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IN SEARCH OF THE OPTIMAL MODEL FOR THE EDUCATIONAL RELATIONSHIP*

Introduction: The relationship between a teacher and a pupil plays a fundamental role in the optimal education of young people. Therefore, the educational process and its effectiveness depend on how this relationship is understood and structured.

Research Aim: The main problem this paper addresses is contained in the following question: Which model of the educational relationship in the school setting can/should be considered optimal?

Evidence-based Facts: The structure of pedagogical knowledge encompasses descriptive, normative, and applicative areas. This article demonstrates the importance of individual areas of knowledge in the context of the optimal model of the educational relationship.

Summary: The adoption and justification of a theoretical model of the educational relationship leads to the identification of applicative solutions in the field of education.

Keywords: education, educational relationship, models, normativism, pedagogical anthropology

INTRODUCTION

The title of the conference concerning the analysis of education in the school setting was formulated as follows: “Healthy School – Healthy Student. Caring for Healthy Relationships.” It was proposed by the staff of the Department of Pedutology and Health Education at the Institute of Pedagogy of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. As the organisers explained, the topic and the central issue are the question of the mental health and health education of children and young people in the face of the current situation in the world (the post-pandemic era and the war across our eastern border; see Institute of Pedagogy of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, 7 November 2025).

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The axiological considerations apparently determine the terminology they used. The point is, after all, to have a “healthy” school, “healthy” students, and “healthy” relationships given the circumstances (the pandemic, war) that disrupt this desired state of affairs. However, drawing out this aspect of the topic is not intended here to indicate any irregularity but, on the contrary, to emphasise that in pedagogical research (even when these assumptions are not explicitly stated) the focus is always not only on the current state of affairs but also on the future. It is understood in normative terms, that is, as the desired and intended state of affairs (Gnitecki, 1999, p. 21).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM

The proposed article title also includes a normative category – the “optimal” model – the search for which is related to the understanding of the relationship between the educator/teacher and the pupil/student. The main problem addressed in this paper can therefore be formulated as follows: Which model of the educational relationship in the school setting can/should be regarded as optimal? The research method involves the analysis of selected pedagogical sources and a deductive approach, which permit drawing conclusions regarding the understanding of the educational relationship at school and formulating recommendations for pedagogical practice.

METHODOLOGY

The manner in which the main problem of this article was formulated indicates that the relevant body of academic literature focuses on two principal areas. First of all, a review of the academic literature was undertaken, focusing on the themes of general pedagogy, educational theory, and pedagogical anthropology. At this point, research into the teleology of pedagogy and the essence of pedagogical reflection in general is of particular importance. The second criterion guiding the selection of the literature is that of the scope of the educational relationship. Here, the focus is not so much on the individual aspects of this relationship as on its model presentation. This research article develops a theoretical model of the educational relationship through a critical analysis of sources.

EVIDENCE-BASED FACTS

This article is structured into four substantive parts. The first part outlines the position of the normative component within pedagogical thought in general, along with a justification for this approach. This is important, as the search for a norma-

tive model is the focal point of this paper – and also (as has been indicated), it is of key significance for the entire conference; therefore, it cannot be left in the realm of conjecture. The next part describes the structure of the “optimal” model of the educational relationship. A justification of the choice follows this. Lastly, applicative proposals are presented in the final part.

The Optimal Model – Significance of Normative Dimension in Pedagogical Research

Normative reflection is inherent in the very essence of pedagogical thinking. Brezinka (1974) notes that it is linked chiefly to an educational ideal in the reflection on the formation of new generations. It is, after all, impossible to imagine such formative measures that would not be subordinated to a specific objective; that is, to an image of the human being within the social expectations of a given community or group of people. Even where no in-depth reflection on the educational process and its objectives is discernible within given communities, this does not rule out the presence of educational ideals towards which that community strives while shaping successive generations. According to Brezinka, there is abundant evidence of the fact that reflection on education was already practised in primitive cultures. In every era, an ideal of the human being was envisioned, and means were sought to enable people to become ever more like the proposed ideals of personality (pp. 9–10). The approach outlined by the German pedagogue may be described – after Zirfas (2021) – as “anthropological anthropology.” Zirfas notes that anyone who educates or teaches a child, advises an adult, or supports an elderly person has a specific life-based (practical, non-scientific) “image” of the recipient of their pedagogical efforts (cf. Zirfas, 2021, p. 12). This is because normativity in educational thought is woven into its essence and meaning, thereby becoming a *sine qua non* condition of the pedagogical approach as such.

