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TÍTULO: Funciones no educativas de la tutoría privada.

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RESUMEN: El estudio se refiere a las teorías de E. Durkheim y R. C Merton. La identificación de los factores no educativos que contribuyen a la popularidad de la tutoría permitirá la implementación de actividades más eficientes para reducirla. Se adoptó una estrategia cualitativa con entrevistas individuales a 15 tutores privados y se analizaron declaraciones hechas por maestros y padres en mensajes de medios en línea. Los resultados muestran que la tutoría privada desempeña muchas funciones, no siempre reconocidas, y los tutores privados llenan los vacíos en los sistemas escolares y familiares. El desarrollo del mercado de tutorías es apoyado por todos los participantes del proceso educativo: padres, maestros y tutores. Necesitamos monitorear los mecanismos y condiciones que sostienen el fenómeno de la enseñanza privada.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Educación, tutoría privada, funciones ocultas, tutor, padres.

TITLE: Non-Educational Functions of Private Tutoring.

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ABSTRACT: The study refers to the theories by E. Durkheim and R. C Merton. Identifying the non-educational factors that contribute to the popularity of tutoring will enable implementation of more efficient activities to reduce it. A qualitative strategy was adopted with individual interviews to 15 private tutors and statements made by teachers and parents in online media messages were analyzed. The results show that private tutoring plays many, not always recognized roles, and private tutors fill the gaps in school and family systems. The development of tutoring market is actually supported by all the participants of the educational process: parents, schoolteachers and tutors. We need to monitor the mechanisms and conditions which sustain the phenomenon of private teaching.

KEY WORDS: education, private tutoring, hidden functions, tutor, parents.

INTRODUCTION.

Many social phenomena can be analyzed by referring to the paradigm called functionalism. E. Durkheim recommends the advantages of the functional analysis: *Therefore, when one undertakes to explain a social phenomenon the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfils must be investigated separately. We use the word 'function' in preference to 'end' or 'goal' precisely because social phenomena generally do not exist for the usefulness of the results they produce. We must determine whether there is a correspondence between the fact being considered and the general needs of the social organism, and in what this correspondence consists (...) determination of the function, it is (...) necessary for the complete explanation of the phenomenon* (Durkheim 1982).

Unfortunately, this is not an easy task for researchers, as many phenomena fulfill two types of function in the society. Some are manifested and are *objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation*. Other are latent and are *the same type of consequences but unintended and unanticipated* (Merton 1968). It is important to include both types of functions when diagnosing

and describing certain social phenomena. It may turn out that it is the latent functions that legitimate their existence.

One of the more complex phenomena which “emerged” in the educational system is private tutoring. It has been practiced since ever, but it was not part of the social discourse. Currently it is an expanding phenomenon in many and diverse parts of the world (Bray 2017): North America (Koyama 2010; Burch 2009), Southern and Eastern Africa (Paviot, Heinsohn, and Korkman 2008), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Silova 2010), and Western Europe (Ireson and Rushforth 2011; Bray 2011) and Poland (Putkiewicz 2005).

Today private supplementary tutoring has involving a great variety of forms and a growing number of students (Bray 2011, 2017).

The research world-wide and the detailed reports about the scale of tutoring initiated the social debate on this common practice. All the research confirms the regular escalation of the problem. In Poland, every other high school senior student takes additional private lessons.

Tutoring is popular due to many factors: culture, socio-economic situation and condition of the education system (Bray 1999). Different attempts to minimize the scale of the phenomenon, made by different institutions, are has not been effective.

Tutoring is still very popular and consumes large part of home budgets. This is because it fulfils three main functions: it helps students get accepted to prestigious schools, earn decent grades and graduate with the results allowing them to choose another good school. Apart from the above, there are many other contributing factors, not always conscious and articulated in the public discourse (Jabbari et al, 2019; Nakhaee & Nasrabadi, 2019; Ardakani et al, 2015; Avazzadeh, 2015).

DEVELOPMENT.

Methodology.

The research objective was to determine the *regularities that will point to the theoretical explanation of the social life* (Babbie 2003), in this case, the popularity of private tutoring. The author tried to answer the following question: What are the hidden determinants of tutoring?

The study was conducted in two stages. First, documents were analyzed: statements.

