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Educational experiences and quality of life in the narratives of graduates of Polish schools in Latvia

SUMMARY

The subject of this doctoral dissertation is **educational experiences** and **quality of life of graduates** of Polish schools in Latvia. The aim of my study was to find the answer of question: **What importance do the respondents attribute to their educational experiences for the quality of their lives?** Additionally, I raised four specific questions: *1) What are educational experiences of graduates of Polish schools in Latvia? 2) What events of everyday school life are considered important by the respondents? 3) What experiences in the area of formal, non-formal and informal educational were deemed an important for the quality of life by the respondents? 4) In what areas graduates of Polish schools in Latvia describe their sense of quality of life?*

Aside from the cognitive dimension, the undertaken a research study made possible to create recommendations for Polish schools in Latvia, which use it will be able to modify the school's tasks and functions. Therefore, my research is aimed at establishing **idiographic explanations**. In the course of my research and field study, I adopted **interpretive paradigm**. Due to the subject, aims and chosen paradigm, the dissertation is based on a qualitative research and **ethnographic methods**. The empiric material was collected during **seven field studies conducted** in 2015-2019 in Latvia. It should be highlighted that this paper is the continuation of the research on the Polish minority in Latvia conducted by the academic community of the University of Nicolaus Copernicus (Torun, Poland) since 1989.

The primary sources were semi-structured interviews (ethnographic interview) conducted with **sixteen graduates of Polish schools in Latvia**. Other applied methods were ethnographic observation, secondary research (statistical data, school archives), online interview and autoethnography.

The dissertation consists of **six chapters**. In **Chapter One**, key concepts and terms for the broadly understood educational experiences is introduced. In **Chapter Two**, the problem of quality of life is presented. In **Chapter Three**, I characterized the developmental age of young adults adopting Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development. In **Chapter Four**, I presented the various faces of multicultural Latvia with regards to the historical context my research. In **Chapter Five**, I demonstrated the research methodology. This chapters also includes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted in this dissertation. In **Chapter Six**, I presented the results of a qualitative analysis based on collected empirical material, starting with profiles of the respondents (timelines were created for ach respondent, with details on education and career paths). The dissertation ends with **bibliography, netography, list of tables and figures and appendix**.

Keywords: educational experiences, quality of life, lifelong learning, everyday life reality, school life, graduates of Polish schools in Latvia, polish schools abroad