Although normativity is present in educational practice even when it is not grounded in solid, in-depth reflection, it must be accompanied by critical analysis within the pedagogical (scientific) approach. Otherwise, it could gradually and imperceptibly turn into a dangerous ideologisation of the educational process, characterised by detachment from reality and from critical reflection upon it (cf. Jaroszyński, 2003, p. 734). One of the measures that rationalise the place of the norm (idea, ideal, etc.) in pedagogy and its functions is the articulation of the fundamental questions of pedagogy, which indicate distinct areas of educational knowledge and their significance for the educational process as a whole. The literature most often mentions two, or possibly three, such areas and their predominant issues. For example, when presenting the etymology of *education*, Kunowski (2004) indirectly points to two states of human existence: the first (the state of nature) and the second (the state of culture; cf. Kunowski, 2004, p. 165), which is the better and higher state to be achieved through education. The follow-

ing two questions about these two states can be formulated: “What is the current situation?” (account of the state of nature) and “What should it be?” (account of the state of culture). Kotłowski (1976) speaks of three spheres, namely of facts, duties, and praxeology (Kotłowski, 1976, p. 21, quoted in Śliwerski, 2010, p. 55). And the three questions that correspond to them are “What is the current situation?” “What should it be?” and “What should be done to make it so?” There are more examples of similar systematisations in the literature. These are extremely important because they enable us to distinguish systems of descriptive knowledge from those of normative and praxeological knowledge. Research in this area, therefore, aims to improve the quality of pedagogy as an academic discipline and contributes to safeguarding education itself as a pedagogical practice.

Building on the above research, this paper suggests dividing the problem under discussion into six essentially distinct topics (expressed as separate questions) which together form a coherent system of pedagogical knowledge. The three research areas presented above (together with their respective questions) feature in the academic literature and are widely known. Therefore, they are not discussed in great detail here, but are merely included in the list below, so as not to disturb the overall structure. The proposed set of six key research questions in pedagogy includes the following questions: 1) What is the current situation? 2) Why is it so? 3) What could it be? 4) What should it be? 5) For what reason should it be so? 6) What should be done to make it so?

These areas can be further specified as follows:

1) What is the current situation? This question represents the descriptive area. This research area aims to describe the reality that is the subject of the study as accurately as possible;

2) Why is it so? This question pertains to the explanatory area. The point here is to explain why things are the way they are. Researchers look for relationships between phenomena, some of which are described as the cause, stimulus, or condition, and others as the effect, outcome, or result of the former phenomenon. It is worth noting at this point that this relationship is not always explained in terms of an empirical cause-and-effect model. In pedagogy, there are explanatory models which, apart from recognising cause-and-effect relationships, also point to “personal factors,” which refer to “a pupil’s positive (or negative) responses to internal or external factors” (Nowak, 2008, p. 276; cf. Kunowski, 2004, pp. 185–190);

3) What could it be? This question refers to the optative area. This area of pedagogical research points to the foreseeable development of the studied reality (cf. Zirfas, 2021, p. 13). It is a prognostic picture in which multiple possible scenarios are taken into account without making judgements or adopting a selective approach. It is often associated with the methods of the natural sciences, including – especially today – the rapidly developing neuroscience, which assists pedagogy in mapping out directions for the development of the studied phenomena. Ongoing scientific

ic research contributes to an ever greater understanding of human developmental processes in general; nevertheless, it cannot be the sole indicator for describing a future state, although the temptation may be great, as these sciences provide hard evidence. Nevertheless, as Hessen (1977) warned in the first half of the twentieth century, the science of education defined as a psychophysiological technique can arrive only at knowledge of the negative conditions of the educational process, but can say nothing positive about the educational process as such (p. 88);

