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Attitudes to Studying in Poland

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Abstract

The research problem was defined as ‘What is the attitude towards studying in Poland, and how has it changed in connection with transformational and generational changes?’

Methods of data collection and analysis: An original questionnaire, “Attitudes to Studying”, containing 55 statements referring to nine content areas defining attitudes towards studying.

Indication of the research sample: The research was conducted between 2015 and 2017 (N=2102). Three generations were defined, as follows: younger generation, 17–39; middle generation, 40–59; and older generation, 60 plus. Other variables taken into consideration were study status, political transformation (study before and after 1989), and gender.

Main results: The research allowed us to distinguish three empirical factors relating to motivation to study. The first of these is linked to the decrease in motivation connected with the

egalitarianism of studying. This factor was more important for women than for men. The second indicates the significance of a university's prestige when taking up studies. Motivation understood in this way was more important for women, people studying before the political transformation, and the results on this scale generally increased with the age of the respondents. The third indicates the role of social pressure in making decisions about studying – this is more important for people studying before the political transformation, and for men compared to women. Interestingly, social pressure is more important for those still studying than for those who have already graduated.

Conclusions: The research made it possible to distinguish three main groups of motives relating to studying in Poland: the environment and prestige of the university as factors increasing motivation, and the egalitarianism of studies as a factor decreasing motivation. Attitudes towards studying are influenced by both the motives present before the political transformation, as well as those which appeared as the result of socio-cultural changes.

Keywords: political transformation, attitudes to study, higher education, university.

Introduction

In Poland, on the one hand, we are dealing with a continuation of certain traditions in higher education, including university education, and on the other hand, with fairly turbulent changes after the political transformation. Formed after the Second World War, the system reflected, above all, the concepts of the Humboldtian university, in which the professor is supposed to occupy himself with scientific research and also be a lawmaker, indicating the standards for scientific work (Goćkowski, 1998). Up to 1990 the university system was elitist and stable – the percentage of people with higher education (depending on various factors) was from several to several dozen percent, although the structure of professions did not undergo any significant changes. For a long time the political transformation had no significant effect on education at a higher level, particularly with regard to universities (Błaszczński, 2014).

University remained at the forefront of prestigious institutions and there was no radical change in the education methods. However, there was a significant decrease in the quality of this type of education as a result of the freeing up of the education market, including the introduction of many private schools and new departments in state institutions which accepted candidates without any entrance exams. It is worth noting that between 1990 and 2004 the number of students increased fivefold, whereas the number of lecturers remained fairly stable during the whole of that period, which had a direct influence on the quality of education and the lecturers' scientific work (a great number of conducive

articles, published only locally or as book chapters which were difficult to access even for specialists) (Kobylarek, 2017).

The next stage in the reform indicated the Bologna Process and bureaucratic operations in an attempt to adapt the higher education system to European standards by participating in the formation of the European Higher Education Area and introducing studies on three levels (bachelor, master and doctorate). Not without significance was the possibility for some specialist higher education institutions to transform into universities after meeting certain requirements. This second stage of post-war development in higher education was intended to increase the importance of professional education, but even here the Humboldtian university proved to be somewhat resistant to change. Education programs underwent minor modifications, brought about rather by ageing knowledge than by ministerial demands. Nor can it be said there was any significant change in quality or procedure in the case of the new universities or transformed academies, which basically still used the same didactic and scientific methods (Kobylarek, 2008).

