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University Students Practising towards Teacher's Profession in Poland, Latvia and Belarus – Motives and Educational Aspirations Found among Generation 'Z'

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Abstract

Education together with its accompanying plans and hopes becomes a significant element of designing process shaped by an individual and referred to his future career. Motives which determine the decision of taking up higher education training, university course and gaining knowledge significantly determine life realizations, young people's future jobs and their career choice. The following monograph focuses on motives and educational aspirations of students representing generation 'Z', who have taken up their studies at the departments of education in Poland, Latvia and Belarus. During the research it was aimed to look for an answer to the following questions: what criteria influenced the students' choice about the university course? What were their motives to gain higher education? How the respondents estimated their knowledge and skills? How much time do university students spend on studying and how they fill up their free time? How do they perceive current education? What factors allow achievement of their educational aspirations and what attitudes about the future are presented

by the students? What, according to the respondents, limits educational development and gaining knowledge? Finally, what are the obstacles in implementing personal plans related to education? The research was conducted among the group of 246 university students. The study followed a diagnostic survey method supported by the author based auditorial questionnaire survey. The thorough analysis was made with the use of SPSS programme.
In spite of revealed differences, generally, the research results regarding educational aspirations of generation 'Z' present the examined group as optimists who appreciate their self-development. Mainly it is their personal interests which influences their choice of university studies at educational departments. The studies do not mean social prestige for the examined and therefore, they rather reject the stereotype of being a good student. They are flexible and combine university course with work which is supposed to be their passion. This circle of students mainly praise quick action and practical solutions, still looking ahead towards future even if they are aware of the fact that the studies do not guarantee an employment in teacher's profession.

Key words: generation Z, motives, educational aspirations, university students, faculty of education, Poland, Latvia, Belarus.

Introduction

In contemporary world we witness numerous and infrequently difficult to trace changes and transformations in different spheres of life. Unfortunately, inevitability of these changes is the reason why they involve a man in search for optimal ways to find an individual in a new and complicated reality. One of these solutions is education, which meant by R. Gerlach provides opportunities towards understanding the surrounding world and modifications which undergo and which are accomplished within our personality to be fully autonomic. The main objective of education is not only to provide knowledge or develop skills but first of all, to provide help to individuals, let them expend their own abilities, and help a man in their self-development (Gerlach, 2014, pp. 11–20).

Contemporary education evolves together with accompanying transformations. Standing out of the fixed education syllabus referred to general knowledge and skills, it is opening towards a holistic concept of a man, their aspirations towards self-development and auto creation as an individual and a society member. All that requires implementing new tasks which enforce multilevel activity of an individual including their ability to change, live and work in the society of information, be assertive and possess management skills. Thus, an important task of education is to change of an individual's consciousness about his own abilities in the work process towards gaining further education and

upbringing actions together with the feeling of satisfaction about own achievements and stimulate the need of responsibility for personal decisions and norms of conduct. In order to prepare an individual towards life in a changing environment, the role of education is to take up appropriate steps to help an individual make own decisions about their access to participation in deepening knowledge and initiating the process. Moreover, a priority task of contemporary education is to offer an individual help in understanding accomplished changes and developing abilities of active and conscious participation in these processes, by having influence on their cause (Wróblewska, 2000, p. 86–87)

Referring to the issue of education as an opportunity for an individual to let them find a proper way in the surrounding chaos of contemporary changes, it is hard to miss a significant point of these transformations which undergo within the subject of education itself. Its current recipients – children, young learners and adolescents who are entering maturity – is defined as a product of information civilization – the so called generation "Z" or otherwise as an iGeneration (derived from: i" – iTunes, iPhones, iPods, iPads), while others call them as „C" generation – derived from an English word – connected (or connected to the net) Gen Tech. or finally the so called „Stimulus absorbents" (Wrzesień, 2015, p. 37–55). Generally the term refers to people born after the year 1990, some of the experts even state the year 1995, and those who are just entering the job market. They are connected to the net nearly 24 hours a day and familiar with new technologies since birth as they find themselves in the environment they were born in and which natural for them. These are the people who do not intend to face long term vision of building up their professional career step by step. They show a peculiar approach towards education. They get their knowledge mainly from the internet and therefore university studies and other forms of training become not the only and essential way of applying for a job on the market. They are aware of the rapidly changing world, they accept that and they are conscious of the fact that the knowledge, once gained, will become outdated soon. Thus, it is more important to search for quick information and creative approach towards the ways to reach the source information. In comparison to previous generations („Baby boom", „X", „Y"), these people are certainly more mobile, possess the knowledge of languages and look for friends worldwide even though they spend most of their lives with their parents. Relatively, „Y" which denotes a generation proceeding its „Z" counterpart, aspires for a balance between private and professional life, whereas, for iGeneration private and professional life constitute a unity. For them, both of these spheres create the same reality with the same values. They search for work not only within their home