4) What should it be? This question applies to the normative area. This area is closely linked to the choice of the ideal of education adopted. It is also linked to the adopted values. It is not subject to scientific verification in the strict sense of the word (*science*). Nor can the choice be justified from the standpoint of the empirical sciences. Among other reasons, this is why, according to Dziaczowska (2024), one can observe in pedagogical reflection a “doubt” about formulating such normative statements in pedagogy, often reinforced by the notion that formulating educational ideals is not scientific (p. 42; cf. Brumlik, 2003, p. 88). If pedagogy is to belong to the humanities, however, its specific character lies not only in studying but also in promoting a particular system of values, model of the human being, and intended development of an individual (cf. Salamucha & Magier, 2013, p. 161). Zachariasz (2005) has a similar view of the matter, noting that adopting a cause-and-effect model to explain reality excludes reflection on its normative character from the domain of science. Reality is then reduced to the material reality, or even to the purely physical reality. Meanwhile, this understanding of reality finds no confirmation in the sphere of reality that arises in human actions and constitutes their result. And so, the reality that we refer to as culture (of which educational activity is a part) arises in connection with purposeful actions and presents itself to the acting subject as a sphere of goods which together define cultural reality. As a result, cultural reality is a reality that itself generates both validity and obligation (p. 20). In this context, one may advance the thesis that such “doubt” regarding the normative area in pedagogy stems not chiefly from the fact that this area exists, but above all from the fact that it is not always clearly and explicitly articulated and justified. Hence, another question needs to be asked, namely;

5) For what reason should it be so? This is a question of the justificatory area. It may also be referred to as the legitimising area. It is worth noting that the question opening this area does not begin with the word “why” because it prompts a search for causes, as discussed above, but with the words “for what reason” (in other words: “for the sake of what?”), which points to the identification of a purpose. Simply put, in this area of research, one should indicate and justify (legitimise) the objective for the sake of which the entire educational process is undertaken. There is no unambiguous transition between “what the current situation is” and “what it should be;” hence, every link between these two areas must be justified, and this justification should be explained explicitly. The wording of this question

(“for what reason”) is intended only to emphasise the directing of attention to that “something” that is the reason for undertaking the educational process.

In view of the above explanations, this area of pedagogical description is grounded in an axionormative choice, and such a choice is always made by a particular academic community, school of thought, or individual educators in relation to specific educational settings. It may also be stated that this is a choice made on the basis of an adopted world view, defined as a global interpretation and evaluation of the world (Kowalczyk, 1979, p. 8). In this sense, it is a general knowledge about the world and about oneself, which a given person considers true and on the basis of which they orient themselves in reality and act within it (Dłubacz, 2008, p. 346). Given this understanding of the definition of the word “world view,” two issues are worth drawing attention to. First, this knowledge is not built solely from one’s own convictions and personal experience. Certainly, it contains a personal and religious component, but it also includes a rational (critical) and a strictly scientific (empirical) component (cf. Dłubacz, 2008, p. 346). Second, and this is particularly worth noting in this part of the analysis, a world view is a type of knowledge that prompts action and leads to implementation in an educational setting. Kamiński (1998) notes that this kind of human knowledge is in essence the complete and definitive basis for a person’s reflected behaviour (p. 17), which links world view and action even more prominently. It is therefore an important type of knowledge because it justifies and legitimises the educator’s decisions and prompts the educator to act. At this point, space opens up for the final question;

6) What should be done to make it so? This is a question of the applicative area. It gives consideration to a wide range of educational technologies, which are intended to help design a practical course of education enabling the objective of education to be achieved. It should also be noted that every pedagogical system, trend, or approach that contains within its knowledge structure a set of methodological and praxeological principles also includes a specific normative area, regardless of whether it refers to it explicitly or not. Scientific integrity requires this to be stated openly; hence, the need for questions 4 and 5 in pedagogy is once again confirmed here.