The third stage is an attempt to reform the education system which is closely connected with higher education and which somehow reinforces that which in Polish universities is 'Humboldtian'. To this day none of these reforms has weakened the influence of an academic oligarchy on the form and function of educational institutions, nor have they (despite declarations) strengthened the function of universities in transformation, nor have they been related to the state budget in effectively meeting the needs of the job market. Attempts at any kind of interference or fundamental change have always been met by protests from the scientific community, for whom freedom of research usually meant freedom of the university itself from any kind of external pressure. This is further transferred to a demand for total freedom in creating educational programs and establishing required student competences. This is one of the main reasons why the fairly consistent education reforms of the last 10 years (despite governmental changes) are perceived ambivalently by the scientific community. Some academics (especially the younger ones, seeking habilitation) perceive the reforms as a chance to introduce Polish science to the global community, and others fear further attacks on the independence of the institution. There are also those who point to numerous inconsistencies connected therewith (Świtalska, 2010; Kobylarek, 2017).

After the political transformation in Poland in 1989 and modernization of the market for education services, private institutions began to appear, which contributed to the opening up of access to higher education (Kobylarek, 2004).

The concepts of higher education, universities and studies generally underwent a change. Next to the traditional humboldtian elite universities (Goćkowski, 1998) private institutions began to appear, educating on a mass scale and focused on making a profit. The range of higher education reforms, fairly consistent in realizing a new vision of the university, despite governmental changes, led consistently to the realization of a new concept of the university as a modern institution continually striving to improve standards (Kwiek, 2015), although still having problems in recognizing the needs of the local community and failing to co-operate adequately with the social environment. Additionally, it is an institution which has serious problems with its social responsibilities and is resistant to civilizational change, which may appear in such things as technological shortfalls or an archaic management system, in which management positions are often held by people without basic preparation in field of management (Kobylarek, 2017).

Transformations in the function and significance of the university were able to change the approach to studying. It could be assumed that egalitarianism caused, amongst others, a decrease in the prestige of studying (Kozyr-Kowalski, 2005), and that the social environment gained a greater ability to encourage studying among a greater number of young people. The opposite hypothesis is also possible. If the assumption is correct that as a result of making access to higher education the prestige of the institution decreases, then pressure from the outside may also weaken, because degrees and diplomas lose their value. That which is widely available is not generally highly valued (Cialdini, 2011).

The Tools for measuring attitudes to studying were formulated, taking into consideration the motives which may be the result of community pressure and the prestige of the institution, as well as the significance they could have for the motivation to study,

The questions were constructed taking into consideration the positions which are prominent in the literature which has arisen in the present century, as well as those which were present before the transformation (Grotkowska & Sztanderska, 2018). The first group of positions may include the postponement of maturity, extended period of studies, and the egalitarianism of studying (which unlike the previous two factors decreases the motivation to study). Factors which may be important both before the transformation and currently are the attractiveness of studying/studies, prestige, promotion, willingness to find work, family pressure, perceived compulsion as a result of social stigmatization.

Methods of data collection and analysis

The aim of the research was to reconstruct experiences related to the motivation to study, and to investigate how this attitude changed in connection with transformational and generational changes. Additionally, another aim was to isolate and verify the content areas necessary for the construction of a tool, which is currently undergoing the process of standardization.

A total of 2,102 people took part in the research¹, which was conducted from 2015 to 2017 in four Lower Silesian institutes in Poland – the University of Wrocław, the Academy of Physical Education, the State Higher Vocational School in Legnica, and Wrocław Polytechnic. Students and participants of the Universities of the Third Age (U3A) from the above universities were asked to complete a questionnaire, and then ask family members from two other generations - older generations in the case of students, or younger generations in the case of U3A students. The three generations were defined as: younger generation, 17-39; middle generation, 40-59; and older generation, 60 plus. Other variables taken into consideration were study status (intending to study, not studying at all, in the course of studying), political transformation (those who had completed their studies before 1989, and those who started before and after 1989), and gender.

For the purpose of research, a questionnaire relating to attitudes to studying was formulated. It contained 55 questions relating to 9 content areas concerning approaches to studying. After analysis, three empirical factors relating to motivation were distinguished.