countries but also around the world. They avoid a routine scheme, looking for diversity, thus they do not care much about work stability. They are people who tend to claim their rights although they are aware of the dangers they face and the crisis situations in their home countries, both professional and existential. In professional reference sources "they are often characterized by an opposite feature which allows to address them as the 'paradox generation'. Their personality traits, which can be illustrated as opposing poles, show their diversity, open and close nature, brave and full of fear, expecting much from the others, "energy safe" from their point of view" (Chomątowska, Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, 2016, p. 62). As the research results show, in most cases generation "Z" recognizes good (high) education as an indispensable success factor. It is confirmed by annual statistics referring to quality training to become at the top of educational ladder. Starting with the 90's the above factors have increased four times up to the present. According to GUS statistics in 2016/2017 alone, there were 1 348,8 thousand students educated at 390 centres of higher education (Schools of higher education and their finance in 2016*,* 2017, p. 25). Does it mean that the education boom brings the era of happiness among the students? Is the mass consumption towards higher education a significant determinant of professional success and does it really make sense to gain higher education? Looking for the answer to the above and other questions, it was legitimate to start a research on motives and aspirations of "Z" generation, which allowed evaluation of the actual status of contemporary education and its tasks, in perspective of views and opinions of young people studying in Poland, Latvia and Belarus.

The research aim

The aim of the research was to make an attempt to diagnose and describe motives and educational aspirations found among the students of "Z" generation preparing towards teaching profession in Poland, Latvia and Belarus but also to find out about university students' attitudes towards education. In the course of the study it was postulated to find out the answer to the following questions: what are the criteria which decided on the choice of the study course?; what are the motives which encourage students to take up higher education?; how do the interviewees perceive level of their knowledge and abilities?; how much time do the students spend on studying and how they fill in their leisure time?; how do they perceive contemporary education?; what allows for the achievement of their educational aspirations and what are their attitudes about the future?; according to the interviewees, what are the major limitations in accomplishment

of their plans connected with education? The research possessed a diagnostic feature and therefore the authors resigned from formulating hypothesis which is correct according to suggestions made by (Łobocki, 1999, p.127; Nowak, 1970, p. 225; Maszke, 2003, p. 65–66).

The empirical material became the basis for describing students' attitudes towards education as well as their motives and educational aspirations of students in Poland, Latvia and Belarus who are preparing to start a teaching career. It was also the basis to formulate deductions and plan further research within the subject.

Research methodology

The research refers to the theory and beliefs held by the generation of William Strauss and Neil Howe (1991, p. 538). They designed the concept of a generation circle which describes the story as a rhythm of occurrences which is regularly repeated. The mankind is developing within a circle of repetitive four types of generations with its characteristic features. They pointed out to the following circles: flight, wakening, disintegration and social crisis. They believe that every generation is shaped during adolescence and at an early youth period. On the other hand, this experience depends on strongly marked with emotions and drama occurrences of transnational nature. They confront their ideas with the generation of their grandparents and parents as they desire to establish their own order of the universe together with its rules, including studying, work, perceiving others etc. They create their own ideas based on imagination, ideas and attitudes in response to new both cultural and socio-economic principles. Moreover, each generation is influenced by two drives, which were mentioned by Chantal Mouffe (Mouffe, 2005, p. 144). One of them is the desire to express own individuality while the other is the will to become a member of a larger group. This creates a basis towards a competition for different resources in varied spheres of a man's functioning including those of intergeneration character. Mouffe accepts a conflict because according to her, it allows for democracy progress and influences generation specificity.

The research[1] was conducted and based on a group of university students of education departments at three university centres in central – eastern Europe: in Poland – the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, in

[1] The results of the research carried out under the research theme No. 518/18/S were financed from the science grant granted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Latvia – Daugavpils University (Daugavpils) and the Brest State University named after A.S. Pushkin in Belarus. During the research conducted throughout scientific internship period which lasted from February until May 2017, the authors used the method of a diagnostic survey supported by the authors' auditorial questionnaire form which had been designed for the need of the survey. It was addressed to a group of 280 university students, however, out of the total number, 246 questionnaire forms were further transformed.

