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# Parents' Pedagogical Culture as a Factor in Shaping and Strengthening Resilience in Children

## Kultura pedagogiczna rodziców jako czynnik sprzyjający kształtowaniu i wzmacnianiu rezyliencji u dzieci

**KEYWORDS**

culture, parents' pedagogical culture, resilience; educational awareness, pedagogical knowledge

**ABSTRACT**

Socio-cultural changes, on the one hand, create development opportunities, and, on the other hand, pose a threat and force the need for change. Modern man, in order to keep up with the pace of life, must respond to changes, adapt to them and actively participate in them. It becomes important for him/her to acquire new skills. Therefore, there are new expectations and requirements for families upbringing the youngest generation. In this perspective, the phenomenon of resilience is revealed, which can be a way of adapting to changing circumstances and foster openness to modification under the conditions of emerging barriers and unforeseen life events. The pedagogical culture of parents is a phenomenon that deserves special attention, since, depending on its level, it can contribute to the child's education, well-being and success in life, or to his/her failure. The purpose of the article is to scientifically reflect on the pedagogical culture of parents in the context of the formation of children's resilience which can be a source of building and maintaining their psychological strength and well-being. The following research problem was formulated: how can the structural elements of parents' pedagogical culture contribute to the formation and strengthening of children's resilience? In order to achieve the formulated goal, a synthetic-analytical review of the literature relevant to the issue in question was used. The analyses primarily refer to J. Wilk's depiction of parents' pedagogical culture and psychological and pedagogical concepts of resilience.

**SŁOWA KLUCZE**

kultura, kultura
pedagogiczna
rodziców,
rezyliencja,
świadomość
wychowawcza,
wiedza
pedagogiczna

**ABSTRAKT**

Przemiany społeczno-kulturowe z jednej strony stwarzają szanse roz-
wojowe, a z drugiej stanowią zagrożenie i wymuszają konieczność
zmiany. Współczesny człowiek, aby nadążyć za tempem życia, musi
reagować na zmiany, adaptować się do nich oraz aktywnie w nich
uczestniczyć. Ważne staje się nabycie nowych umiejętności. Dlatego
pojawiają się nowe oczekiwania i wymagania związane z wychowa-
niem rodzinnym najmłodszego pokolenia. W tej perspektywie ujaw-
nia się zjawisko rezyliencji (*resilience*), które może być sposobem na
dostosowanie się do zmiennych okoliczności oraz sprzyjać otwartości
na modyfikację w warunkach pojawiających się barier i nieprzewidzi-
anych wydarzeń życiowych. Kultura pedagogiczna rodziców jest zja-
wiskiem, które zasługuje na szczególną uwagę, ponieważ w zależno-
ści od jej poziomu może przyczyniać się do dobrostanu oraz sukcesu
życiowego i edukacyjnego dziecka lub do jego niepowodzeń. Celem
artykułu jest naukowa refleksja nad kulturą pedagogiczną rodziców
w kontekście kształtowania rezyliencji u dzieci, która może być źród-
łem budowania i utrzymania ich psychicznej odporności i dobrostanu.
Postawiono problem badawczy: W jaki sposób elementy strukturalne
kultury pedagogicznej rodziców mogą przyczyniać się do kształtowa-
nia i wzmacniania rezyliencji dziecka? Dla realizacji postawionego celu
zastosowano syntetyczno-analityczny przegląd literatury istotnej dla
podejmowanej problematyki. Dokonane analizy odwołują się przede
wszystkim do ujęcia kultury pedagogicznej rodziców przez Józefa Wil-
ka oraz psychologicznych i pedagogicznych koncepcji rezyliencji.