Construction of the questionnaire - theoretical and empirical content areas

When distinguishing the content areas defining attitudes towards studying, various changes which occurred in Poland as a result of the political transformation after 1989 were taken into consideration. The focus was on both, changes directly related to higher education (e.g. egalitarian access to studies, the prestige of the university) and general socio-cultural changes (e.g. postponement of adulthood).

¹ The total number of respondents in individual tables may differ slightly due to a lack of some data for several of them, or due to the type of variables which are compared.

The results obtained from the replies to questions relating to various content areas indicated how far the respondent agrees with the statements describing:

- **attractiveness** (-) : the promulgation of education decreases its attractiveness
- **promotion** (-) : the promulgation of study meant that students who studied after the political transformation linked studying with promotion and a better start in the job market less than students before the transformation
- **egalitarianism** : political transformation meant that studying is being seen more as egalitarian than elitist
- **postponement** : the postponement of maturity is a significant factor in deciding whether to study after the transformation
- **work** (-) : after the transformation studying did not guarantee finding a good job
- **pressure** (parental) : despite a change in the approach to studying, parental pressure still exists, which influences the decision to study
- **prestige** : despite a change in the approach to studying, higher education is still regarded as prestigious, which is a motivation to start studying
- **extension** : understanding studies as a natural extension of compulsory education contributes to making a decision about studying
- **obligation** (social) : social stigmatization of those without higher education contributes to a sense of obligation to study

Next, a factorial analysis (PCA) was conducted on the 55 questions in the ‘Aspects to Studying’ questionnaire. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement of adequacy in selection of samples was 0.92 (the lowest individual KMO measurement was 0.78), and test structure (Figure 1). The three factor solution explaining 33.41% variance of Barlett’s sphericity phenomenon turned out to be statistically relevant [$\chi^2(1485) = 34348.70$, $p < 0.001$], which confirms the validity of conducting factorial analysis (Field, 2009). Cattell’s criterion (scree graph) indicates three factors (factor 1 explains 15.66%, factor 2 explains 10.57%, factor 3 explains 7.17%).

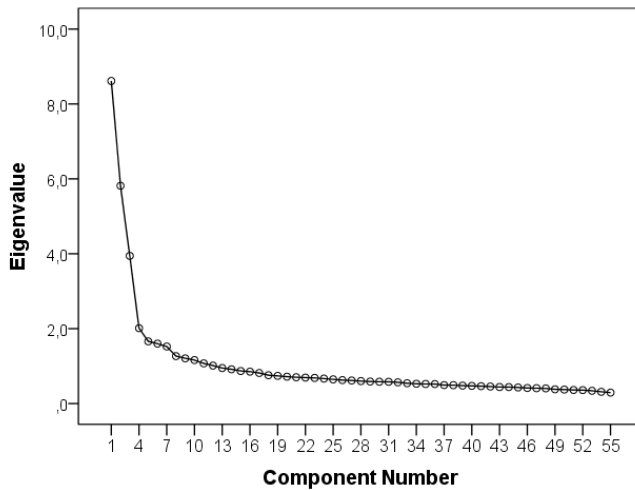


Figure 1. Factorial structure of empirical indicators relating to attitudes to study.

Source: Authors' research.

Based on the analysis of the content of the test positions, three factors were defined as follows:

- factor 1: decreased motivation – egalitarianism
- factor 2: motivation – university
- factor 3: motivation – environment

These three empirically defined factors distinguish people according to the type of motivation.

Factor 1. **Decreased motivation – egalitarianism.** High results obtained on this scale indicate that people consider that with regard to the promulgation of studies, studying is not currently attractive. Studying, in the opinion of such people, does not guarantee finding a job. The consistency of position on this scale is high ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Factor 2. **Motivation – University.** High results obtained on this scale indicate that studying is attractive with regard to the prestige of the institution, and completing studies provides the possibility of finding work. For such people, studying forms a natural continuation of education. The measure of reliance on this scale is satisfying ($\alpha = 0.82$).

