think my dad is a good role model. In the future I would not like to be like him.	8	6,5%	6	11,1%	2	2,8%
I don't know if I consider my dad a role model.	6	4,8%	2	3,7%	4	5,7%
No answer	4	3,2%	2	3,7%	2	2,8%
Total	124	100%	54	100%	70	100%

Source: own elaboration.

In the literature of the subject, the father's influence on his son is particularly emphasized. A proper relationship with the father is a guarantee of successful socialization in the family to the role of father in the future⁴¹. Half of the boys surveyed evaluated the role of a father to be more or less worth following (sum of answers: I think my dad is totally worth following, and answers: I think my dad is worth following). For girls, identification with their father is not so obvious. Girls are much more critical about their own fathers. The percentage ratio is 13% lower for full acceptance of the father as a role model. Negative or partly

⁴¹ See: M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca...*

negative perceptions on performance of the role of a father appeared in 16% of students and spread more or less evenly according to gender (clearly negative assessment appeared slightly more often in girls). In general, higher evaluations can be found for students' positive beliefs about their own fathers. Sons especially value such features that are useful in fulfilling their professional role. In answer to the question in what he would like to be like his own father (question 7), there are such statements as: in accuracy at work, in running a company, in solving problems, resourcefulness, pursuit of the goal, rationality, but also in specific skills as in DIY or IT knowledge. In the statements of girls, on the other hand, there are features that emphasize social competences: in approaching people, family management, and in family and professional life. Girls appreciate such personality traits of their fathers as: honesty, caring, loyalty, family, goodness, helpfulness, father is a source of love for them (it is important for them how they show love to their family). Sometimes, they only see an effective employee in their fathers, valuing their pursuit of the goal, logical thinking, quick and rational decision making, and diligence. Significantly, in many (73) questionnaires there was no answer.

Socialization to perform social roles (including professional ones) is possible thanks to the parent's direct contact with the child. The opportunity to influence through a personal pattern is carried out even through a direct conversation, exemplary conduct, beliefs and judgments. Therefore, it is very important to enter into relationships with own child and create conditions for educational interactions. As Wioletta Ośkiewicz argues, "proper care, upbringing and socialization of the father towards the child result in their life activity, kindness to other people, compliance with social norms, adopting life values from the father, acquiring behavior consistent with the culture of family, local and social life"⁴². Today, the observed paternity crisis results, among others, from the fact that often busy, caught up with work, maintaining the material status of the family, fathers spend less time with their own children. Therefore, the next question concerns the frequency of contact of the surveyed students with the father (question 9) and then the feeling of support in solving difficult situations (question 11).

⁴² W. Ośkiewicz, *Rola ojca w oddziaływaniach wychowawczych w rodzinie*, „Pedagogika Rodziny” 2012, nr 2/3, s. 103.

Table 8. Frequency of conversations with father

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
We talk to each other every day	52	41,9%	23	42,5%	29	41,4%
We talk to each other several times a week	38	30,7%	15	27,8%	23	32,9%
Once a week, when he has time.	15	12,1%	6	11,1%	9	12,9%
Once every few weeks	5	4,0%	3	5,6%	2	2,8%
Very rarely	8	6,5%	5	9,3%	3	4,3%
No answer	6	4,8%	2	3,7%	4	5,7%
Total	124	100%	54	100%	70	100%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 9. Possibility of own father's support in solving a problem or trouble

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes, always every time	61	49,2%	24	44,5%	37	52,9%
Yes, but from time to time.	32	25,8%	14	25,9%	18	25,7%
Rarely, in exceptional situations	8	6,5%	4	7,4%	4	5,7%
I never ask my dad for help	18	14,5%	10	18,5%	8	11,4%
No answer	5	4,0%	2	3,7%	3	4,3%
Total	124	100%	54	100%	70	100%

Source: own elaboration.

