

## English Summary

Since 1990, when non-state entities started to provide educational services at Polish market, the higher education sector has been constantly changing. In relation to the change of the tendencies (among others, demographic), within the last decade, one could notice the occurrence of overcapacity both in the number of higher education institutions and in the educational offer at numerous, newly created courses of study. These changes forced Polish academic centres to adapt to the new competition conditions and to increase the market orientation within every field of activity of higher education institutions. In addition, universities and colleges need to constantly adjust their educational offers to the requirements of the changing labour market. Moreover, they have to look for the purchasers of their services not only among the first and second cycle degree programme students, but also among the people who want to improve their professional skills by continuing their education at payable education institutions. The abovementioned factors caused that the consumer, i.e., the recipient of the educational services, became the starting point of the actions undertaken by the higher education institutions. The knowledge of the consumer's preferences and his/her market behaviour is indispensable to the establishment and implementation of effective marketing instruments as well as a strategy of conducting business activities that is adjusted to the recent conditions.

The research problem of the dissertation is the identification of the factors determining the behaviour of the consumers at the market of payable educational services provided by the higher education institutions within additional forms of education, i.e. above the first and second cycle degree programmes.

The purpose of the dissertation is to identify the factors that decide on the continuation of education and on the choice of the institution of higher education by the students of postgraduate and PhD studies, stating specifically the elements of marketing communication employed by Polish higher education institutions.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. The introduction defines the research problem, the main purpose and the specific objectives. It also defines the thesis and research problems. In addition, the introduction positions the dissertation in time and space, as well as presents its structure. The first three chapters constitute the theoretical part of the dissertation. They specify the theory of the consumers' behaviour at the market, as well as the theories concerning the decision-

making process, analyse the changes of the labour market in Poland and their influence on the change of the educational needs. Moreover, the first three chapters characterise an educational service as a market product, describe the situation at the educational services market on the higher education level in Poland, as well as marketing activities undertaken by Polish higher education institutions. The remaining two chapters describe and analyse the conducted empirical studies.

The author's own project of empirical research carried among a sample of participants of postgraduate studies and extramural PhD studies has been conducted in order to accomplish the main problem. The substantive scope of the research consists of the issues connected with the process of choosing a particular educational offer by the consumers, the factors influencing their decisions and the consumers' motivations to select the payable form of education offered by higher education institutions.

Moreover, the analysis of the data obtained from the survey has been deepened by the examination of artifacts comprising the tools of marketing communication that the higher education institutions employ so that their educational offer reaches the consumers. The examination of the collected artifacts has deepened the analysis of the results of the quantitative research within the scope of the consumers' sensibility to the marketing stimuli and has enabled the comparison of the employed promotion measures.

On the basis of the research it was stated that the consumers of the educational services were mostly focused on the higher order needs, such as willingness to develop their knowledge and skills, as well as fulfilling their ambitions. They assessed an operating website and information communicated through social media as the most effective tools for promotion. The obtained results helped to define the direction of further research. It is crucial to analyse changes regarding marketing communication, as well as to investigate the purchasing habits representatives of the Z generation's representatives, as they are going to be the main group of consumers of educational services on the higher education level after 2020.

The conclusion includes a summary of the reflections and presents a collection of final conclusions. An appendix with the statistical data, the examined artifacts and a sample questionnaire is attached to the dissertation.