Factor 3. **Motivation – Environment.** The high results obtained on this scale indicate that people undertake studies because of parental pressure or postponement of maturity and responsibility, for which they are not prepared.

In this case, motivation is situated beyond higher education institutions. This scale is characterized by a high level of reliability ($\alpha = 0.83$).

Results

With the aim of bringing objectivity to the analysis, 9 theoretical measurements were used, as well as 3 general measurements distinguished by factorial analysis (PCA). Inter-gender comparisons (Table 1) showed that men more than women declared that parental pressure and the motivation to find a better job influenced their decision to undertake studies. In turn, women more than men are of the opinion that education is still regarded as prestigious and treat studies as a natural extension of compulsory education, and also (more than men) consider that social stigmatization of those without higher education leads to a sense of obligation to study. Looking at the results of the empirical measurements, it was also observed that compared to women, men obtained lower scores on the scale 'decreased motivation – egalitarianism' and in the measurement 'motivation – university' and higher scores on the scale 'motivation – environment'. No differences were shown in the remaining measurements.

Table 1. Intensity of position and motivation of men and women regarding studies.

	women (N = 1668)		men (N = 427)		U	p
	Mdn	Mrang	Mdn	Mrang		
Attractiveness*	3.17	1051.64	3.17	1033.76	350038.50	0.585
Promotion*	3.33	1056.67	3.33	1014.15	341663.50	0.194
Egalitarianism	3.43	1059.01	3.29	1005.00	337755.50	0.099
Postponement	2.71	1047.10	2.71	1051.51	354619.00	0.893
Work*	2.80	1034.93	3.00	1099.06	334313.50	0.050
Pressure	2.00	1015.25	2.17	1173.77	301492.00	< 0.001
Prestige	3.14	1074.74	3.00	943.55	311518.50	< 0.001
Extension	3.17	1073.53	3.00	948.29	313540.00	< 0.001
Obligation	2.43	1065.25	2.43	980.63	327349.50	0.010
Decreased motivation – egalitarianism	3.35	1062.26	3.30	992.28	332325.00	0.033
Motivation – University	3.06	1079.42	2.95	925.25	303703.50	< 0.001
Motivation – E	2.06	1021.01	2.31	1153.44	311095.00	< 0.001

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' research.

On the other hand, comparison of those studying before and after 1989 (Table 2) shows that those educating themselves before the political transformation agree to a greater extent that the motives influencing the decision to study are postponement of maturity, parental pressure, and the opinion that higher education is still considered as prestigious and studying is a natural extension of compulsory education. In the case of empirical measurements, it turns out that compared to those studying after the transformation, those who had studied before 1989 achieved higher scores on the scale ‘motivation – university’ and ‘motivation – environment’.

Table 2. Intensity of position and motivation of those studying before and after the political transformation of 1989.

	After 1989 (N = 545)		Before 1989 (N = 79)		U	p
	Mdn	Mrang	Mdn	Mrang		
Attractiveness	3.33	311.83	3.50	317.11	21163.50	0.808
Promotion	3.50	313.61	3.50	304.85	20923.00	0.686
Egalitarianism	3.43	310.87	3.57	323.77	20637.50	0.552
Postponement	2.71	302.60	3.25	380.77	16134.50	< 0.001
Work	3.00	309.74	3.00	331.54	20023.50	0.313
Pressure	1.83	303.77	2.33	368.68	17010.50	0.003
Prestige	3.14	297.81	3.57	413.87	13519.00	< 0.001
Extension	3.17	302.21	3.33	383.51	15917.50	< 0.001
Obligation	2.43	309.91	2.50	330.40	20113.50	0.344
Decreased motivation – egalitarianism	3.50	311.30	3.50	320.78	20873.00	0.662
Motivation – University	3.11	299.80	3.42	400.09	14607.50	< 0.001
Motivation – Environment	2.00	303.69	2.31	373.30	16724.50	0.001

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' research.