The results contained in both tables (8 and 9) show similar values. Nearly a quarter of the surveyed youth have limited access to contacts with their father, and yet 83% live in a full family. Theoretically, contact with the father should be maintained. Despite this, only about 40% of students use this opportunity and contact their father every day. Then the majority can count on support in solving ad hoc problems – 63 people out of 124 respondents turn to their father for help often or from time to time.

Insufficient contact with the father during adolescence may negatively affect the attitudes presented in adulthood. In the literature on attitudes towards the father, young men accuse their fathers of lack of certain competences: “It’s about the lack of the ability to establish close relationships, lack of determination, lack of ability to solve problems, lack of discussion skills, lack of susceptibility to

change or masking feelings”⁴³. The results of own research confirm the trend. Young people do not have enough opportunity to get support from a significant person, establish bonds by overcoming obstacles together, they will not receive sufficient role models, and may be constituting their own identity (also professional) in opposition to existing patterns. Insufficient presence of the father (25% of students declare that they do not ask or very rarely ask for help from their father) may be conducive to loss and consolidation of the individual’s passivity.

The process of educational and professional orientation ends with a specific decision as to the direction and level of education. A young man, left alone in making choices, is exposed to an incorrect or inadequate decision. It is good if in the process of making life choices he can count on the support of the closest person, such as a father. That is why it is important for fathers to talk to their children about the educational paths they undertake (question 10: Have you talked with your dad about choosing a further direction of education?).

Table 10. Father’s opinion on the educational and vocational choices of young people

Responses	Total		Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Yes, he completely agrees with me.	75	60,5%	33	61,1%	42	60,0%
b. Yes, he doesn’t approve of my choice.	11	8,9%	6	11,1%	5	7,1%
c. No, we haven’t had time yet.	12	9,7%	3	5,6%	9	12,9%
d. No, he thinks it’s my business.	19	15,3%	10	18,5%	9	12,9%
No answer	7	5,6%	2	3,7%	5	7,1%
Total	124	100%	54	100%	70	100%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 10 above shows that most fathers share their kids’ choices. 60% of both boys and girls agree with the choice of education. It is worth recalling that most students do not intend to continue the profession presented by their father. They take a different educational path leading to a different profession. In the future, they limit the possibility of instrumental support in the form of specific knowledge or skills that could be acquired directly from a parent. Most fathers give their children the right to the decision as to which education to choose, which may also be an expression of rational, friendly control over the decision-making

⁴³ M. Majorczyk, *Rola ojca...*, s. 198.

process. Only 8% of fathers expressed dissatisfaction with their children's choices. Others are indifferent or uninterested.

Conclusions

Despite the changing conditions and patterns of social life, and in particular the role of the father in the family, it can be observed that the parent's position in the upbringing of the young generation is significant. The father is present in the life of a young person both passively (being a member – most students grew up in full families) and actively (for example, expressing an opinion as to the further direction and level of education). Thus, he meets the postulate that is present in the literature according to which, “the father should prepare his child to face possible dangers. Encouraging to be active, teaching to be responsible – these are the essential tasks in the process of upbringing”⁴⁴. The surveyed students notice the presence of the father, express strong opinions about the father's profession, attractiveness and the possibility of its continuing.

The students did not find the father's professions interesting, and even those who saw them as attractive did not intend to continue them. Although fathers mostly had higher education, the vast majority of young people do not intend to pursue the same profession as their father. No inheritance of professions is observed. For the surveyed youth, the father is not a professional role model, thus he does not become a source of professional knowledge. Students declare independent decision making, diverging from the father's professional tradition or professional experience. However, despite different plans for their own future, the respondents can count on the opinion of their closest parent (the vast majority had a conversation about choosing a school – as much as 70% of the respondents). There is also a noticeable attitude of own fathers observed by the students watching over the course of the decision. It is the father in the opinions of young people that is the source of knowledge about the outside world, the entity responsible for their aspirations by accepting their educational paths. The father is still considered as the one who has an impact on the need for achievements which is in accordance with the research results concerning the relation between the father's attitude towards his child and the child's school performance (e.g., Pospiszyl 1980, Kozak 1986, Sosnowski 2009, Plopa 1995).

