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Izabela Wielewska

Knowledge as a Factor of Development of Human Resources in Post-State Agricultural Farm Areas

Key words: *post State Agricultural Farm areas, knowledge, development of human resources, education, activity on the job market*

Abstract: The aim of the research was to gain information on the structure of the knowledge deposit among residents of post-SAF areas. It is the level of the engagement of the worker in broadening his own knowledge that frequently determines the survival of the organization on the market and its development. The research was carried out among residents of post-SAF areas in *Pomorskie* province, in August 2009. The method employed was a diagnostic survey. Thirty questions were asked to 185 interviewees of various age. The survey included 24 subject questions and 6 personal questions. The participants of the survey were residents of 5 post-SAF villages in *Pomorskie* province. The majority of the interviewees were women (55.1%). The age of the interviewees – 18-60 years old. The results of the survey show that there is a high dependence between the age of the surveyed and the level of their education. Persons under 35 had much higher education than those between 36 and 60 years old. This shows an increase in the significance of possessed education. Persons with university degrees usually have a steady source of income or regular odd jobs. Those residents with a lower level of education have problems finding jobs. Some of them attend qualification courses organized by local Job Offices. They have exhausted all due unemployment benefits and finally understood that without new skills and deepening their knowledge they have serious problems finding jobs. Also, young persons admitted that it was worth attending courses and trainings, which are organized with the use of activating methods or as workshops. They allow the participants to present themselves in practice. Continuous improvement in competence and qualifications is conducive to the development of human resources in rural areas.

Introduction

A contemporary young person who wishes to find employment, but also a worker who wishes to stay on the market, should not only have sufficient load of knowledge but also an ability to use and create knowledge. Knowledge has become a significant index of success on the ever-competitive market. Knowledge

must be taken over and imitated. This is conducive to improvements of production processes, management, marketing activity, etc. This, in turn, generates the necessity to continuous studying, taking over knowledge from external sources, its changing and constant renewing. Possessing sufficient knowledge resources has become a contemporary must. Recruitment of workers and their employment in a company or organization is a process of managing people and transforming their knowledge into the value of the company, through being more competitive. The learning organization is based on the obvious grand sum of knowledge which particular workers possess. This knowledge is continuously enriched and developed, and then made available to the company.

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Knowledge and the Development of Rural Areas

Knowledge must be looked on as an aggregate of information and skills in a given field, acquired by learning and experiencing. Information is part of knowledge articulated by means of language or other code. Knowledge is much broader than that and is superior to data and information, although it is based upon them. Knowledge is information combined with experience, interpreting and concluding. If information has more of a descriptive and historical character, then knowledge may pertain to future situations and arise from hidden premises (Bartkowiak, 2005, p. 409).

The two notions (knowledge and information) are interchangeable; however, there are at least 4 reasons why it is important to distinguish between them:

– unlike information, knowledge concerns belief and expectations,

– knowledge is concerned with actions whilst information confirms their occurrence,

– knowledge is more contextual and relative than information,

– knowledge, unlike information, is a human domain (Bartkowiak, 2005, p. 409).

Knowledge is the application of information in practice. It is understood that data are all kinds of numbers, words, images. They constitute a raw material which, only after proper processing, gains meaning to the organization and becomes information. Knowledge, on the other hand, as mentioned before, is information of specific application in everyday practice. (Sawicki, 2003, p. 40).

Literature subdivides knowledge into:

1. Available knowledge (or formal) – knowledge that is organized, systematized, stored; knowledge that can be stored and carried in many ways, e.g., in books, reports, patents. It is characterized by the ease of flow between the organization and its workers.