Comparisons of generational groups (Table 3) also revealed statistically relevant differences. It turned out that those over 60 and those aged 39 or younger achieved higher scores on most of the scales compared to those aged 40 to 59. However, in the measurements ‘postponement’, ‘prestige’, ‘extension’ and ‘motivation – university’, the level of results generally increased with age (there were no statistically relevant differences in the ‘promotion’ and ‘work’ measurements).

Statistically relevant differences in position and motivation to studying were also obtained when comparing groups of people who are not studying, are currently studying, or studied in the past (Table 4). On most of the scales, those who have already completed studies obtained higher results than those who are currently studying, and the lowest results were obtained by those who are not studying at all. Exceptions are the pressure and prestige measurements. Parental pressure is a much more influential factor for those currently studying than those who have finished studies, and prestige as a criterion conditioning the decision to study is the most important factor for those who are not studying at all, when compared to the other group.

Table 3. Intensity of position and motivation with regard to studying in age groups 17–39, 40–59 and over 60.

	I: aged 17–39 (N = 1884)		II: aged 40–59 (N = 98)		III: over 60 (N = 115)		H(2)	p	Post-hoc
	Mdn	Mrang	Mdn	Mrang	Mdn	Mrang			
Attractiveness	3.17	1053.67	2.83	881.24	3.40	1115.49	9.05	0.011	II < I, II < III
Promotion	3.33	1044.06	3.33	1052.02	3.50	1127.29	2.06	0.357	ns
Egalitarianism	3.43	1048.35	3.14	912.48	3.57	1176.07	10.08	0.006	II < I, II < III, I < III
Postponement	2.71	1035.96	2.62	968.44	3.20	1331.21	27.66	< 0.001	II < III, I < III
Work	3.00	1042.03	3.00	1068.66	3.00	1146.37	3.35	0.187	ns
Pressure	2.00	1044.38	1.67	836.61	2.50	1294.75	31.15	< 0.001	II < I, II < III, I < III
Prestige	3.00	1021.23	3.38	1223.45	3.43	1355.31	41.66	< 0.001	I < II, I < III
Extension	3.17	1043.57	2.83	914.82	3.33	1252.26	18.00	< 0.001	II < III, I < III
Obligation	2.43	1048.29	2.14	927.79	2.57	1163.90	8.10	0.017	II < III
Decrease in motivation – egalitarianism	3.35	1052.25	3.13	876.80	3.45	1142.47	10.73	0.005	II < I, II < III
Motivation – University	3.05	1033.76	2.92	1033.99	3.26	1311.42	22.87	< 0.001	I < III, II < III
Motivation – Environment	2.13	1045.27	1.87	824.53	2.50	1301.33	33.54	< 0.001	II < I, II < III, I < III

Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

Source: Authors' research.

Table 4. Intensity of position and motivation towards studying among those not studying, those currently studying and those who have finished studies.

	I: not studying (N = 161)		II: currently studying (N = 1320)		III: finished studying (N = 619)		p	Post-hoc
	Mdn	Mrang	Mdn	Mrang	Mdn	Mrang		
Attractiveness	2.67	746.31	3.17	1039.13	3.40	1153.87	59.17	I < II, I < III, II < III
Promotion	3.00	822.39	3.33	1023.88	3.50	1166.60	48.32	I < II, I < III, II < III
Egalitarianism	3.00	783.42	3.43	1035.67	3.43	1151.59	49.38	I < II, I < III, II < III
Postponement	2.71	1085.19	2.71	1030.59	2.71	1083.95	3.84	0.146
Work	2.60	885.34	3.00	1055.32	3.00	1083.19	13.93	I < II, I < III
Pressure	2.00	1043.75	2.00	1080.41	1.83	986.68	10.13	0.006
Prestige	3.14	1137.85	3.00	1012.65	3.14	1108.50	14.20	0.001
Extension	3.00	1041.23	3.17	1030.45	3.17	1095.66	4.93	0.085
Obligation	2.29	998.55	2.43	1047.57	2.43	1070.25	1.88	0.392
Decreased motivation – egalitarianism	2.95	741.36	3.35	1041.06	3.50	1151.05	59.22	I < II, I < III, II < III
Motivation – University	3.05	1068.64	3.00	1011.47	3.11	1129.02	16.00	0.001
Motivation – Environment	2.20	1074.29	2.19	1085.19	2.00	970.34	15.40	0.001

Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

Source: Authors' research.