## Introduction

The civilisation transformations taking place in various areas of life, on the one
hand, create opportunities for development and, on the other, pose a threat and force
the need for change. In order to keep up with the pace of life, which implies the
development of technology and knowledge and the emergence of new facts and phe-
nomena in the field of culture, a person must react to changes, adapt to them and
actively participate in them. It is becoming important to acquire new skills relevant
to the contemporary reality. Therefore, there are new expectations and requirements
related to the upbringing of the youngest generation, which are placed on educa-
tional environments, including, and perhaps above all, on the family. This perspec-
tive reveals the phenomenon of *resilience*[1] which may be a way for a person to adapt

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1    Wioletta Junik (2012) suggested that scientific publications in Polish should use the original term
*resilience* or a Polonised version of "rezyliencja", as there is no term in Polish that fully corresponds to the
essence of the phenomenon. This article in the Polish language version uses the version "rezyliencja".

to changing circumstances and foster openness to modification under conditions of emerging barriers and unforeseen life events, where risky decisions have to be made. The aim of this article is to scientifically reflect on parents' pedagogical culture in the context of shaping resilience in children, which can be a source for building and maintaining their psychological strength and well-being. The research problem posed was: How can the structural elements of the parents' pedagogical culture contribute to the formation and strengthening of resilience in the child? A synthetic-analytic review of the literature relevant to the issue in question has been used to fulfil the objective set. The analyses refer primarily to the parents' pedagogical culture from the perspective of Józef Wilk (2021) as well as psychological and pedagogical concepts of resilience.

## Resilience: Power to Cope With Difficulties

The concept of resilience (Latin *resilire* – reflection, recoil, return to the beginning, achieving balance) is multidimensional and interdisciplinary, as it occurs in many disciplines and has a varied meaning history. The term was originally used in psychology in the 1950s. To this day, there is an ongoing debate regarding the definition of the phenomenon and there are difficulties with its operationalisation and measurement. Among Polish researchers, the term is understood as resilience, flexibility or mental toughness (*prężność, sprężystość* lub *odporność psychiczna*) (Konaszewski, 2020; Błasiak & Dybowska, 2021).

In social sciences, resilience is broadly considered as a set of processes that contribute to the proper functioning of an individual despite objectively unfavourable conditions for development and living. Analysing the origins of this phenomenon and considering the way it is described, explained and delimited, different concepts can be distinguished: resilience as a trait, process and outcome. In the first instance, resilience was conceptualised as a trait, a property, a relatively permanent human resource associated with health and effective coping with difficulties and adversities. With time, resilience started to be perceived as a dynamic process which reflects good adjustment; positive adaptation of a person in the threats he/she experiences, despite the difficulties. This process involves the mutual influence of a whole range of risk factors (i.e. situations, events, contexts that can disrupt human functioning) and protective factors (i.e. resources and positive strengths fostering the activation of resilient resources and positive adaptation, functioning well despite negative experiences, assisting in coping with the impact of risk factors). Resilience is then an interactive construct that is shaped during development and is, therefore, a long-term process and involves the development of the individual's strengths. Another approach falls within the category of an outcome, i.e. a result conditioned by a number of individual and

environmental factors that interact with each other. All the ways of defining resilience indicated have two elements in common: adversity and positive adaptation (Konaszewski, 2020; Smulczyk, 2016; Rutkowska, 2015).

It is also worth noting the concept of resilience-sensitive pedagogy, which was developed by Karol Konaszewski (2020). The narrow meaning of this concept concerns educational and upbringing knowledge aimed at supporting adaptive learning and teaching processes. The broad meaning, on the other hand, includes knowledge about the fulfilment of a specific art of living in the midst of challenges and setbacks. At its core is the empowerment of individuals through processes of self-understanding and clarification of reality, supporting them in their processes of self-determination and moving towards development, so that they can function satisfactorily in the face of challenges and crises. Therefore, it is possible to support a person's functioning in terms of upbringing and education, according to the phase of life, helping them to achieve the best possible individual-social outcomes, well-being and satisfaction with life.