2. Quiet, hidden knowledge (or informal) – knowledge that is by nature inseparably connected with people and results from their talents, skills and experiences; it is a good of special kind and therefore it is difficult to be described and presented as a set of rules, regulations or procedures – thus hard to measure.[1]

The dominating role of knowledge towards other resources (work, land and capital) is explained by special qualities of this resource – first of all its inexhaustibility, simultaneousness and non-linearity. Not only does knowledge not wear away, but it also gains value with time, is ubiquitous and accessible at all times. Using even a small fragment of it may bring about success, although even extensive knowledge does not guarantee success (Matejuk, 2005, pp. 12–13)

The development of rural areas has now become a key problem as it concerns 93% of Poland's area and affects 38% of the total population, which amounts to 15 million people. Poland has strong rural and agricultural background. The population of rural areas has not changed since 1980 and shows long-term stability. In 1988 there was an increase in the number of people closely associated with agricultural production (Harasimiuk i Rodzoś, 2004, p. 148). This required some activation of rural areas. Mainly post-State Agricultural Farm areas are concerned here. The problem is the low level of knowledge among residents of those areas, which shows not only in the low level of education (especially among those in the second stage of productive age), but also in the low level of professional and vocational activity.

This phenomenon is described, among others, in the research of M. Adamowicz and A. Nowak, who argue that 'it is often said that there are obstacles in the development of rural areas; one of the most important obstacles is the low level of education and activity of rural residents. The differences in the level of education in the city and the country have also been confirmed in the results of the national census of 2002. These results show clear disproportion in the level of education between residents of urban areas and those of rural ones. Whilst only 4.3% of the rural populations hold university degrees, the percentage in the urban populations amounts to nearly 14%.

As far as the high school education is concerned, the difference is as much as 16.2% to the advantage of the city. In the country, 5% of the population still do not even have elementary education, but this is 6.2% less than in 1988' (Adamowicz and Nowak, 2004, pp. 299–300).

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[1] Causes of the increase in the significance of knowledge, www.google.pl/search?client=firefox-a&rls=org. (legal state on 21.09.2009).

Analysis of own Research

Polish agriculture and rural areas, especially post-SAF areas, considerably fall behind the level of the EU countries in terms of development.

The aim of the research was to gain information on the structure of knowledge resources among residents of the post-SAF areas and what impact knowledge has upon the development of human resources in those areas.

185 residents of post-SAF areas took part in the research, including residents of such post-SAF villages and settlements as: Nieżychowice and Chojnaty (County Chojnice), and Czarna Dąbrówka, Suchora, Dretyń (County Bytów). The surveyed population included 102 women (55.1%) and 83 men (44.9%).

Table 1. Age of the surveyed

No.	Age	Women		Men		Total	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
1	18–25 years	5	4.9	12	14.5	17	9.2
2	26–35 years	44	43.1	32	38.5	76	41.1
3	36–45 years	29	28.4	20	24.1	49	26.5
4	46–55 years	18	17.7	12	14.5	30	16.2
5	56–60 years	6	5.9	7	8.4	13	7.0
Total		102	100.0	83	100.0	185	100.0

Source: own research.

The two largest groups of the surveyed population were persons between 26 and 35 years old, both women and men (41.1%), and persons between 36 and 45 years old (26.5%). The smallest group were those of persons between 56 and 60 years old (7%) and those between 18 and 25 years old (9.2%).

Table 2. Age versus education among the surveyed

No.	Education Age	Elementary		Vocational		High school		University		Total	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
1	18–25 years	-	-	2	2.2	3	5.8	12	50.0	17	9.2
2	26–35 years	1	6.2	45	48.4	23	44.2	7	29.2	76	41.1
3	36–45 years	3	18.8	26	27.9	16	30.8	4	16.7	49	26.5
4	46–55 years	5	31.2	14	15.1	10	19.2	1	4.1	30	16.2
5	56–60 years	7	43.8	6	6.4	-	-	-	-	13	7.0
Total		16	100.0	93	100.0	52	100.0	24	100.0	185	100.0

Source: own research.

The largest group among the surveyed were persons with vocational education. There were 93 such persons, which constitutes 50.3%. The next group were persons with high school education – 52 or 28.1%. The smallest-sized groups included university graduates – 24 people or 13% and those with only elementary education – 16 people or 8.6%. The data in Table 2 clearly shows that persons under 35 years of age possess considerably higher education level than those between 36 and 60 years of age.