Discussion

Despite continual reforms, changes in the concept of the functioning of higher education appear to be spurious, because its distinctive characteristic is always a high degree of independence from the influence of external interested parties. On the other hand, the position and expectations of students themselves towards education may change with regard to changes in the education market. Above all, we can expect a different attitude to studying from those students (currently graduates) who had finished elitist studies before the beginning of the 1990s. Students who studied before the political transformation and those who studied after should expect something different from their studies and be guided by different motives. A different attitude to studies should also be held by the generation studying in recent years, when the education programme is very varied and generally accessible, and at the same time appears to be better adapted to people with enormous experience in new technologies and who are prepared for passing tests rather than advanced analysis. It can be supposed that such people will expect 'instant' education, much more focused on a tangible effect (knowledge, skills) or non-education profits (social position, social contacts) rather than an effort of building oneself and self-improvement which may mean yielding to environmental pressure.

Research into higher education in recent years is generally concentrated on systematically created chances and exclusions. Students' motivations are considered in the context of modern technologies in supporting the education process, which is particularly significant in the case of the youngest generation (Fox, 2019; Dusseau, 2020). In the case of professional studies, students generally base their choice on the interest and the attractiveness of the chosen profession (Kori et al., 2016). In the case of a system transition in researching students at public universities in Pakistan, no significant changes were discovered in positions between the sexes and different universities (Afzal & Rashid, 2018).

In turn, research into the positions and expectations of students regarding English and American universities show an increase in the elitist tendency, opposite to Poland. Especially in Great Britain, higher education has become a much more valuable and difficult to achieve benefit (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2013).

Research into attitudes to study in Poland shows that studying is undertaken above all with regard to achieving a profession and employment or from an interest. The motivation for both are in some way connected (CBOS, 2013). The research suggests that young people are able to make mature life decisions

and consciously choose a suitable direction of studies, guided by intelligence or pure calculation.

Results from another questionnaire published in 2013 indicated interest and passion as the main reasons for choosing a subject to study, which to a certain extent corresponds to the general assumption of the autonomous character of decision making (Jeziór, 2013), at the same time showing that the political transformation changed nothing in the general structure of motivation to undertake studies, which in a certain way dovetails with the theory of minimal changes in the approach to education in the institutions.

Still more research results, conducted among high school pupils, show that young people are guided to a large extent by the prestige of a profession or the character of their future work when choosing a subject to study (Sikorski, 1997).

This is confirmed by the analysis of the research material collected from vocational high schools:

- economic – the choice of study was above all decided by the type of work future graduates wished to perform (Sławecki & Wach-Kąkolewicz, 2012),
- polytechnic – the prestige of a professional title was chosen as the basic motivation in the case of almost 40% of students in the fourth semester of studies (Bujara & Popczyk, 2016),
- pedagogic – desire to work with children, interest in pedagogic knowledge (Jarco & Wąsiński, 2016)

However, already in 2015 W. Jarecki indicated a certain shift in approach to studying, that is to say that earlier (2004) most of those researched (60%) were guided by their interests when choosing a field of study, whereas in 2015 they were in the minority (about 40%).

In the case of the research results obtained here, it appears that this tendency is pushed even further, because many more motives were identified and with a great degree of certainty, it can be assumed that interests are the only one of many components affecting the final decision to study.