[S] of people engaged in the discourse on tutoring. The analyzed material was obtained mainly from the global network. Then, individual interviews with 15 tutors [T] of different subjects: mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign languages were conducted. The interviews were focused on the most important aspects of tutoring: students, relations with parents and teachers, methods and evaluation of the phenomenon. The material was subject to the qualitative analysis to identify the latent functions of this type of teaching.

Analysis of the material.

The manifested functions of the certain social phenomenon can be diagnosed and described quite quickly, allowing to undertake activities to eliminate it from the social life. The problem is the most phenomena also fulfill some latent functions which the main reasons for their existence are. This is the case of private tutoring. It involves three groups of interests: teachers, parents and students. The paper presents the motivations of the first two groups. For each of the group, tutoring is beneficial for slightly different reasons. The analysis of the numerous publications and voices from the public debates allowed to identify over a dozen of the latent functions. Surely, there are many more, as every individual has their own motivations to engage in the activity, determined by such factors as their living environment or biography (Nuriyev et al, 2018; Eslami & Ahmadi, 2019; Araújo et al, 2018; Aziz & Abdolghader, 2018; Kotadiya & Andriambololona, 2018).

We will study the motivations of teachers in the first place¹. The most obvious function seems to be the *economic* function. Many tutors effectively evade paying income tax and this way repair their budget. Teachers' salaries in Poland are relatively low, especially those at the initial stages of professional promotion.

I've always combined teaching with tutoring. I tutored the kids of my friends and relatives for free (for the so-called gratitude), others for hefty money. Thanks to this I could make ends meet [S1].

Educational success is determined by the level of motivation of students. Teachers should be aware of the role of positive enhancements. Thanks to proper stimulation expressed in words of affirmation, encouragements, grades and rewards, they can achieve much better results. The following statement illustrates the essence of this relation.

Every success motivates students to attempt for more. They become more ambitious. I have not met with laziness during my lessons, for example, students not completing their homework because they didn't feel like it. Not always all the homework is done, sometimes only part of it, sometimes part of it is wrong, but there is will and commitment [T3].

The awareness of successes is particularly recommended when students have little faith in their abilities. Another statement proves it: *I get average students thinking about themselves: I'm not going to learn it or I won't need it. It is very hard to lead them out of this wrong self-assessment, to remove the barrier of unbelief in their own abilities, it takes few years and then they get pretty good results [T10].*

Another function may be called *corrective*. The number of hours planned for certain subjects in school curricula is insufficient. Despite teachers' efforts, it is impossible to cover the whole content: *I try to address all the issues but it's not always possible to discuss certain topics longer [T2].* The needs of students differ, and every class has over twenty students on average. Not everyone is able

¹ Students were excluded from this group because in their case other functions are significant.

to understand all the information taught. Private lessons provide time and conditions to implement the principle of individual approach to education.

School curricula are another area where some modifications should be introduced. The interviewed tutors comment the scope of the obligatory programs as follows: *As for mathematics, the school teaches too many too difficult, abstract things, neglecting the important essentials ... Students usually were coming to me with questions about the literature from the area I covered during five years at the university* [S2] (Putkiewicz,2005, p.148-149). Correction involves not only reduction of the systemic barriers but also the barriers within the students: *My goal is, among others, to overcome fear during tests and overcome barriers in the students* [T5].

Other tutors' declarations were similar: *As for me, I focus on encouraging and showing that studying is not that bad. That they should not be afraid of mathematics. That it's possible like and understand physics. I want to show that knowledge of the basic physical or chemical laws is much needed and useful in daily life* [T7].

In other words, I want to tame these subjects, so they are not associated with some kind of punishment one has to bear at school. Students with very good or good grades are afraid too, and they learn by heart. Which is not the best solution. This is my hidden goal with which I come to every student [K9].

At the beginning, we usually talk about the potential educational future of the student. I need to convince them, that the lesson is not an unpleasant duty but a benefit [T10].

The *creational* function is also worth a closer look. While tutoring teachers are not limited by the imposed curriculum. They can introduce students to different meanders of the certain subject, pass on their passion and make the education process more attractive.

For my lessons, I prepare spatial multimedia presentations because only when students can see how the Earth rotates, they will understand how to calculate the angle of the sunlight [T4].