The research was based on the quantitative method (Dobek-Ostrowska, Sobera, p. 20–23). Simple random selection (probabilistic) was used (Creswell, 2013, p. 164, 171) where number of trial elements was chosen directly from the population of the students of education course of the three participating countries. Such an appointed test is regarded as highly representative. The number of 280 results from the fact that during the scientific training period and the work carried out at own university the researchers had a chance to have lectures and talks on the issue of the examined topic, specificity of the study and its aim. Moreover, the research meant continuation of the authors' previous work on educational, professional and life aspirations (Roguska, Antas-Jaszczuk, 2017, p. 59–67) carried out among the same examined group of pedagogy students.

The results obtained in the study were subjected to statistical analysis. Statistical gravity of differences between more than two approximate values was checked by a single factor variation analysis (ANOVA). Because the test indicates only the fact of significant statistical differences occurrence, and does not inform, however, between which of the compared pairs the differences were actually observed, the authors administered further post hoc testing techniques with the use of T3 Dunnett test (lack of variation homogeneity). A significance of correlation between quality variables (nominal) was verified with the use of independence test chi squared. Correlation between rank variables was checked with the use of tau-b Kendall correlation factor. It is assumed that the coefficient ranges from +1 (strong positive correlation, together with an increase of one variable there occurs an increase of the other) through 0 (lack of correlation) to -1 (strong negative correlation, an increase in one variable caused decrease of the other). During the statistical analysis the level of significance was assumed at the rate of p=0,05. The analysis was conducted with the use of SPSS programme.

Characterization of the respondents

There were 246 university students representing 3 countries: Poland (35,8%), Latvia (33,3%) and Belarus (30,9%). Their average age was 20,3 with a standard

deviation which equaled 1,61 year of age. A vast majority of the respondents were women (90%) and the highest number of them were from Belarus (96%), a little lower percentage found among those from Poland and the lowest number of consisted female respondents from Latvia (80,5%). The highest percentage of the interviewees lived in the countryside (37%), and comparatively those who came from cities below 100.000 inhabitants represented 21% with 18% of those who lived in cities over 100.000 inhabitants. An average size of the researched students' family was 4,4 people (with deviation = 1,48), at least more than a half of the addressees came from families of more than 4 members, such was also a modal value of the target group. Factorization of the variable ranged from 1 to 11 family members. The largest group (140) consisted of those who came from families of 4 – 6 people. On average the largest families were found among Polish respondents (4,8), following those from Latvia (4,2) and Belarus (4,0). Data analysis on the respondents' parents education revealed that there were mothers with secondary school education (36%) or vocational training (37%). A slightly lower percentage consisted of those with higher (college, university) education and it represented 22% of the researched population. Finally, the group was supplemented by the students' mothers who had elementary level of education or those who lacked any education (1,2%). When it comes to the respondents' fathers, there were mainly those with vocational training (51%) and a much lower percentage of those with secondary education (33%). Low percentage were people with higher (8%) and elementary (7%) education. The group characteristics was supplemented with the students' fathers who had no officially certified education (2%). The respondents also estimated their material situation. Majority of them declared that their financial situation was at average level (58%), whereas 29% of the examined students stated that the situation was either good or very good. The others admitted that their financial situation was bad (11%) or they just could not make their judgment (3%).

Criteria of the faculty choice among the students

The analysis of empirical data revealed that the students' choice about the faculty of education was determined by personal interests (59%), with less determinant of a nearby location of the university (17%), easier opportunity to find work (12%). In some cases the choice was influenced by a family member (5%), friends' encouragement (4%) or university prestige (3%) (see table 1). Statistically students responses did not vary much between the nationalities with p equaled 0.185)

Table 1. Criteria of the faculty choice

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
What were the reasons to choose studies at education department?	Easy opportunity to find work	Population	11	14	5
		% by answers	36.7%	46.7%	16.7%
		% by country	14.5%	17.1%	5.7%
	Personal interests	Population	50	42	54
		% by ans wers	34.2%	28.8%	37.0%
		% by country	65.8%	51.2%	61.4%
	Parents'/family memebers' encouragement	Population	2	5	4
		% by answersi	18.2%	45.5%	36.4%
		% by country	2.6%	6.1%	4.5%
	University prestige	Population	1	3	3
		% by ans wers	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%
		% by country	1.3%	3.7%	3.4%
	Close neighbourhood of the university	Population	11	12	19
		% by answers	26.2%	28.6%	45.2%
		% by country	14.5%	14.6%	21.6%
	My colleagues and friends made a similar choice	Population	1	6	3
		% by answers	10.0%	60.0%	30.0%
		% by country	1.3%	7.3%	3.4%
Chi squared independence test			χ^2=13.74; p=0.185		

