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Labour migration as a form of expanding employee competencies

Abstract

Transformations of work take place as a result of many factors. One of them is the scientific and technical progress. Years ago, significant progress has been made through automation, followed by robotics, and now the computerization of production processes. There has been a massive shift from physical work to intellectual work, from simple to complex work. Over time, mental effort gained in importance to become dominant. Finally, included the creativity - also auto - creative efforts. This in turn caused a change in eligibility requirements based on experience and replacing them with those which are systems of motor skills and intellectual supported by scientific knowledge and relevant to the job requirements personality traits.

In Poland, a significant impact on the transformation of work have change of the political system. The political transformation has contributed to the occurrence of migration. During a stay in emigration takes place relatively deep reconstruction of the structure of knowledge and skills in the wider cultural transformation for the individual and society.

Key words: transformations of work, labour migration.

Transformations of work take place as a result of many factors. One of them is the scientific and technical progress. Years ago, significant progress has been made through automation, followed by robotics, and now the computerization of production processes. There has been a massive shift from physical work to intellectual work, from simple to complex work. Over time, mental effort gained in importance to become dominant. Finally, included the creativity - also auto - creative efforts. This in turn caused a change in eligibility requirements based on experience and replacing them with those which are systems of motor skills and intellectual supported by scientific knowledge and relevant to the job requirements personality traits.

The economy is looking for “ready” high-skilled workers. They are the ones in the long term, enriched by experience, decide on competitiveness of the company and the economy. Their level depends largely on the state of educational thought in the process of defining the transformation of learning and teaching and the organization of education and science¹.

Polish Language Dictionary defines qualifications as: education, preparation needed to practice some activities; talents, suitable for something². Developer of labor pedagogy, Tadeusz W. Nowacki qualifications defines as a system of mental and practical skills, based on the corresponding systems tailored interdisciplinary knowledge to deal effectively with different but specific classes of professional tasks and deliberately shaped human psychophysical features which condition effectively³.

So understood qualifications divided into: labor and professional assigning greater meaning to “qualifications of employees”, which consists of three types of partial qualifications. These are: physical and health qualifications, socio-moral and proper qualifications. Generally the professional qualifications understands the scope and quality of the preparation necessary to perform a profession, which consists of: the level of general education, professional knowledge, professional skills and especially the degree of skill and the ability to organize and improving work, talent and professional interests⁴.

In the structure of qualifications (knowledge) are distinguished by messages, skills and attributes necessary to perform psychophysical set of professional tasks.

The first component of qualifications – knowledge – indicates the importance of the broader knowledge in the work process. If the work will be understood as a series of interrelated professional tasks, in each case to carry out specific tasks you need a different scope and nature of knowledge. Nowadays, due to the development of techniques and technology, dominated jobs that require employees to appropriate intellectual preparation. What kind of knowledge, however, is it? For our discussion, assume that knowledge situates itself between the data and wisdom, which we refer to as the knowledge and experience (professional and life). It is more than information and data - is close to the news. It can be recognized as the effect of structuring and hierarchization of messages.

Skills understood as a willingness to deliberate action, based on some knowledge as to the objects and phenomena and the specific elements mas-

¹ S. M. Kwiatkowski, *Nauki pedagogiczne z myślą o randze intelektualnej działania ludzkiego*, [w:] *Nauki pedagogiczne w perspektywie społeczeństwa wiedzy i pracy*, t. I, Z. Wiatrowski, I. Pyrzyk (red.), Włocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna we Włocławku, Włocławek 2010, s. 65.

² *Słownik języka polskiego*, t. I, M. Szymczak (red.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, wyd. VIII, Warszawa 1993, s. 1096.

³ T. W. Nowacki, *Kształcenie i doskonalenie pracowników. Zarys andragogiki pracy*, Warszawa 1983, s. 312–316.