This function is connected with another one, the *self-fulfillment* function. Working one-on-one with a student, a teacher may feel fulfilled: *for me it was a pleasure because we covered extra material and it was like [...] an extended program. It was very beneficial for me because I too read additional stuff* (Putkiewicz 2005, p. 155). With this system of work, it is much easier to trace student's progress. Young teachers also mentioned another function, that is, *consolidating* the obtained knowledge. Multiple times repeated content and passing it on to others transmits the knowledge to the long-term memory. These teaching methods are at the top of the Dale's Cone of Experience (1969) and guarantee memorizing even up to 90% of material. In addition, doubts and questions raised during lessons help young teachers to evaluate and constantly develop their own skills (*self-educational function*)

Tutoring also facilitates *communication* with students and their parents: *First of all, tutoring enables [...] more individualized contact and this, in my opinion, is the greatest gift of these meetings* (Putkiewicz 2005, p. 150). Tutors are given much trust from parents and students, what usually facilitates contact and working on student's progress.

Parents always cooperate with me. Not only in terms of didactics but also raising the children. Sometimes I feel like I know more about the functioning of certain student's family than the school. This helps me to select optimal methods of work and discipline [T11].

The *control* function involves teachers who also tutor their students. During the classes they can ask "their students" further questions in a controlled way so they get the best possible results and contribute to school's high position in rankings. The following statement may prove this practice: *In many prestigious high schools about 90% students benefit from private tutoring by teachers from this actual school! Schools then advertise themselves with the high percentage of acceptance to renown universities* (Putkiewicz 2005, p. 12). Being tutored by one's own schoolteacher most often protects against the unsatisfactory grades from that teacher's subject.

The fact of being the renowned tutor gives the sense of prestige and *nobilitation*. The number of students trying to get additional lessons from certain teacher proves he or she is the specialist in their profession. In addition, tutors see successes of their students more often than schoolteachers, and they get “praise” after successful exams or promotion to another levels or education. They also hear “thank you”, more often.

Finally, we could mention one more function. Tutoring lowers the unemployment rate. Often people who make a living by providing this type of services treat them as their professional work. This is mainly the case of students.

When analyzing the latent functions, we must also mention the destructive ones which distort the balance in the classroom, introduce social inequity (secondary selection) or stigmatize some students. These activities challenge the fundamental mission of education, that is, leveling the chances: *I teach in a small town (...) here, people cannot afford tutoring, even if it was 10 or 15 zloty per hour. The results will be that poor children from classes with 35 students will lose at the exams with the ones whose parents could have afforded several hours a week of extra tutoring (...) The differences between the students from poor and rich environments, from big cultural centers and remote villages are also noticeable during the final exams in primary and lower secondary schools* [S4] (Rynkowska 2018).

In the discourse on tutoring, many voices blame parents for the escalation of this phenomenon. Here is the opinion of one of the high school examiners, who has been tutoring for over 16 years: *Students do not read books and newspapers, and they listen to the obligatory books on MP3. They type with their computers, while only handwriting stimulates imagination. They graduate from school and end their contact with literature, so how can we talk about success here? Maybe parents are satisfied with the passed exam but for me, it's a failure* [T14].

It is truth that overworked and tired parents are ready to pay more to increase the certainty their children will pass the exams. Besides, interactions with a tutor are easier and more relaxed than with teachers. There are no elements like listening comments on parents' meetings or the danger of transferring resentments resulting from the interactions with parents to the relations with students². These are not the only positives. It is worth to analyze thoroughly these tutoring functions which, according to parents, make paid lessons attractive.

One of the private teachers noticed some present trend parents want to follow: everyone must finish high school, pass the final exams and get several degrees (even with very average results) to find a job. *People get excited about it but what's the point if this makes the quality and prestige of education close to none (obtaining several degrees does not guarantee employment). Maybe university shouldn't be for everyone* [T12].

I wonder the most about parents sending their children to English lessons against their will. Tutoring has become very popular and essential, a fixed element in every student's weekly schedule. But actually, it should be teachers' responsibility to do everything, so the material covered during classes was assimilated by the young minds [T15].

Parents do not admit their decisions to pay for tutoring are the result of following the trends or pressure of the environment (the growing competition).

A separate sub-group are the functions typical for the family environment such as: *socializing, educational and care*. The first one involves learning how to be consistent, how to use time properly and to respect one's own and teacher's work. Many students treat school classes as an obligation and they only learn to use their studying time effectively during private lessons. They learn how to learn. If the tutor is an expert in certain area or has interesting personality, he or she may become someone a significant person in student's life. Someone they can talk to about different, often difficult issues.