Source: Authors' research

Motives encouraging to gain higher education

Responses given by the students revealed that the most significant motives to gain higher education were as follows: to avoid unemployment (30%), to become self-reliant and independent (22%). The examined students less frequently pointed to self-improvement (15%), education's help to make life easier (11%), opportunity to get an interesting job (8%). Among less common reasons, the students pointed out to: social prestige (5%), approval (4%), willingness to be useful to others (3%), effortless job (2%), satisfy parents' ambitions (1%). It can be noticed that even though the most frequent motive among all the examined groups was to achieve higher education in order to avoid unemployment, still some other points of view were observed among the respondents. Students from

Belarus frequently stressed becoming independent (30%) while those from Latvia pointed to self-improvement (31%), whereas Polish students appreciated independence (22%) and easier life (20%). The analysis conducted with the use of an independence test revealed that the discussed differences were statistically significant (p=0.004) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Motives found among young people encouraging to gain higher education. Questionnaire survey answer spread with a target group division (excluding answers with low frequency <5%)

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
What were the motives for young people to gain higher education?	Interesting profession	Population	9	6	4
		% by answers	47.4%	31.6%	21.1%
		% by country	14.3%	8.3%	5.2%
	Avoiding unemployment	Population	20	22	32
		% by answers	27.0%	29.7%	43.2%
		% by country	31.7%	30.6%	41.6%
	Easier life	Population	8	3	15
		% by answers	30.8%	11.5%	57.7%
		% by country	12.7%	4.2%	19.5%
	Self-reliance, independence	Population	19	19	17
		% by ans wers	34.5%	34.5%	30.9%
		% by country	30.2%	26.4%	22.1%
	Self-improvement	Population	7	22	9
		% by answers	18.4%	57.9%	23.7%
		% by country	11.1%	30.6%	11.7%
Chi squared independence test			χ^2=22.51; p=0.004		

Source: Authors' research

Common needs among the students to obtain higher education in present time

Most of the survey respondents claimed that it was worth nowadays to become higher educated (answers: definitely – 32%, rather so – 39%). Opposed views were traced among 11% of the students (answers: rather not and definitely not). The others had no opinion on the issue (18%). It needs to be stressed that the largest group of students who confirmed the need for higher educating came

from Poland (19%) followed by Latvian students (7%) and Belarussian students (7%). Differences between the groups were of statistical importance (p<0,001) (see table 3).

Table 3. Common needs to take up higher education

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
Is it worth taking up higher education in opinion of the respondents?	Definitely	Population	40	18	21
		% by answers	50.6%	22.8%	26.6%
		% by country	52.6%	22.0%	23.9%
	Rather so	Population	25	37	34
		% by ans wers	26.0%	38.5%	35.4%
		% by country	32.9%	45.1%	38.6%
	Have no opinion	Population	6	21	16
		% by ans wers	14.0%	48.8%	37.2%
		% by country	7.9%	25.6%	18.2%
	Definitely or rather not	Population	5	6	17
		% by an wers	17.9%	21.4%	60.7%
		% by country	6.6%	7.3%	19.3%
Chi squared independence test			χ^2=30.70; p<0.001		

Source: Authors' research

Self-assessment of knowledge and skills possessed

The results obtained during the study revealed that students assessed their knowledge and skills at an average level (64%), whereas high and very high self-assessment level was observed among nearly 30% of the addressees. The others assessed their knowledge and skills as very low (1%) and there were some who could not make such an assessment (5%). Differences of statistical importance were not observed between the examined groups (p=0.061) (see table 4).

However, a significant statistical connection was noticed between self-assessment and assessment of their financial situation (p=0.001). Students who were better well-off revealed high self-assessment level (see table 5).