⁴ W. Okoń, *Nowy słownik pedagogiczny*, Warszawa 1996, s. 146.

tering tasks⁵. Skills relate to perform the duties of an intellectual nature (theoretical) or practical. Among the practical skills T stands Nowacki Skill level: elementary, functional and complex⁶. Knowledge, according to S. Kwiatkowski, is a kind of structure, where skills are based. The researcher also indicates the skills that do not have an adequate basis in the form of design knowledge, but are the result of imitation (procedural knowledge without understanding, that is, without elements of knowledge of cause and effect)⁷.

The degree of complexity of modern professional tasks will in the opinion of Stefan M. Kwiatkowski, changes inside the sets of skills. Skills recognized for some time specialized over time move towards the core for a given profession, and even the general vocational or over-professional. Currently expands the set of skills "for all". As a scholar cites examples of skills until recently considered to be specialized, such as: applying information technology to communicate effectively in foreign languages, or interpersonal skills⁸.

The last of the components forming a coherent system of qualifications are psychophysical features that include sensory motor skills, abilities and personality traits. The knowledge and skills gained during the school quickly outdated. This is a natural consequence of technical and technological progress. In this situation, they take on a special meaning⁹.

A kind of description of reality concerning the labor process are standards of professional qualifications. They set the standard minimum qualification requirements for the profession with respect to the types and levels of qualifications. Standard professional qualification is a description of the requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and psychophysical features¹⁰.

Levels of qualification form a hierarchical system of qualifications, reflecting the complexity and difficulty of professional tasks and the corresponding system of qualification requirements. Is usually adopted five-hierarchy - from of qualifications necessary to perform simple tasks (level 1) to the qualifications required in the performance of complex tasks, often embedded in problematic situations that require decisions of strategic importance for the company (level 5). Today is observed dominance of tasks that require of qualifications from the highest (5) level. This trend is observed in the vast majority of the competition as a result not only of progressive complexity of technological processes, but also strive to improve quality while increasing productivity¹¹.

As an educator, Stefan M. Kwiatkowski proposes considered together as the basis for theoretical knowledge, skills and application of knowledge as psy-

⁵ T. W. Nowacki, *Podstawy dydaktyki zawodowej*, PWN, Warszawa 1973, s. 184.

⁶ Ibidem, s. 191.

⁷ S. M. Kwiatkowski, *Nauki pedagogiczne z myślą o randze intelektualnej działania ludzkiego...*, *op. cit.*, s. 60.

⁸ Ibidem, s. 61.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem, s. 62.

¹¹ Ibidem.

chophysical characteristics (including in particular personality traits) as individual determinants trigger action¹².

On the one hand, the continuous transformation of the work make it necessary to keep up with them all, those who want to keep in the labor market – there the modernization work makes the employer forced to function in a highly competitive environment resulting from the process of globalization, on the other hand, all who under conditions of low unemployment want to develop professionally must improve their qualifications. A higher level of professional qualifications, often supported by new knowledge and skills is a great asset in the financial negotiations with the employer.

Working in the knowledge-based economy

T. L. Friedman phenomenon shows that, in his view, fundamentally transforming the global balance of power and opportunities in the twenty-first century. The axis of the concept is the thesis that the flattening of the world, through which the author understands the connection of people of different cultures and civilizations in the global networks. Removal of barriers, hierarchy, divisions and limitations is made possible by advances in technology. Friedman shows the 10 forces that in his opinion “flattened” the world. The first force is the collapse of the communist block and open up their economies to free market competition. As the cut-off date he assumes November 9, 1989, the day the Berlin Wall fell. This is the first approved by the author, a symbolic date defining the beginning of a new era, related to the acceleration of progress through the world is flatening. The second is the debut of the Netscape Web browser. The third power became the management software workflow. They allow the use of this resource, regardless of the time of day or the customer’s geographic location. Uploading a fourth force, in which both professional experts and amateurs-hobbyists develop innovative projects, usually on solutions that charge via the Internet available to other users, while still perfecting it. The fifth force is outsourcing relies on redirecting production to regions where cheaper workers can perform various simple tasks generally productive or service. The sixth power is directed chiefly to the opening of China to international cooperation and free trade with the rest of the world. The seventh is to build competitive advantage in the precise, reliable and fast supply chain. The strength is the eighth, insourcing relies on taking over part of the function of one company by another, that is better prepared for that and for whom this is only a minor deviation from the currently implemented strategy. Ninth force, which has its source in the resources and characteristics of computer networks, is based on the timelessness of information provided to the network. The tenth is the ability to communicate different devices with each other and with the man anywhere in the world. IT enables access to almost unlimited