² Kiedykorepetycje? http://www.daktik.rubikon.pl/Nauczanie/nauczanie_kiedy_korepetycje.html 12.05.2010.

It happens that educational and care functions are passed on to private tutors: *Aneta tutors an 11-year old boy since his first grade. She picks him up from school every day, they go home together, she gives him some soup and they have lessons. When they're done, they wait for his mom to come home from work* [S3] (Sarnacka 2007).

15 minutes a day would be enough, but parents don't have time even for that. By paying me, they feel excused [S6] (Kolet-Iciek 2018).

I taught German but his [student's] grandmother asked me at the beginning of each lesson to look through all the notebooks with him so he would have his homework done [T1].

Offers of tutoring for first graders have received a great deal of publicity. Tutors offer support in learning the basics like reading, writing or calculating. Condemned by different environments, they explain that their activity is the response to the marketplace laws. The demand drives the supply. There are many parents who use this type of services. One of the overworked mothers got her child a tutor because the boy has troubles learning the alphabet. She can afford to pay the specialist to work with her second-grader and she doesn't see anything wrong with that (Bartkowiak, Koziol 2009).

Modern parents very often control all free time of their kids. They plan and organize, filling the schedule with additional activities. There are many educational errors in this attitude. Releasing young people off the control over their free time will result in them having problems with managing and creative use of it in the future. It is also disturbing that parents often focus on the final results of the educational process (passing a test, acceptance by the certain school). But they neglect the aspect of understanding the obtained knowledge and regular progress in studying, the so-called small victories. Sometimes tutors want to do something more with their students but the parents, fixed on getting good grades, "clip their wings".

As for English, it is only grammar and writing that matters. I think students should learn the language, not the material needed to pass the test. But when I try to do something different, approach the language from another angle, practice listening or speaking, parents ask me to stick to the school material. Everything boils down to learning the material and getting a good grade [S3].

Some of the interviewed tutors emphasized they fulfill educational or therapeutic functions for their students' parents or caregivers: *I tried to explain the grandmother that my student has entered a difficult period of adolescence and that his rebellion is the way he expressed his independence. Actually, all my students had complicated family situations and it almost always results in problems at school. (...) Sometimes it just happened that I became the family therapist. Grandmothers told me about their personal problems. I listened to everyone because I knew this information would help me to understand the problems and motivations of my students [T8].*

I explain that if someone has had E's so far, he or she won't start to get A's right away. At the same time, I explain that child's ignorance or discouragement with the subject is not only caused by a "stupid teacher" but the "blame" is on both sides, so for example, maybe it would be good to make notes in the subject notebook so you know later what the homework is or what will the test be about. Sometimes students say they have a test in math. So, I ask: what exactly? Ehmmmm, well, math. Student very often neglect their responsibilities and parents don't know about it [T12].

Tutoring may also support rising children by fulfilling the *penalty* function. It becomes a weapon used by parents when children do not want to learn. Sometimes, additional lessons are some form of punishment for lack of progress. Parents know that paid tutor will take care and enforce proper work: *The rule is: a student has to come with a plan of the essay, part of the text and only when at least one page is ready we can move on to the next part [S5] (Putkiewicz 2005, p154).*

Sometimes, private tutoring serves as a *preventive* measure, especially with youths. Parents limit their child's free time because they are convinced that they minimize potential threats like getting into the "wrong company" or engaging in risky behaviors. It is better if they spend time with a tutor because then they can be controlled.

I had few students who had troubles at school because of bad behavior. They were teenagers. Our lessons began right after school. Parents worked in corporations and they were practically not present. It felt like my job was to babysit those kids, not to teach them because they did well at school [T5].

Tutoring may also serve to *diagnose* child's intellectual abilities and predispositions, and sometimes other problems which come out during individual work with a student. *Tutoring is hard because often students get it when it's very late and it's hard to fix many things in a short time, especially when you don't like the subject, or you've earned certain reputation at school [T15].*

Modern parents really want their children to achieve as much as possible in life. This phenomenon was analyzed with Becker's economic theory of fertility (1990). According to it, children play identical role as luxury goods. It is worth to invest in them because with time, it will bring benefits. The educational capital will transform into the economic one. Investing in tutoring significantly increases the value of child's potential, the investment. In this case, tutoring fulfills two functions, not necessarily recognized: *investment* and *maintenance*. In the first case, it is about believing that someday the money invested will pay off or even multiply. The research conducted by A. Giza-Poleszczuk, M. Marody and A. Rychard reveal that over 80% of parents think the most important strategy of accumulation of capital is education (Putkiewicz 2005, p. 12), 40% declared that if their financial situation allowed them, they would send their children to a private school. They do not have this opportunity, so they at least provide private tutoring for them (Zawadzka 2007).