Professional activity denotes remunerable engagement of physical force and human skill in the work process, thanks to which material or non-material goods are created (Liniewski, 2006, p. 91). More broadly, employment is defined as professional activity expressed by remunerable engagement of physical force and human skill in the work process, thanks to which material or non-material goods are created that satisfy the needs of society. Employment fulfils important, closely related functions:

– economic – being a factor of national economic growth;

– profitable – as the most important source of people's income;

– social – by contributing to the realization of the society's need for work (Liniewski, 2006, p. 131).

Table3. Activity on the job market

No.	Type of professional activity	Details	
		number	%
1	permanent job, odd jobs	91	49.2
2	no job	61	33.0
3	unemployment benefit	19	10.3
4	school	14	7.5
Total		185	100.0

Source: own research.

As the research shows, the activity among those surveyed is diverse. Part of the surveyed are still at school (7.5%), thus not working. Another 10.3% receive unemployment benefits. 49.2% have steady or odd jobs, out of which 17.9% are employed in agriculture. The remainder work in factories and institutions unrelated to agriculture. Out of 185 surveyed residents of post-SAF villages 33% are out of work.

Those residents who have low education have problems finding a job (15.1%). Another reason for the shortage of work is the lack of appropriate qualifications, which arises from the gap between qualifications and the demand on the job market.

The higher the education of a person, the better chance to take a higher position in the professional life and the higher probability of avoiding long-term

unemployment. Lack of qualifications or their low level decrease these chances proportionally.

Table 4. Potential advantages arising from the improvement in qualifications

No.	Advantages	Details	
		number	%
1	employment	52	28.1
2	higher salary	87	47.0
3	increased educational chances	23	12.4
4	better mobility on the job market	17	9.2
5	no opinion	6	3.2
Total		185	100.0

Source: own research.

The surveyed (96.7%) have noticed potential benefits arising from the improvement in qualifications. First of all they think that this is in relation to higher salaries. This is the opinion of 47% of the interviewees. A little more than 12% claim that they have better educational opportunities thanks to their own education, and a 9.2 % assume that they have better mobility on the job market.

I have deemed important the interviewees' willingness to take part in training. Generally, this willingness to retrain was declared by 41.1% of the interviewees. They claimed that they were ready to retrain at any given time.

Table 5. Willingness of the interviewees to take part in training

No.	Training	Details	
		number	%
1	vocational training, qualification courses	79	42.7
2	computer courses	28	15.1
3	foreign languages	59	31.9
4	workshop training	19	10.3
Total		185	100.0

Source: own research.

The interviewees are unanimous: extra qualifications, or occasionally a complete change of profession, facilitate finding an interesting and well-paid job.

As many as 42.7% of the surveyed are able to take up training. Another 15.1% expressed their willingness to train in computers, and 31.9% in foreign languages whose knowledge is considered to be an inherent attribute of contemporary man. Training in foreign languages was interesting mostly for young persons and those already working.

Specialist courses – training, language and vocational courses – are all becoming more and more popular.

Knowledge is an experience that depicts the world (objects, other people and ourselves) as the subject of our causative actions. The intention of this knowledge, or its problem motive, is the question of the possibilities of reaching goals set by man: what can be checked and how in order to transform the world according to the goals that we set? In fact, the question concerns how technological rule of the world can be expanded; how the world can be subject to fuller and fuller control in order to make it manageable more easily and better serving our purposes (Kwieciński and Śliwerski, 2004, p. 299).

Table 6. Accessibility of education among residents of the post-SAF areas

No.	Accessibility	Details	
		number	%
1	worse material situation	92	49.7
2	considerable distance from educational centres	68	36.8
3	no ambition	21	11.3
4	no willingness	4	2.2
Total		185	100.0

Source: own research.

Accessibility of education among residents of the post-SAF areas shows that they consider their own position financially worse (49.7%). Long distance to the nearest educational canters also seems to be an obstacle here (36.8%).

The process of individual openness to new intellectual, cultural and aesthetic trends, expressed in intense acquisition of knowledge from outer sources, seems to have an increasing meaning for the development of units and organizations (areas). The assimilation of new norms, expressions, notions and standards (which constitute the material for current states of organized awareness) happens in the situation of convergence of economical views and emerging of the standard of economical culture that is maximum productivity-oriented. This is why the intense assimilation of information from the environment (in this case the post-SAF areas) is conducive to strengthening the presence and interaction of modern values, norms, standards and beliefs within the organization (in this case the post-SAF) – the newer the knowledge, the more saturated it is with the priority idea of productivity. (Panasiewicz, 2005, p. 4).