> If we consider that supporting the individual to develop harmoniously is a priority task, it is worth starting with shaping *resilience.* In contrast, coping effectively with stress using adaptive strategies plays a key role in functioning and has a significant impact on health and well-being […]. Teachers, pedagogues and educators can and should take deliberate action to build *resilience* (Konaszewski, 2020, p. 253).

## Parents' Pedagogical Culture – Multifaceted Perspective of the Phenomenon

Family education can contribute to building resilience in children if parents are aware of this task. In this context, I will point to the possibilities inherent in the pedagogical culture of parents.

In the literature of the subject there are many definitions describing the concept of parents' pedagogical/educational culture, which is a complex and multi-factor concept and therefore does not have a clearly defined semantic scope. The difficulty of the description is also related to the fact that the notion of educational awareness[2] is used to describe pedagogical culture. Many researchers note that there is a need to distinguish between the concepts of pedagogical culture and educational awareness, as they are not the same and do not mean the same thing (Opozda, 2012).

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2    An example of such an activity is Stanislaw Kawula's (1975) approach to the upbringing awareness of parents. He defines this phenomenon as a form of reflection by parents of issues related to the upbringing of their own children. According to the author, upbringing awareness is the parents' specific stock of pedagogical knowledge, mainly colloquial, the system of values and judgments related to upbringing issues, as well as practical upbringing behaviour resulting from personal parental knowledge.

The key issue for the reflection undertaken is the concept of culture which has a rich history showing its evolution and changes in meaning. From a pedagogical perspective, this concept refers to the Greek *paideia,* the holistic upbringing of a human being in view of the adopted ideal, and is related to the development of an individual and social groups (Opozda, 2012). The classic approach of Bogdan Suchodolski indicates that "culture is the totality of human achievements socially fixed and accumulated throughout human history, constantly enriched by new creative works and the work of all societies" (1990, p. 156). At present, Teresa Hejnicka-Bezwińska defines culture narrowly "as a system of activities and products the basic aspect of which is the presence of meanings as intersubjectively understood senses having social value and acceptance" (2008, p. 84). Hence, as highlighted by Danuta Opozda (2012), the relationship between man and culture is twofold, because, on the one hand, man creates culture, while on the other hand culture shapes man and the quality of his life. Thus, as Danuta Opozda emphasized (2012), culture should help a person achieve full humanity at the stage of forming and using it.

In this perspective, the phenomenon of pedagogical culture emerges. Such culture

> […] was influence by historical, social political and cultural conditions in the broadest sense. The shape of the pedagogical culture of a given time was determined by traditions originating from the broad cultural circles of Europe and other continents […]. Even in today's age, it can be considered that pedagogical culture still results from the experience and knowledge of previous generations, but it is also subject to strong influences of the current global culture and social changes (Opozda, 2012, p. 95).

On the one hand, we are dealing with the pedagogical culture (or educational culture) possessed by certain individuals and groups of people and, on the other hand, with the pattern of pedagogical culture, which has its origin in scientific rationality and is normative in nature. The first category refers to a set of beliefs about the upbringing of successive generations on the basis of the stock of colloquial knowledge socially distributed and transmitted, and the second situation refers to researchers who aim to develop a specific pattern of pedagogical culture on the basis of scientific knowledge (Opozda, 2012).

A model/benchmark of pedagogical culture is a kind of theoretical construct; a desirable state with normative overtones, which should be pursued, being, at the same time, a reflection of the reality (status) of pedagogical culture (Doniec, 2008). Henryk Cudak (1997, pp. 28–34) elaborated a model of parents' pedagogical culture which contains eight elements covering its basic and desirable contents: knowledge of upbringing and the child's physical and mental development; awareness of one's role in upbringing; recognised and fulfilled upbringing patterns; kindness towards children and young people and sensitivity to their needs; a sense of responsibility for the fate of

the young generation; improvement of pedagogical knowledge and skills; the ability to apply pedagogical knowledge in upbringing activities; parents' cooperation with school and other educational situations, and support of the actions taken by them. Renata Doniec believes that the development of a universal model for the pedagogical culture of parents "is impossible, or at least very difficult, in times of such rapid change and strong social and cultural differentiation as today, although such reflection is very much needed in pro-family education programmes" (2001, p. 209).