With that, another important function appears: *nobilitation*. When parents know they can afford to pay for additional lessons with good tutors, they feel better. A mother of a lower secondary student comments this new type of luxury: *I often hear how outstanding tutors my friends' children have. The higher academic degree of the tutor, the more you pay and the more proud you can be* [S6] (Mila 2013).

As for the *maintenance* function, paying for tutoring may be an excuse to neglect other, widely understood responsibilities towards children. Parents may think I am doing my best so my child has the best tutors and learning conditions, I pay a lot of money so I am a good parent. I can take care of my child's future. Unfortunately, it is easy to go into extreme, as mentioned by one of the teachers: *It is parents who want to invest in their children, and they send them somewhere all the time, and kids go for the sake of peace. In most cases this is connected with lack of acceptance from the parents who want more and more, they want A's, but not everyone is predisposed to A's, right?* (RMF FM, 2008).

I teach math to a girl with the average 5.5 (In Polish education system the scale is 2-6, with 5 meaning very good and 6 - exceptional). *Her parents want her to have someone to practice with, but I think she doesn't need that kind of help at all* [T7].

Tutoring may also fulfill quite dangerous *compensation* function. Sending children to numerous extra lessons may be an attempt to indirectly fulfill parents' own dreams. If they were not able to finish prestigious studies, find a well-paid and satisfactory job, they would do anything to ensure a good start and provide opportunities for their children.

I often hear parents saying: "This is my dream that she/he becomes a doctor or a lawyer. Graduate from this or that high school". Then I know working with this student may be hard because kids do not always share their parents' vision. And it is hard to motivate them by saying: "You know, your parents really want you to..." [T2]

At the end, the question we should ask is: What is the future of tutoring? In what direction will it evolve? What functions will it fulfill? We will see the answers within the next years.

Discussion.

The existing research on private supplementary tutoring have mainly focused on forms and efficiency of private tutoring for students' learning and achievement, and less on the functions filled by PST (Hallsén, Karlsson 2018).

The presented research results show that private tutoring fulfils many functions additional to education. The interviewed tutors noticed their role was often beyond simple teaching, most often the mentioned care and investment.

Some of the above described functions like socializing (the role of "bigger brother") or therapeutic are beyond parents' awareness. It would be beneficial if tutors discussed with parents the scope of their services and functions.

CONCLUSIONS.

The closing question we should ask is: What should we do with the knowledge about the functions of tutoring? First of all, a complex diagnosis is needed of the roles of tutors and the functions of the supplementary private education.

The results should be compared to the previous research described by (Hallsén, Karlsson 2018), Trent (2016), Davies (2013) and others. Surely, it would be worth to introduce more complex care over families that decide to use the help of a tutor.

Many teachers now start their own businesses. Their [educational] offer could be extended with psychological and pedagogical support. The Swedish studies show that private tutors appear in the consumer narratives as compensating for shortcomings in schools and families (Hallsén, Karlsson 2018); for example, *the private tutor is positioned as a savior in relation to both mother and son*

else or a young role model with whom the children can share interests and who can boost their self-confidence (Hallsén, Karlsson 2018 p. 8).

It is also worth to use the experience of other countries and introduce peer-tutoring in schools (Gottfried, Garcia & Yon Kim 2018, Barron & Foot 2006). Danuta Sterna sees the advantages of organized student self-help: *I have seen that in some schools' consultations were so organized that the tutors were students from higher grades. Teachers were only the ultimate appeal instance. Both, students who came with their problems and the tutors were satisfied. The latter were recognized by teachers who showed trust in them and gave them the opportunity to help others* (2011).

Free student self-help available in the formal educational institutions could reduce the scale of tutoring and organized classes would serve education and socialization in the first place. This would eliminate the practice of non-educational support of parents and limit the investment and nobilitation function of tutoring because peer tutoring would be available to all students.

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