The analyses mentioned above could suggest that, together with the ongoing transformation, personal motives (interest and passion) in choosing to study are losing their significance. Perhaps attitudes to studying have become more mature, and the institution was chosen, above all, with regard to the possibility of following a specified profession in the future. It is commonly assumed that such a perception of studies and higher education ceased in 1980s. (Kokocińska, 2015, p. 117). Research results from the 1990s point to numerous overvalua-

tions influenced by the political transformation and to a shift (at least in the aspirations of some young people) from being educated as a self-satisfying value (for self-development, for possession of knowledge itself, or simply to be wise), to an instrumental direction (to acquire a profession) (Borowicz, 1991; Fatyga, 1999; Kokocińska, 2015). The research results obtained confirm a change in the approach to studies, but it has a different character. The oldest generation, those who had completed their studies before the political transformation, valued the possibility to study with regard to its elitist character, therefore the current mass generation may perceive it negatively on the basis of opposition. The middle generation, who studied during the transformation and entered the job market at an unfavourable time of high unemployment, also valued studying but currently has other priorities connected with professional and family duties. Egalitarianism did not alienate them from studying earlier and the factors described mean that they were never subjected to demotivating pressures. The youngest generation, currently studying, suffer pressure from the egalitarianism factor, because for them studying is nothing exceptional because it is widely accessible.

A second problem is the distinct divergence between the research results, which point to two basic types of reasons for young people when choosing what to study (interest and the possibility of following a profession) and internet discussion, where a more relaxed approach to studying appears, and sometimes also randomness or making a decision influenced by completely different factors such as postponement of maturity (Wieteska, 2014). It can be supposed that motives appearing in a media discussion of open comments in online forums do not present an accurate picture of the situation because of the greater possibility of the appearance of extreme or marginal positions, characterized by emotion. However, it would be interesting whether these marginal motives, together with mass access to higher education, might be subject to enlargement.

Yet, another problem is the differences between men and women in their attitude to studies. The data obtained unambiguously show that in the case of women, we are dealing with a lack of change when it comes to a feeling of pressure. For them, studies were and still are attractive, and the political transformation had no significance in this respect. In the case of men, environmental pressure increased for them after the political transformation, which might suggest that in choosing to study women are guided above all by a conviction that studying is valuable in itself while men choose to study under pressure from parents and friends, and treat studying instrumentally as a path to a career and social position.

Research limitations

A large number of factors affecting attitudes to studying is a result of the political and socio-economic transformation in Poland. Research conducted in a different, more stable environment might not reflect the whole range of relationships mentioned here.

Conclusions

As a result of analysing the research, 3 factors influencing positions connected with motivation to study were distinguished. The first of these, “**decreased motivation – egalitarianism**”, points to a decreased motivation to studies due to their mass availability. Such a position is more characteristic of women than men. When it comes to generations, it turns out that this factor is less relevant for the middle generation (aged 40–59) than for the oldest generation (over 60) and the younger generation (under 40). Also in this area, those who are not studying at all obtained lower results compared to those currently studying or who have already finished. Also, lower results were recorded among those currently studying than those who had completed studies.

The next factor, “**motivation – university**”, places the motivation in the institution itself (prestige, value of education). It turns out that this is a type of motivation more characteristic of women than men, and for those who studied before the political transformation, than for those studying after. A similar tendency can also be observed in the generations. For the older generation, motivation based on the prestige of the university is more relevant than for the middle and younger generations. It is similar in the case of those who are currently studying and those who have finished. In the latter group, higher results were recorded on this scale.

The final factor, “**motivation – environment**”, is connected with the effect of social opinion on the decision to study or not. Interestingly, it is a motivation where men obtained higher results than women². It is a type of motivation more relevant for those studying before the political transformation than after. The environment is also less relevant in making a decision to study in the middle generation than in the older and younger generations. It is also a motivation which is more relevant to those currently studying than to those who have completed studies.

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