The leading and, so to speak, source opinion on pedagogical culture is the concept of Janina Maciaszkowa (1980) who saw the pedagogical culture of society, including of the family, as a set of intellectual, social and aesthetic values from which arises the ability to respond in educational situations in accordance with the needs of the child. Such ability is defined by knowledge, a system of values, norms and models of behaviour, and it is combined with an awareness of the aims of upbringing and the ability to act in terms of educational methods and means. Among the structural elements Maciaszkowa included: knowledge concerning the child (scientific pedagogical knowledge, grounded and verifiable), awareness of the aims and tasks of upbringing; an emotional (kind) attitude towards others; and the ability to act in a way that is beneficial to others, especially the child. In this view, the dissemination of pedagogical culture takes place through care, upbringing and educational institutions by means of the transmission of knowledge and the process of formation of educational skills. According to Maciaszkowa (1980), knowledge has an information and regulatory function.

Parents' pedagogical culture is also present in the reflection and research by Irena Jundziłł, Jadwiga Izdebska, Henryk Cudak, Marian Grochociński, Stanisław Kawula, Józef Wilk, Mikołaj Winiarski, and Małgorzata Bereźnicka.

## Structural Components of Parents' Pedagogical Culture Based on the Example of Józef Wilk's Concept, and the Possibilities of Building Resilience in Children

The structural elements of parents' pedagogical culture are interrelated, form a coherent whole, and influence the course and effects of the upbringing process in the family, including the formation of the personality of the youngest generation. Therefore, this area of parental activity also includes the possibility of consciously shaping and supporting resilience. It is about developing skills that "allow one to cope effectively with stress through learned behaviour, ways of thinking and acting" (Konaszewski, 2020, p. 253).

According to Wilk's (2021) concept, the pedagogical culture of parents consists of: an educational awareness that is linked to responsibility, the ability to establish an educational relationship, pedagogical knowledge the synthesis of which are certain pedagogical principles, and the ability to apply educational methods and means.

In general, awareness is related to the fact that, being a person, one is aware of one-self, of what one is doing and of the consequences that may result from such action. Parental awareness, according to Wilk (2021), is closely linked to responsibility for the child's life, development, upbringing and socialisation, i.e. it determines the fulfilment of parental roles. Parents should know that their action and inaction with regard to their child has specific consequences in the young person's attitude, behaviour and functioning. Parental awareness is treated in many studies as a common denominator for specific issues related to the parental influence and their effectiveness or parenting error (Opozda, 2012).

While analysing the phenomenon of educational awareness, Irena Jundziłł (1980) pointed out that it is the intellectual dimension of culture, including awareness of the aims of upbringing, knowledge of the youngest generation and the process of its development, as well as the possibilities of conscious action in this regard. For Sławomir Cudak (2007), in turn, educational awareness is an internal reflection on upbringing and the relationship between the educator and the child, the parent and the child, methods, goals of upbringing, conditions of development, care and socialisation, as well as the consequences of such parental behaviours.

In her analyses, Danuta Opozda (2012) pointed out that identifying educational awareness only with knowledge or opinions and views on upbringing leads to a kind of reductionism. The author distinguished introspective and perceptual educational awareness. The introspective level means that "the adult subjectively and currently experiences himself/herself as a teacher and, from this perspective, plans, makes decisions and evaluates his/her actions" (p. 107). Being constantly aware of being a teacher requires constant reflection on how a parent acts in the parenting process, why they act and to what end. It is the mental capacity to be aware of one's own thought processes in terms of parenting. In the second, perceptual dimension, parenting awareness is completed and acquires completeness when there is an integration of information concerning the environment that the parent perceives. It is the mental capacity to be aware of external events, of what is perceived and experienced, and which is at the same time apprehended in educational terms. These two types of educational awareness complement each other. According to Opozda (2012), high parental educational awareness in the introspective and perceptual dimensions combines reflective perception and excludes mental passivity and reactivity in the parenting process. Parental awareness is an attribute of a person; it concerns subjective references and the subjective representation of reality in the mind and the understanding of the self in