⁴⁴ J. Lach, B. Szczupał, *Rola ojca w rodzinie*, „Edukacja i Dialog” 1998, nr 10, s. 51.

It is also worth noting that young people postpone the decision about choosing a particular profession. Most would like to go to general high school, thus the first professional decision will be taken only at the stage of choosing the field of study. This may indicate uncertainty and lack of determination. At the same time, young people know perfectly well what they do not want to choose, but it is also difficult for them to determine what they expect (observed lack of an explicit declaration as to the direction of education).

Only some sons declare that they would like to be like their father in having competences useful in the profession. In their own statements, they provide those traits that lead to professional success or are associated with professional activity. Nowadays, the father teaches boys how to behave like a man for – as it has been noticed by Jerzy Witczak – “The boy who has not a proper male role model in his family is in danger of coming up with the distorted idea of what it means to be »a true man«”⁴⁵. Girls pay more attention to social competences and personality traits conducive to intimacy. The family is the intimate world of loved ones and such features that promote contact in the family are appreciated in their fathers the most. This is what will enable them to properly form their femininity and the relationship with the father will be transferred to their “perception of the men’s world as well as to that of the external community and beyond the family”⁴⁶.

In a dynamically changing educational reality, it is not enough to adopt vocational education curriculum assumptions that would induce graduates of primary school to study in specific professions. It must be remembered that attitudes (including attitudes to the profession) are shaped in environments with significant emotional characteristics (and thus in families). The father as the “head” of the family, a source of knowledge about the outside world, values, social norms, as an inspirer and often the initiator of the educational aspirations of his own children, can influence not only the fate of his own children, but also a social example for others. Today, fathers are not a clear life signpost for children. The surveyed sons and daughters, at the stage of making the first choices, partially identify with their father. They often present an attitude of indifference or lack of knowledge about the parent’s professional activity. This lack of knowledge may result from the father being absent at home and absorbed by

⁴⁵ J. Witczak, *Ojcostwo bez tajemnic*, IWZZ, Warszawa 1992, s. 17.

⁴⁶ M. Styczyńska, *Wpływ nieobecności ojca na rozwój i zachowanie dziecka w wieku przedszkolnym*, [w:] M. Duda (red.), *Rodzina wobec zagrożeń*, PAT, Kraków 2008, s. 100.

his professional duties for – as it has been correctly noticed by Maria Janukowicz – “the father who is not present at home is an unknown father. Not present, which means, he is the one who cannot be there to cooperate with [...] to meet common objectives”⁴⁷.

This article was designed to present the role of the father in making the first educational and professional decisions, as seen by students leaving school. As it is observed from the research results, teenagers are not sufficiently covered with parental care. Children criticize their own parents, often signal lack of contacts or do not consider the father’s professional roles worth imitating.

Although the present research results are of limited range (they concern students and their fathers who live in a big regional capital city and a university centre), they allow to formulate preliminary recommendations that may be considered in the planning of vocational guidance provided on the first educational stage to support students in their occupational choices.

The direction of vocational guidance and counseling which are carried out at schools should, first of all, reflect the demands of the local labor market and be related to the anticipated economical changes. The modernization scheme which has been implemented in the vocational education in the Małopolskie voivodship is to broaden the educational offer and to persuade the youth to take up the professions that are based on knowledge and particular skills. Apart from taking into account the individual and environmental factors, it is the social role of the father that should be underlined and strengthened in order to meet the specific objectives in the process of guiding young people in regard to their educational choices. It would be then worth to point to the unique and, perhaps, the key role of fathers in those critical moments in the young people’s lives when they choose their professional career. It may also be recommended that vocational advisers should support fathers and their parenting role by including them in the decision process as well as by raising their awareness of the potential creative influence which they have on their children and on the decisions that they take.

⁴⁷ M. Janukowicz, *Czy współczesne ojcostwo, to ojcostwo nieobecne?*, „Małżeństwo i Rodzina” 2002, nr 1, s. 44.

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