The questions listed above, together with the areas of research to which they point, are complementary to pedagogical academic reflection. This does not mean, however, that all these areas must be addressed in every piece of pedagogical research to the same degree and extent. Individual researchers may analyse one of the areas mentioned above in greater detail; nevertheless, pedagogy as a discipline cannot exclude any of them. In the research described here, the emphasis is placed on presenting an optimal model of the educational relationship in the context of school education (area 4) and on justifying its significance (area 5). This will then lead to the proposal of practical solutions (area 6).

Optimal Model for Educational Relationship: What Should It Be?

One hopes that justifying normative questions in pedagogical thought (i.e., what should it be) should make it clear that this is not an attempt to impose the validity of a “single truth” within the academic field. Rather – if anything – it is an explicit articulation of the teleological framework adopted by the researcher. It can and, indeed, should remain open to further critical scrutiny.

What, then, is an “optimal” or, to use the conference terminology, a “healthy” model of the educational relationship in school education? Generally speaking, it is – to quote Milerski and Śliwerski (2000) – a way of realising the processes and interactions that take place in the course of the mutual relationship between two people, helping them to develop their own humanity. For this goal to be achieved, both the educator and the pupil must open themselves to one another, acknowledge their own freedom and dignity, and demonstrate authenticity, a sense of responsibility, trust and empathy (p. 274). Therefore, one is looking for such a model of school relationships in which every effort not only leads towards the development of the pupil’s specific skills but also – without excluding the former – aims above all at the development of their humanity, while preserving, or rather through recognising, their freedom, dignity and authenticity. In other words, adopting these attributes explains what constitutes “healthy” school relationships.

This paper supports the view that the *three-subject model* of the educational relationship is a means of achieving the desired situation described above. This model identifies the essential features of the mutual relationship between the teacher and student listed by Milerski and Śliwerski, as well as the objective of school education outlined by them, namely the development of humanity. This model involves the following three subjects: (1) the educator – the teacher, (2) the pupil’s “I-caller”, and (3) the pupil’s “I-(re)called” (cf. Jeziorański, 2022, pp. 147–157). It should also be noted that in the educational reality it is impossible to distinguish clearly, or empirically, between the actions of individual subjects, and to separate them from one another. These actions are intertwined. A theoretical model is always susceptible to simplifications; nevertheless, it is precisely thanks to these simplifications that it becomes possible to break down the complexity of a given reality to its individual, usually most essential elements, which in this sense fall within the scope of what is to be discussed (Nowak, 2008, p. 37).

(1) The first subject mentioned is the educator or the teacher. It is the educator in the traditional sense. It is worth noting that this role can only be performed by a person. At a time of dynamic developments in artificial intelligence, which finds increasingly wide application (including in educational settings), this model assumes that only a human being can be an educator in the strict sense. März (1965) emphasises that education is to be understood as an interpersonal phenomenon. A human being can be educated only by a person, because nothing apart from another person in this experiential world is capable of providing the developing person

with such help as 'would aim at the self-realisation of the person in accordance with his or her nature and needs (p. 148).