social and non-social settings. These aspects indicate that it is not enough for a parent to have knowledge of resilience and its construction in the child, but that he or she should have certain resources and shape his or her resilience as well.

According to Ewelina Świdrak (2013), parents' insight into the upbringing process leads directly to an upbringing that is purposeful, planned and appropriately organised, as well as to controlling their own educational actions in terms of their usefulness, effectiveness and the possibility of mistakes. The parent then acts consciously, bringing up children consciously, which is a consequence of having an educational awareness. A conscious cognitive effort is needed in the context of recognising and acknowledging the child's resources, strengths and successes, which are the basis for building resilience in the child. The task of the parents is to nurture the child's sense of agency and confidence in their own competence. This will be possible when the parent is involved in the child's affairs and gives the child the space to make his/her own decisions, experiment and suffer consequences, and learn from his/her own actions, including failures.

According to Wilk (2021), another element in the structure of the parents' pedagogical culture is the parental ability to establish an educational relationship, based, above all, on correct communication which, in turn, fosters the formation of bonds and the creation of the proper family atmosphere.

Wilk's (2021) concept of shaping an educational relationship by parents refers to several factors. The first one is mature parental love linked to the parents' close and empathic relationship with their child. Conscious love and support from the parent is also an important family protective factor and part of shaping resilient children. Mature parental love results in caring about the child's needs and his/her physical well-being. Parents are concerned to ensure that the care provided is optimum, creating independence and resourcefulness, so that the child can cope in any situation. It is about making wise and necessary demands, adapted to the child's abilities, resources, age and situation, so that the child develops self-confidence and acquires coping strategies. The second element of relationship formation is a positive emotional attitude towards the child, which is fundamental in supporting the child's development. This involves nurturing the child's sense of security and meeting other emotional needs. The third factor is "struggle", i.e. the parent's readiness for conflict to occur, because, in the parenting relationship, individuals who carry differing views, needs, etc. meet. However, this is to be a meeting without aggression and violence, based on dialogue. Another element is tolerance, understood as forbearance towards the child, linked to empathy and acceptance of the child as he or she is, which fosters the development of the child's independence, autonomy and initiative. In order to build resilience in the child, it is important to provide supportive experiences and to receive parental support when the child encounters difficulties and does not cope on his/her own. It is also

important that the child's successes are recognised and highlighted by the parents in their daily functioning. In addition, the child acquires coping strategies from observing others, especially the parents. Parents can model certain skills here, including asking for and receiving help when the resources needed to solve a difficult situation are insufficient. A child who has experienced help develops trust in others and the world. The last factor highlighted by Wolf (2021) for building a nurturing relationship is guidance, which involves teaching values, rules and norms, and helping the child to learn about the world and the self (parents are guides with a certain authority on the external and internal world). A good knowledge of the child's self and emotions, which is possible through self-analysis and reflection on oneself and one's place in the surrounding reality, seems today to be a necessary tool in building and strengthening resilience. The development of self-awareness in the child is an important task for guides-parents, requiring time and understanding. Interactions with parents from the moment of birth help the child discover who he or she is and what he or she needs. Resilience in the child is built by parents accompanying and teaching the child to recognise his or her own needs, take care of them and respond accordingly. Then, they teach the child that he or she is a valuable person who has the right to his/her own feelings, can meet his/her own needs and is responsible for his/her own actions. Self-awareness becomes the basis for shaping resilience in the child, and it is also the way to a proper sense of the child's worth, so that the child will not feel powerless in the face of difficulties

From the perspective of building resilience, it is indicated that maintaining and forming appropriate relationships with loved ones is crucial for coping with difficult situations. Close relationships with others promote mental and physical health, in addition to increasing the likelihood of receiving support and help from others. Positive relationships within the family are a protective factor, fostering a secure attachment style and a sense of belonging to the community. Close relationships with caregivers who provide for the child's needs and show love and care build a high level of basic hope, i.e. the belief that the world is friendly to people.