Table 7. Education and impact on later life of the interviewees

No.	Impact strength	Details	
		number	%
1	very strong	32	17.3
2	strong	55	29.7
3	weak	41	22.2
4	very weak	39	21.1
5	no opinion	18	7.7
Total		185	100.0

Source: own research.

Among the surveyed, 47.6% think that education does have some impact on their later life, whilst over 43% think otherwise. The remaining 7.7% did not have an opinion.

Conclusion

The issues covered in this article merely touch the multi-aspect subject. They only show selected aspects of the presented range and allow to draw the following conclusions:

In the case of the research individuals under 35 had much higher education than those between 36 and 60 years old. Thus it can be concluded that young people appreciate the value of education and its impact on professional activity.

Residents' activity on the job market is not satisfactory as 33% of the surveyed are out of work. They say that the main reasons for unemployment are low level of education and/or education unsuitable for the needs of the job market.

Interviewees are unanimous that extra qualifications, or even a complete change of profession, facilitate finding an interesting and well-paid job. They show willingness to retrain or improve their qualifications. There is a noticeable increase in the motivation such as the certainty of the job, avoiding unemployment and financial benefit.

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WIEDZA JAKO CZYNNIK ROZWOJU ZASOBÓW LUDZKICH NA TERENACH POPEGEEROWSKICH

Słowa klucze: *tereny popegeerowskie, wiedza, rozwój zasobów ludzkich, wykształcenie, aktywność na rynku pracy*

Abstrakt: Celem badań było uzyskanie informacji na temat, jak kształtują się pokłady wiedzy mieszkańców terenów popegeerowskich i jaki jest wpływ wiedzy na rozwój zasobów ludzkich na tych obszarach. Poziom zaangażowania pracownika w poszerzanie wiedzy decyduje często o przetrwaniu organizacji na rynku i jej rozwoju. Badania przeprowadzono wśród mieszkańców terenów popegeerowskich województwa pomorskiego w sierpniu 2009 roku. Metodą badawczą był sondaż diagnostyczny. Do 185 badanych w różnym wieku skierowano ankietę składającą się z trzydziestu pytań. Ankieta składała się z części merytorycznej (24 pytania) i metryczki (6 pytań). W badaniach uczestniczyły osoby zamieszkujące 5 popegeerowskich wsi województwa pomorskiego. Wśród ankietowanych przeważały kobiety (55,1%). Wiek ankietowanych kształtował się w przedziale 18 – 60 lat. Wyniki przeprowadzonych badań wskazują, że istnieje wysoka zależność między wiekiem badanych a poziomem ich wykształcenia. Osoby do 35 roku życia legitymowały się znacznie wyższym wykształceniem niż ankietowani w przedziale wiekowym 36–60 lat. Wskazuje to na wzrost znaczenia posiadanego wykształcenia. Osoby z wykształceniem wyższym magisterskim i wyższym zawodowym utrzymują się przede wszystkim ze stałej pracy lub pracują na umowę zlecenie. Mieszkańcy terenów popegeerowskich o niższym poziomie wykształcenia mają problemy ze znalezieniem pracy. Część z nich uczęszcza na kursy kwalifikacyjne organizowane przez urzędy pracy. Wyczerpali już oni wszelkie zasiłki im przysługujące i wreszcie zrozumieli, że bez nowych kwalifikacji i poszerzania horyzontów swojej wiedzy nie znajdą zatrudnienia. Także osoby młode przyznały, że warto uczestniczyć w różnego rodzaju kursach i szkoleniach. Największym zainteresowaniem cieszą się kursy i szkolenia, które organizowane są metodami aktywizującymi i w formie warsztatów. Pozwalają one zaprezentować się uczestnikom w praktyce. Podnoszenie kompetencji i kwalifikacji sprzyja rozwojowi zasobów ludzkich na wsi.