(2) The pupil's "I-caller" is one of the two subjects located within the pupil. Distinguishing between two subjects (but not separating them) follows from the assumption that there is a creative and authentic inner dialogue taking place within the pupil. By definition, the "I-caller" is the normative image of oneself internalised within the pupil. Its understanding therefore requires an explanation of the three main terms in this definition: image, internalisation within the pupil, and normativity. Image – the use of the metaphor of an image draws, above all, on the pedagogical tradition associated with the category of *das Bild* (cf. Liessmann, 2019, p. 69). Nowak (1999) explains that the image category is understood as an 'inner' ('authentic') image, in the sense, as it were, of an Orthodox 'icon', distinctly different from a phenomenon, an event or fiction (p. 285). It is a specific, immanent, individual personal ideal. Internalisation within the pupil – the "I-caller" is a form of inner calling, spanning the loftiest aspirations and low, commonplace needs (Bloom, 2012, p. 23), which is not always fully recognised and acknowledged by the pupil. Normativity – although the "I-caller" is located within the pupil, one can discern in it features of the educator. For this reason, the name of this subject includes the word "calling." This refers to normativity. However, it is an internal rather than an external normativity. It cannot be equated with external compulsion of any kind. One might say that, in this area, normativity is expressed through the imperative "I ought to" rather than "you ought to." Therefore, the "I-caller" is the most important educator. It is also the most effective educator. In a certain sense, it is the only educator, as the pupil is guided by a deep-seated need to realise their inner image.

(3) The "I-(re)called" is the second subject within the pupil and refers to the pupil's decision-making centre. First, the decisions made by the pupil are a response to the calls coming from the "I-caller." The pupil feels compelled to respond to them. Secondly, the "I-(re)called" also signifies accepting the consequences of one's own decision. This is indicated by the word "called," which refers to what follows the "calling," that is, what comes after a decision has been made.

To sum up, the three-subject model of the educational relationship may be presented in the following schematic formula: "call – response – responsibility." In this way, school education is continually built by means of a responsible dialogue. This state may be defined as a continual readiness to take risks, which means that a person can never *settle* into fixed patterns of thought and behaviour, but is always "called" to step beyond a certain, calm, and safe world, and in doing so, become even more fully human (cf. Anzenbacher, 1965, p. 63) and become their authentic self.

Sources of the Optimal Model of the Educational Relationship in School Education: For What Reason Should It Be So?

At this point, one must consider why the three-subject model of the educational relationship has been adopted as optimal. This choice is informed, among other things, by the following approaches to thinking about education. Only selected examples are presented. First of all, it is worth returning to the founding father of scientific pedagogy, who offered profound reflections on the very nature of education. Thus, for example, in discussing the objectives of education and the related tasks of the educator in relation to the pupil, Herbart (2007) wrote that the educator stands in for the boy's future self; therefore, in his efforts he must strive towards those aims which the pupil, in the future as an adult, will set himself; for these he must now prepare favourable conditions in the pupil's soul. It is worth emphasising that Herbart requires the educator, in relation to the pupil, to recognise a third subject, namely the pupil from the future as an adult human being (p. 46). One may question the educator's ability to make such a recognition; nevertheless, what is immensely important here is that the father of scientific pedagogy requires the educator to seek the objectives of education within the pupil.

Another source to be considered is Nohl's (1988) anthropological conception. In it, he demonstrates that "man is internally divided: he finds within himself a conscious 'self' that sets goals, and an impulsive 'self' that has to be educated" (p. 165). Nohl therefore calls education a spiritual process and describes it as follows: from the inner sphere of the subject, in its interactions with other subjects, forms are constantly brought forth which are in themselves meaningful and important, becoming the norm of life (p. 161). Particularly worthy of emphasis is the process mentioned by Nohl, whereby certain "forms" emerge from the inner structure of the person (the pupil) and subsequently become the norms governing that pupil's life. This inner dialogue, although perhaps not explicitly indicated, may undoubtedly be regarded as crucial to the process of education.

Yet another example of pedagogical inspiration for constructing the three-subject model of the educational relationship may be Heitger's (2004) anthropological conception. In the dialectical model he proposed, human development does not take place in the absolute freedom of self-realisation (*Selbstverwirklichung*), as is the case in the experimental model, nor does it occur in an entirely predetermined manner, where the development of a person's innate dispositions (*Selbsentfaltung*) is of primary importance, as is the case in the substantial model; rather, it is the result of the pupil's decision, arising from an inner tension within the structure of the "self" between what is free in the pupil and what is determined by the spatio-temporal reality they experience. Therefore, in order to emphasise this inner tension within the pupil, which is at the same time constitutive of the essence of education, this model is defined as self-determination (*Selbstbestimmung*; see Böhm, 2004,

pp. 13–15). Heitger (2004, p. 22) observes that the “self” is simultaneously the client and the contractor in one.