Table 4. Self-assessment of knowledge and skills possessed

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
What is self-assessment of knowledge and skills possessed?	Very high or high	Population	16	31	26
		% by ans wers	21.9%	42.5%	35.6%
		% by country	21.9%	39.7%	31.3%
	Average or low	Population	57	47	57
		% by answers	35.4%	29.2%	35.4%
		% by country	78.1%	60.3%	68.7%
Chi squared independence test			$\chi^2=5.58$; $p=0.061$		

Source: Authors' research

Table 5. Correlation between material situation and self-assessment of knowledge and skills possessed. Tau-b Kendall correlation factor

			Self-assessment of knowledge and skills possessed
Tau b Kendalla	Material situation assessment	Correlation factor	0.197
		Significance (double side)	0.001

Source: Authors' research

Time spent on studying and leisure activities among the students

Most frequently the respondents devoted themselves to studying from time to time (41%), some of them did it in exceptional situations (5%) or did not study at all after lectures (4%). 7% of the students spend half an hour studying daily, whereas 10% of them admitted to spend approximately 1 hour, compared with those who declared the amount of time between 1 to 2 hours (21%) and 13% of the addressees stated more than 2 hours on studying daily. Most of the students from Belarus pointed to studying from time to time (51%), a high percentage of the respondents studied more than 1 hour daily (42%). Similar amount of time spent on studying was declared by the students from Latvia (from time to time – 44%, with 35% of those who studied more than an hour). In reference to Polish students, a high percentage of them were those who studied from time to time (31%) or those who devoted only an hour daily to studying (28%). Most of the Polish students studied only in exceptional situations or did not study at all (17%). Differences between the examined groups are of statistical importance ($p<0.001$) (see table 6).

Table 6. Amount of time spent by the students on studying after lectures

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
respondent spend on studying?	Only in exceptional situations or not at all	Population	3	4	15
		% by answers	13.6%	18.2%	68.2%
		% by country	3.9%	5.0%	17.0%
	From time to time	Population	39	35	27
		% by answers	38.6%	34.7%	26.7%
		% by country	51.3%	43.8%	30.7%
	Not longer than an hour daily	Population	2	13	25
		% by answers	5.0%	32.5%	62.5%
		% by country	2.6%	16.3%	28.4%
	1–2 hours daily	Population	20	14	16
		% by answers	40.0%	28.0%	32.0%
		% by country	26.3%	17.5%	18.2%
	More than 2 hours daily	Population	12	14	5
		% by ans wers	38.7%	45.2%	16.1%
		% by country	15.8%	17.5%	5.7%
Chi squared indepndece test			χ^2=38.04; p<0.001		

Source: Authors' research

During their free time the students usually hanged out with friends (33%), less frequently they watched TV (13%), spent time reading books (12%), did hobbies (12%), studied on their own (8%), browsed the Internet (7%), listened to music (7%), did not do anything in particular (4%), spent time in a library (3%), did sports (1%) (see *chart* 1).

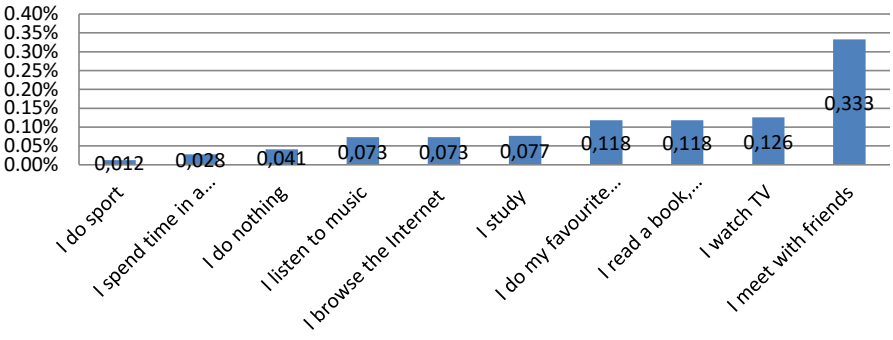

Chart 1. What are the students involved in their free time?

Source: Authors' research

Perception of education

Education is perceived by university students as a pass towards a better future (30%) and a chance to develop personal interests and abilities (29%). Moreover, for some of the students education gives a chance to get a well paid job (16%) and gain knowledge (14%). Only a fraction of them perceive education as a duty (7%) and a chance to get social prestige (4%). The analysis with the use of square chi independence test did not show statistical significant differences between the groups (p=0.100) (see table 7).