¹² *Ibidem*, s. 59–60.

information resources, while providing unlimited opportunities to communicate and collaborate¹³.

The intellectual capital, especially its profit in the flattened world, on the one hand, it is the product of the other important factor in mental changes, decision-making and functional. The flattened world is expecting on such people, who can access information and make use of it in the form of implementation of the different objectives and tasks, through acquired skills and constantly improved in order to claim the championship in dealing with the world of nature, culture, science and technology and with others and with himself¹⁴.

We can of course argue that the balance of forces / factors that pointed to the well-known American journalist, based only on their own observations and thoughts, is the cause of structural and functional changes of modern businesses, but we must note that the principles of the knowledge-based organization and functioning of the seen from the perspective of the organization of industrial significantly different from each other.

Knowledge-based organizations, inter alia, exhibit greater productivity with less employment, observes A. Bańka¹⁵. As a result of the restructuring, the nature of work is changing. Working with well-defined tasks and the responsibilities to the organization, disappears. The employee has the flexibility to move from one job to another. It is not easy, because every change job training is associated with new or modified skill. It is therefore a continuous process involving permanent widening and deepening of knowledge and the integration of the 'new' knowledge of existing skills to their gradual transformation¹⁶. Boundaries between activities performed individually and collectively are blurred. Becomes the dominant notion of the concept of "work areas". The categories around which operates a modern organization, are "competence". Knowledge, skills and attitudes are matched to the individual tasks. As a result, people do "task areas", to which they are best prepared. The competence of employees are the basis of goodwill, as generate income in the form of intangible assets (knowledge, image etc)¹⁷.

If competence is becoming a key concept of the new economy let us be precise how it should be understood. Polish Language Dictionary defines competence as: terms of reference, powers of attorney, the scope of the affairs of

¹³ T. L. Friedman, *Świat jest płaski. Krótka historia XXI wieku*, tłum. T. Hornowski, REBIS, Poznań 2006.

¹⁴ K. Wenta, *Kapitał intelektualny w społeczeństwie wiedzy*, [w:] *Nauki pedagogiczne w perspektywie społeczeństwa wiedzy i pracy*, t. I, Z. Wiatrowski, I. Pyrzyk (red.), Włocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna we Włocławku, Włocławek 2010, s. 243.

¹⁵ A. Bańka, *Nowy wymiar pracy i organizacji w społeczeństwie wiedzy. Wyzwania dla psychologii i pedagogiki*, [w:] *Nauki pedagogiczne w perspektywie społeczeństwa wiedzy i pracy*, Z. Wiatrowski, I. Pyrzyk (red.), t. I, Włocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna we Włocławku, Włocławek 2010, s. 72.

¹⁶ S. Kwiatkowski, *Nauki pedagogiczne z myślą o randze...*, *op. cit.*, s. 61.

¹⁷ A. Bańka, *Nowy wymiar pracy...*, *op. cit.*, s. 72.

an institution or subject to a specific body, etc.; the scope of one's knowledge, skills and responsibility¹⁸. In the Dictionary labor pedagogy 'competence' is understood as given on the basis of appropriate qualifications range of powers, and authority to act and decide and make judgments in a particular area. One is competent when it has the power to act and qualifications for it¹⁹. For the purposes of this paper I defined the competence as a team capacity to use knowledge, skills and attitudes to accomplish tasks at a designated level of employee and accepting responsibility for them.