Particularly interesting are the figurative (allegorical) inspirations found in the writings of pedagogues, educators, and thinkers, who often intuitively drew attention to the inner dialogue taking place within the pupil, which must be taken into account in the educational process if it is to be implemented properly. One example worth mentioning here is Montaigne (1995), who uses the metaphor of the work of bees to illustrate the essence of education more clearly: Bees suck nectar from various flowers here and there, but then they turn it into honey, which is their own; it is no longer thyme or wild thyme. In the same way, let the pupil rework and fuse into one the parts borrowed from others, so as to make of them a work wholly their own, that is, their own judgement; education, work and study are merely the means to achieve it (p. 236). Meanwhile, Rousseau (1995) warned educators in the following way: You would indeed make [the pupil] stupid if you constantly directed him, if you were always telling him: come here, go back there, stay, do this, do not do that. If your head always guides his arm, his own head becomes superfluous (p. 476). An interesting inspiration also comes from the writings of Pindar (1987). This ancient Greek poet addresses Hieron with the following words: *Become who you are* (p. 99), suggesting that Hieron can become his ‘true self’ only because Pindar has revealed to him his own essence (Jaeger, 1962, p. 477). A closer analysis of this statement suggests that Pindar is expressing the belief that a person carries within them their true “self,” which demands to be realised. This is possible only when the work of the educator initiates it. Nevertheless, however important the educator’s role may be, it is limited to (merely) initiating the process of drawing out from the pupil what they have possessed within themselves from the very beginning. This understanding of the educational process is, in substance, consistent with the concept of educational personalism built on the Socratic maieutics (cf. Nowak, 2019, p. 504). It embodies the conviction that what takes place within the pupil is the most important thing from the point of view of educational success.

Applicative Dimension of the Proposed Model: What Should Be Done to Make It So?

When considering the practical implications arising from the adopted teleological assumptions, they may be situated on two levels: the level of thought and the level of educational practice. With regard to the level of educational thought, the implementation of the three-subject model of the educational relationship is consistent, among other things, with the solutions proposed by Buber (1968). In 1925, Buber delivered a lecture entitled “Rede über das Erzieherische,” in which he noted that the subject of his address would be the development of the creative forces in the child (p. 442). He stressed that the key condition to ensure the proper course of



this development is for the educator to adopt an attitude of “embracing” (*Umfassung*) towards the pupil.

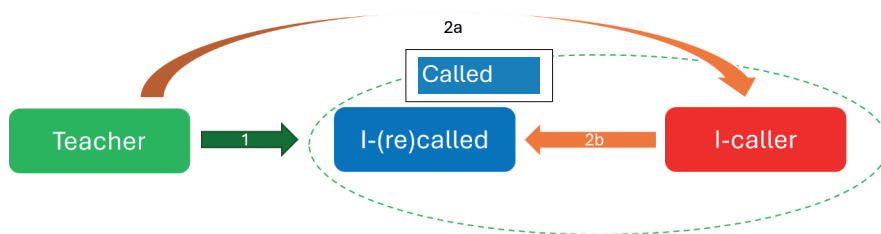
The embracing of which Buber speaks is a particular mental operation that requires the educator to maintain constant attentiveness and sensitivity in their relationship with the pupil. The attitude of embracing consists in making a continual inner effort to place oneself in the pupil’s position, so as to experience one’s own actions from the other side. According to Buber, the act of embracing constitutes a factor so fundamental that education attains its true and proper power through its continual recurrence and through the constant renewal of the connection with it. A person whose vocation is to influence others [...] must always experience their action anew from the other side (p. 458). Only when this condition is fulfilled, therefore, can one speak of the beginning of a genuine educational process because in order to be able to guide someone, one needs to have the power that makes it possible to embrace the situation of the person being guided (p. 455).