Table 7. Perception of education

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
How do the respondents perceive education?	a duty	Population	4	4	9
		% by ans wers	23.5%	23.5%	52.9%
		% by country	5.3%	4.9%	10.3%
	a pass towards a better future	Population	23	28	23
		% by ans wers	31.1%	37.8%	31.1%
		% by country	30.3%	34.1%	26.4%
	a chance to get a well paid job	Population	9	13	16
		% by ans wers	23.7%	34.2%	42.1%
		% by country	11.8%	15.9%	18.4%
	gaining knowledge	Population	16	13	6
		% by answers	45.7%	37.1%	17.1%
		% by country	21.1%	15.9%	6.9%
	a chance to develop interests and skills	Population	24	21	27
		% by answers	33.3%	29.2%	37.5%
		% by country	31.6%	25.6%	31.0%
	a chance to get a social prestige	Population	0	3	6
		% by answers	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
		% by country	0.0%	3.7%	6.9%
Chi squared independent test			$\chi^2=15.98$; p=0.100		

Source: Authors' research

Achievement of educational aspirations and attitudes towards the future

In order to achieve own educational aspirations, in opinion of most of the students, they need perseverance (49%) and high learning achievements (40%). In order to fulfill their desires, the addressees would rather rarely expect a life chance or favorable conditions (7%) or simply rely on others' help (1%). It can be noticed that the students from Belarus combined achievement of their educational aspirations with studying (62%), whereas their Polish colleagues regarded perseverance as the most important feature (73%). In the case of Latvian students, a similar fraction of them claimed that in pursuit of educational aspirations it was worth studying (46%) and it took perseverance (48%) which helped the process. Differences between the groups were of statistical importance ($p<0.001$) (see table 8).

Table 8. Actions supporting achievement of educational aspirations. Answers divided based on target groups (excluding answers with low frequency <4%)

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
What actions need to be considered in order to fulfill personal aspirations?	achieve high academic results	Population	46	36	16
		% by ans wers	46.9%	36.7%	16.3%
		% by country	62.2%	45.6%	19.5%
	be persistent	Population	22	38	60
		% by answers	18.3%	31.7%	50.0%
		% by country	29.7%	48.1%	73.2%
	expect a life chance and favourable conditions	Population	6	5	6
		% by answers	35.3%	29.4%	35.3%
		% by country	8.1%	6.3%	7.3%
Chi squared independence test			$\chi^2=32.14$; $p<0.001$		

Source: Authors' research

Most of the examined students perceived their attitude towards the future as optimistic (answers: definitely so – 23%, rather so 59%). Pessimistic attitudes were revealed among over 7% of the respondents. Statistical significant differences were not observed between the target groups ($p=0.159$) (see table 9).

Table 9. Students attitude towards the future. Answers divided in accordance with target groups

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
How does the respondent value own attitude towards the future?	Definitely optimistically	Population	25	21	11
		% by answers	43.9%	36.8%	19.3%
		% by country	33.3%	27.3%	16.2%
	Rather optimistically	Population	46	50	49
		% by answers	31.7%	34.5%	33.8%
		% by country	61.3%	64.9%	72.1%
	Definitely or rather pessimistically	Population	4	6	8
		% by answers	22.2%	33.3%	44.4%
		% by country	5.3%	7.8%	11.8%
Chi squared independence test			$\chi^2=6.60$; $p=0.159$		

Source: Authors' research

Barriers and restrictions in educational growth

In opinion of the students who took part in the research, educational growth of a young man was restricted mainly due to: lack of money (39%), laziness (28%) and lack of work perspectives (17%). Occasionally, the respondents pointed to such limitations as inappropriate peer company (5%), commuting inconvenience (4%), lack of university centres preferred in close neighborhood (4%), bad living conditions (3%) and health problems (2%). It needs to be stressed that in opinion of Belarussian students it was laziness (55%) which was regarded as an important restriction of educational growth, compared with the Latvian students who perceived lack of finances as an obstacle (75%). Polish students also pointed to lack of finances (41%) and lack of work perspectives (35%) as limitations in educational growth. The differences between the groups were of statistical significance ($p<0.001$) (see table 10).