Pedagogical knowledge is another component of parents' pedagogical culture in Wilk's (2021) concept, but also other researchers, when analysing the phenomenon of pedagogical culture, refer to the category of "pedagogical knowledge" or "knowledge of upbringing" (Opozda, 2012). This knowledge should be acquired in a planned process of parent education (pedagogisation of parents). This is all the more so since the results of research in this area indicate that upbringing activities are most often based on a model drawn from the family of origin rather than on scientific knowledge (Bereźnicka, 2015). Furthermore, a high level of parents' pedagogical knowledge correlates with a child's high level of school achievement. The knowledge of the parents of students with average school performance is mainly rooted in family experience and

family tradition, while the knowledge of the parents of the weakest students is derived from colloquial knowledge, intuition, family traditions and imitation of them, with the latter being most often negative (Cudak, 1997). Kawula (1997) considered the following areas of knowledge to be particularly important (for adult teachers): knowledge of the contribution of innate endowments; the possibilities and rights of development of children and adolescents; the importance of the period of childhood and youth for the whole of life; the role and stimulating function of the child's activity: play, study and work; the content of sexual education, the child's interests and rights to education and socio-professional advancement; the dangers of civilisation and forms of their prevention and combating. This area includes contemporary knowledge of resilience as a relatively permanent psychological property of the child and adult as a category of personality which helps to successfully cope with life difficulties, stressful situations and allows adaptation in a changing reality (Konaszewski, 2020).

The ability to apply upbringing methods and measures is the last element of the concept presented by Wilk (2021). The important issue here is the criteria for selecting the right upbringing method and measures in order to optimise the family upbringing process, which will promote the reinforcement of resilience. Incorrect methods result in children behaving inappropriately. It is important that the method takes into account the child's abilities and resources; has a positive and liberating effect; is preventive, but does not block the child's independence and self-sufficiency, allowing the child to experiment and implement his or her own ideas and solutions; directs the child's attention to good behaviour; is combined with parental care and involvement; is based on discussion and explanation of motives; and takes into account the parents' own example.

## Conclusion

The pedagogical culture of parents is a phenomenon that deserves special attention of pedagogues because, depending on its level, it can contribute to the success in life and education of the youngest generation or to their failures or even pathology. Researchers into the issue of parents' pedagogical culture point to specific consequences of the level of parents' pedagogical culture that relate to both the present and the future of their children. Kawula (2007) indicated that a low level of parents' pedagogical culture in the short term (i.e. personal) results in children achieving a low level of school achievement, displaying indifferent and/or negative attitudes towards school and family, low educational aspirations, choosing a profession with lower social prestige. In the longer term (i.e. socio-pedagogical) it determines the child's start in life and education, may also inhibit development or cause it to be disharmonious, also

increases susceptibility to deviant behaviour and reduces chances of success in life. In turn, a high level of parents' pedagogical culture in the area of close and distant consequences has the opposite effect to those mentioned above. Therefore, it is possible to consider pedagogical culture, with its components, as an important factor that can build and strengthen the child's resilience, thanks to which the child will acquire the strategies and adaptive competences necessary to function in a changing and inhospitable reality, which will strengthen his/her psychological resilience and well-being. Researchers on the issue of the pedagogical culture of parents indicate that knowledge about it should be popularised in society, especially among parents, and should concern broadly understood family upbringing so that the most up-to-date issues are addressed in education, according to current expectations and needs.

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