In the proposal formulated by the German philosopher of dialogue, there is a clear concern to recognise and safeguard what is genuinely authentic in the pupil, namely, their creative power of growth. For this reason, an educator must put themselves in their pupil’s position in order to experience the consequences of their own actions. The attitude of embracing is intended to sustain the educator’s vigilance, arising from concern for the pupil’s authentic personal growth.

Another approach to shaping educational thought is to adopt the path of an “indirect educational relationship.” It follows directly from the three-subject model described above. This relationship is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1

Direct and indirect educational relationship



Note. Author’s own elaboration.

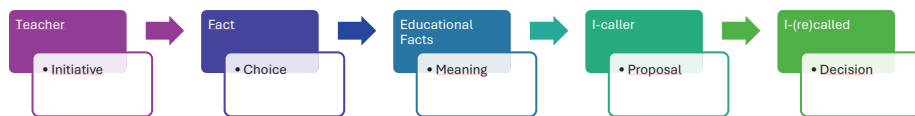
The above figure illustrates two possible forms of educational influence: (1) a direct educational relationship and (2) an indirect educational relationship. In the former, the educator directly influences the pupil’s behaviour, without taking

into account the pupil's (student's) own contribution to shaping their attitude. The latter (2) is an indirect educational relationship. As shown, it is accomplished through the pupil's "I-caller." Undoubtedly, building an educational relationship between the teacher and the "I-(re)called" through the "I-caller" is a longer and more demanding path for the teacher; nevertheless, it is the educational path in the proper sense of the term.

The first important consequence of the indirect external relationship is that the teacher is intentionally oriented towards building a relationship with the pupil's "I-caller" (2a), while at the same time being convinced that a well-built relationship of this kind will radiate into a change in the "I-(re)called" (2b). This is a vital distinction in the educator's approach to the pupil. To make it easier to recognise this subtle difference in the educator's approach to the pupil, the main elements of the indirect educational relationship are presented in the figure below.

Figure 2

Educational influence of the indirect educational relationship



Note. Author's own elaboration.

The above figure outlines the five key stages in building a proper educational relationship:

1. The "you" subject – the teacher: the educational initiative comes from them.
2. The fact: the subject chooses a tool of influence (a fact). Facts are physical, cultural, or spiritual phenomena, such as particular objects, symbols, or language, etc..
3. The educational fact: a fact that is educationally neutral attains educational significance, which is conferred on it by the teacher. With a specific intention in mind, the educator makes use of particular facts, which then attain an "axiological colouring" in order to facilitate the achievement of the objective of the educational process.
4. The "I-caller" subject: a pedagogical tool prepared in this way is only (if anything) a proposal addressed to the pupil. An educational fact cannot be anything else. At this point, the "I-caller" adopts the educational contents coming from outside as their own. However, it is never guaranteed that the *decoding* of the educational fact by the "I-caller" will coincide with the

educator's *encoding* of that fact. This is precisely where the pupil's freedom is manifested, and the educator has to accept it.

5. The "I-(re)called" subject: that is, the addressee of the educational influence. This subject decides whether or not to open themselves to the educational initiative offered, and whether to accept or reject it, in whole or in part.

Accordingly, the presented mode of educational influence suggests that the educator's effort is focused primarily on shaping the pupil's "I-caller" rather than shaping the "I-(re)called" directly. This also means that the educator must respect the pupil's own decision, since the pupil may accept or reject the educator's proposal.