Table 10. Restrictions in educational growth. Division based on target groups (excluding answers with low frequency <5%)

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
According to the respondent, what was the factor which restricted young people's educational growth?	Lack of money	Population	16	53	28
		% by answers	16.5%	54.6%	28.9%
		% by country	23.9%	74.6%	41.2%
	Laziness	Population	37	15	16
		% by answers	54.4%	22.1%	23.5%
		% by country	55.2%	21.1%	23.5%
	Lack of professional job perspectives	Population	14	3	24
		% by answers	34.1%	7.3%	58.5%
		% by country	20.9%	4.2%	35.3%
Chi squared independence test			χ^2=51.42; p<0.001		

Source: Authors' research

Difficulties in accomplishment of personal plans connected with education

According to the students' opinion, accomplishment of educational plans was mainly restricted by: uneven state situation (31%) and difficulty to find work in a trained field (28%). The respondents rarely pointed to such drawbacks as unemployment (15%), university fees (14%), lack of professional perspectives (10%), poor knowledge of foreign languages (2%) and other people's disapproval (0.4%).

The analysis revealed statistical important differences between the target groups in their answer division (p=0.006). In opinion of the students from Belarus most frequent restricting cause of educational plans accomplishment was difficulty in finding work (32%) and uneven state situation (31%). Lack of home country stability was also stressed by the students from Latvia (41%), whereas Polish students mostly enumerated difficulty in finding work in a trained profession (40%) and unemployment (20%) (see table 11).

Table 11. Difficulties in accomplishment of personal plans connected with education. Answers divided in accordance with target groups (with exclusion of answers with low <3%)

			Country		
			Belarus	Latvia	Poland
What, according to the respondent, restricts accomplishment of their personal educational plans?	Uneven state situation	Population	22	33	21
		% by answers	28.9%	43.4%	27.6%
		% by country	30.6%	40.7%	24.4%
	Lack of life perspectives	Population	8	8	8
		% by answers	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
		% by country	11.1%	9.9%	9.3%
	Unemployment	Population	6	13	17
		% by answers	16.7%	36.1%	47.2%
		% by country	8.3%	16.0%	19.8%
	University fee	Population	13	15	6
		% by ans wers	38.2%	44.1%	17.6%
		% by country	18.1%	18.5%	7.0%
	Inability to find work in a trained profession	Population	23	12	34
		% by ans wers	33.3%	17.4%	49.3%
		% by country	31.9%	14.8%	39.5%
Chi squared independence test			$\chi^2=21.29$; $p=0.006$		

Source: Authors' research

Summary and conclusions

Teacher's profession is still perceived as a female domain. The results of the study revealed that nearly 90% of the respondents were females. Pedagogical studies with a teaching specialty are still very popular among students. It is not a deficit job and the choice of faculty is not incidental and it results from the internal need to test yourself in pedagogical professions.

Motives which determine the choice of studies at the faculty of pedagogy with the specialty of teaching are not connected with high salary. Most of the respondents declared that their financial situation was at an average level and that the teaching profession is not unambiguously connected with high incomes. Such distribution of the data suggests that colloquial opinions about today's youth as materialistic seem to be over-exaggerated. Well-being, even though it

seems to be desired as a means of providing decent existence, does not occur as a dominant value for the students. That should be emphasized, having in mind the widely promoted media campaign of the cult of possessiveness and endorsing the lifestyle of the society of wealth.

The respondents' choice of education faculty was mainly made on the basis of personal interests instead of close neighbourhood of a university, its prestige position, encouragement by friends and family members or finally, an immediate possibility to find a job. The results of the study concerning motives to gain higher education were also interesting. It turned out that the priority for the students was to avoid unemployment (30%) followed by self- reliance and independence which are in close link (Wciórka, 2009, p. 3–12; Hipsz, 2013, p. 3–7). Young people during their studies perceive higher education as a value alone, important from own point of view as personal development. Again, it proves characteristic features of generation "Z" – who admit that their future work should be a passion, not a duty. It may not become a life priority in itself or mean sacrifice – a significant feature of generation X (those who were born between 1961–1982), for whom professional duties become superior to family and relaxation.