According to A. Bańka, replacing the traditional human capital, based on qualifications, new – based on competence, leads to a situation in which employers are interested in observable behavior of workers – providing immediate return on labor costs, and not hidden potential, which are abilities. Competence give employers a direct return on investment, which is the very fact of employment of the employee²⁰.

Labour migration as a form of competence development

In Poland, a significant impact on the transformation of work have change of the political system. From a centrally controlled, command-and- distribute system go to a market economy. Such changes profoundly impinge on education. You have to make a completely different educational goals, putting the focus on the formation of worker characteristics such as: initiative, considering the competition for the normal and the willingness to risk, responsibility for yourself and loved ones, learning throughout life, readiness to change their profession, occupational mobility, etc. but what about those who were prepared to work under the previous system of education?

The political transformation has contributed to the large scale of a particular phenomenon of migration. Hundreds of thousands of our countrymen after 1989 moved to work in Western Europe and overseas. In the years 1989–2003 mainly for economic reasons temporarily or permanently emigrated from Polish approximately 3 million people. Another 2–3 million after joining the European Union. Migration of this scale and nature is the phenomenon not typically Polish. In the last fifteen years in the Europe and Central Asia migrated about 35 million people (World Bank Report). For example, 13 million people migrated to Russia (recall that in 1989, 28 million people lived in other republics than the republic of birth – approximately 10% of the population of the USSR). Migration of people in Ukraine is already impressive, and more recently has been in even greater intensity.

¹⁸ *Słownik języka polskiego*, t. I, M. Szymczak (red.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Wyd. VIII, Warszawa 1993, s. 977.

¹⁹ T. W. Nowacki, K. Korabiowa-Nowacka, B. Baraniak, *Nowy słownik pedagogiki pracy*, Warszawa 2000, s. 101.

²⁰ A. Bańka, *Nowy wymiar pracy...*, *op. cit.*, s. 73.

The data are far not accurate due to the high dynamics of the phenomenon and unwillingness of immigrants to the official register in the new countries. Let us remember that in some countries the labor market is still limited or closed. In terms of the democratic system is difficult to grasp the real scale of this phenomenon. Emigration in the Polish edition are mainly men with vocational education. Also university graduates leave the country, for whom the western opening of labor markets seems to be lifetime opportunity. Unfortunately immigrants who have higher education rarely perform learned or similar profession. Usually reach secondary sectors of the labor markets and make work in construction, agriculture, hotel and household services. For them it is probably an internship, during which acquire certain skills and habits, but it happens usually far outside the obtained during the study of knowledge. Things are different in the case of graduates of vocational schools. They usually work in professions and have learned on the western labor market access to the latest technologies significantly increase their competence. Their return is easier and often only determined to create the jobs and ensuring the expected salary.

Functioning in a completely new cultural conditions usually connected with considerable stress, strong motivation and diligence contributes to broadly understood development. Even when the immigrant does not perform work in their profession, they acquires through contact with other cultures work new knowledge, new experiences, skills, habits. Shaping their own value system modeled on the existing values in the new environment. This is particularly important because the previous system has serious disturbances in the system of Polish worker. Values such as respect for labor, respect for the right job, respect for fundamental moral principles will bear fruit in the future, after the return and start working in the country. Under conditions of prolonged, several years abroad immigrant trying to learn new skills or get a job in a learned profession in the country. This is often associated with the implementation of the new and unknown technologies through self-study or as part of institutionalized education. Strong motivation accelerates this process very well.

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In conclusion, during a stay in emigration takes place relatively deep reconstruction of the structure of knowledge and skills in the wider cultural transformation for the individual and society.

The mobility of highly skilled, competent employees is inevitable. It should, however, affect its scale and strengthen the tendency to return migration. It is crucial to creating suitable working conditions and professional development. Ireland's experience shows that the number of returns depends to a large extent on the opening of the economy and the development of policies to promote domestic investment.

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