At the level of educational practice, one may at this point propose an approach that consists of the educator adopting the pupil's perspective. It comes down to understanding the motives and the path the pupil has taken in suggesting one solution to the problem or task set by the teacher rather than another. For example, if a pupil states that a whale is a fish, the teacher not only refrains from rebuking the pupil for an incorrect answer, but also avoids correcting the pupil directly. Instead, the teacher asks a question such as: "Why do you think that?" What is important about a question of this kind, regardless of its wording, is that the teacher should neither assess the outcome (result) of the pupil's thinking nor suggest the expected answer. Rather, the teacher should ask a question to encourage the pupil to articulate – or perhaps even to become aware of – their own way of thinking. In this way, the teacher comes to know the reasoning that has led the pupil to their answer. In doing so, the teacher does not position themselves in opposition to the pupil but gives them a sense of being on the same side with regard to the problem (task) that is to be solved. Thus, the teacher respects the pupil's inner space of freedom and self-determination ("I-caller"). They take that voice into account and act so as to persuade the pupil to take appropriate decisions, rather than compel them to take such decisions.

It is also important to critically analyse the weaknesses of the proposed model. It appears that the following three areas require more in-depth research. First, the question arises of how to apply the outlined model in pedagogical practice and how to identify measurable indicators of its application. Two practical applications of this model have been outlined above; however, they require further exploration if a standardised diagnostic tool is to be developed on the basis of the proposed theory. Second, the model highlights the internal dialogue within the pupil. It suggests that this dialogue is an important part of education. In this way, it may lead to a devaluation of the social context of the educational process, which constitutes an important element of education. Third, the very distinction between the "I-caller" and the "I-(re)called" is not empirically verifiable. This opens up the questions of the anthropological mystery. These issues emerge ever more frequently in the field

of educational theory (Jeziorański, 2025; Marcel, 2001; Węclawski, 2021; Zirfas, 2021), but they still call for more in-depth research.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This article presents research related to the search for an optimal model of the educational relationship between a teacher and a pupil. The first step involved outlining the complex structure of pedagogical knowledge, which provided the background for the specifics of the proposed model of the educational relationship. The position and justification of the normative component in pedagogy inspired this research. The conclusions are provided in the following points. The first two concern the area of pedagogical theory, while the latter focus on educational practice:

1. The structure of pedagogical knowledge contains the following components and questions assigned to them: descriptive (what is the current situation?), explanatory (why is it so?), optative (what could it be?), normative (what should it be?), justificatory (for what reason has a particular normative dimension been adopted?), and applicative (what should be done to achieve the normative state?). Particular attention should be paid to the optative and justificatory components, which are scarcely addressed in pedagogical literature. This is important insofar as scholarly reflection on these questions will allow a clearer separation of the descriptive and the normative areas;
2. The three-subject model of the relationship includes the following subjects of the relationship: the educator, the I-caller, and the I-(re)called, thereby placing educational value on the pupil's inner, person-forming dialogue;
3. The proposed model of the optimal educational relationship contributes not only to the pupil's attainment of a certain level of knowledge and skills but, above all, serves the development of their humanity;
4. The applicative dimension of the outlined model involves, among other things, adopting an attitude of "embracing" the pupil by the teacher in line with Buber's proposal, as well as adopting the pupil's perspective in educational practice.

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W POSZUKIWANIU OPTYMALNEGO MODELU RELACJI WYCHOWAWCZEJ

Wprowadzenie: Relacja wychowawcy z wychowankiem (nauczyciela z uczniem) odgrywa zasadniczą rolę w optymalnym kształceniu młodego człowieka. Dlatego od jej rozumienia i struktury zależy sam proces wychowania oraz jego efektywność.

Cel badań: Główne pytanie tekstu wyraża się zatem w sformułowaniu: Jaki model relacji wychowawczej w kontekście środowiska szkolnego można / należy uznać za optymalny?

Stan wiedzy: Struktura wiedzy pedagogicznej zawiera obszar deskryptywny, normatywny i aplikacyjny. W artykule będzie ukazane znaczenie poszczególnych obszarów wiedzy w kontekście optymalnego modelu relacji wychowawczej.

Podsumowanie: Przyjęcie i uzasadnienie teoretycznego modelu relacji wychowawczej prowadzi do wskazania rozwiązań aplikacyjnych w obszarze wychowania.

Słowa kluczowe: wychowanie, relacja wychowawcza, modele, normatywizm, antropologia pedagogiczna