Moreover, it was interesting that students from Poland, otherwise to their Latvian and Belarusian peers seemed to be more sceptical towards studying as a way of acquiring necessary knowledge in order to take up a job. Young generation is becoming more and more aware of the fact that the market for "experiencing knowledge" offers combined with taking up employment is broad and meets the need for simultaneous work and training depending on the specific professional needs and interests. University education does not guarantee finding employment in a chosen profession. The students estimated their knowledge and skills at an average level. For the respondents (and their peer generation Gen Tech) university studies do not mean a social prestige. Similar attitude was also confirmed by the research conducted by A. Żarczyńska-Dobiesz and B. Chomątowska, which indicates that over 90% of surveyed students question the sense of their previous and further university studies, expressing belief that most of the acquired knowledge and skills are not useful in practice" (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Chomątowska, 2016, p. 201). It may lead to an assumption that the perception of the world expressed by the students is full of realism. At the same time, they are very creative people who appreciate their individual, even eccentric self-development and relative independence. Moreover, they appreciate quick acting and practical solutions. Things that become useful for them are those which are time-saving. Generally, they are young people who act

for themselves and their own needs with much consciousness instead of fulfilling common needs and superior directives. They may be briefly described as "wise egoists". It does not denote that they want to fulfill themselves by all possible means, exploiting others. They naturally "listen to their inner nature" and do not pay attention to others opinions, e.g. family, friends or superiors at work. They are the generation of paradox and they are labeled as such because they are aware of unemployment problems but they do not enforce possible solutions; these young people lead their lives in both virtual world and reality. They are open in contacts with the others, but on the other hand, they avoid situations which demand deep emotional engagement and face to face communication; courageous in taking up decisions but also full of internal fears; expecting much from the others, which results from their internal feeling of high value, while offering little in return. They are not willing to start their own initiatives unless they are aware of personal or team profits.

The results of the research have shown that in the achievement of one's own educational aspirations, first of all, perseverance is important, not the stereotype of being a good student. Perseverance is more appreciated as an internal motivation and is associated, for example, not only with the use of academic knowledge, but also with widely available sources of knowledge, such as online resources or experiencing knowledge in the profession, i.e. practical learning. Nowadays, more and more students decide to combine studying and working at the same time. It refers not only to those who decide to take up extramural studies but we also find an increased number of full-time students who make a living doing various duties after regular lectures and who apply for individual study programme.

The generation of the respondents who comprised the students of education departments is mainly perceived as a generation of optimists. Their educational development is restricted for them not because of the lack of job perspectives but rather by their laziness and limited financial resources. They realize that today's market offers varied courses, training sessions and individual lessons based on tuition fees.

Personal educational plans, according to the students from Belarus, are restrained by difficult job market and unstable political and economical situation in their country. Polish students mostly stressed difficulties in getting a job in their trained profession. Even though, they constitute a generation of flexible explorers in search of their place in reality. They do not arouse or cultivate hidden complexes e.g. educational deficiencies. Based on their parents' experience they know that worrying over one's situation does not lead to any constructive

solutions and hard work in order to bring a company's profit does not equal personal satisfaction. Thus, they search for opportunities to get best paid jobs possible together with job satisfaction. They do not treat their work as a mission but rather their internal and own will , considering flexibility when

Conclusion:

According to the concept of a generation circle by W. Strauss and N. Howe (Strauss, Howe, 1991, p. 538), the experience of generation Z on the basis of the examined students from the three participating countries may be generalized. The theory assumes experiencing similar, generation creating occurrences which influence global perception of the world and reveal coherent aspirations. Thus, it becomes even more legitimate that generation Z are young people who are closely dependent on mass media (means of communication), new technologies and the internet. De facto, they stay mobile away from their country borders and keep in touch with their peers around the globe. They are focused on finding quick information and looking for contacts via social networking sites or chat forums. The respondents come from neighbouring countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It denotes their common experience and the feeling of solidarity in the face of traumatic occurrences, spreading views and building their feelings.

The researched students who represent their generation "Z" are the people who draw conclusions from experience of their previous generations but they mainly get new ideas from opportunities and current offers (including those of a remote character) caring for own needs. This is an exceptional generation whose ideas towards life, including those of educational meaning, can be drawn by earlier generations.

Post ad rem/postulate:

1) It may seem interesting to conduct a research which would undertake studies on this professional group perceived by their widely understood educational and professional efficiency perceived by their charges and a degree of their job satisfaction. Will we talk in the future about educational revolution of generation "Z" and what shape it will have?
2) We are of the opinion that the system of education lacks not tools but a kind of trend or consciousness of the need to explore job preferences among secondary schools graduates before they decide about their

university course or a widely understood professional life path. It requires specially designed tests offered and produced by professionals e.g. touching the issue of job predispositions towards further studying or taking up a particular job. We share our opinion that participating in that kind of confirmation of own assumptions, desires or aspirations of your own or your family should be widely confronted not only on our own initiative. It should be addressed to everyone and it should be accomplished by educators, school councilors or job advising offices as an indispensable element of educational process.

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