

Paper 1/7 - Perception of the school environment and willingness to leave education early among students of various types of Polish secondary schools

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Although the Polish education system tends to avoid tracking and implements relatively uniform curricula to all primary and lower secondary schools, at the upper secondary level the situation changes. Students choose from three types of upper secondary school and pupils who get enrolled to one type – basic vocational school – are at a relatively high risk of early school leaving. To some extent this is caused by the selection of students themselves – basic vocational schools usually admit applicants with poor educational performance at the lower levels of education. Unlike the other upper secondary schools, completing BVS does not allow graduates to continue directly to tertiary education. Hence, BVS constitute the educational and social environment where the factors increasing or reducing the risk of early school leaving may be different, compared to other types of upper secondary schools.

Therefore this paper studies the respondents' perception of the school's social environment, especially the students' relations with teachers and peers, and investigates whether the perception of the school community correlates with the students' declared desire to abandon education early. The paper discusses whether the risk of ESL and protective factors are similar or different in various types of schools, with the special focus on the basic vocational schools. The data concerning school size, belonging to a bigger school complex, the number and demographic profile of students is also applied.

The paper is based on the data from a quantitative survey conducted in 2014 on a sample of over 3,000 students of upper secondary schools in three Polish cities, supplemented by the data of the Educational Information System of the Ministry of National Education.