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HOW DO POLISH STUDENTS DEAL WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES?

Private lessons – fashion or necessity

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Abstract: The article describes psychological aspects of using private lessons (additional paid lessons) by Polish pupils. The problem concerns using private tuition by pupils and students of various schools (primary, junior high, secondary, tertiary). Many reports indicate that the phenomenon is expanding not only in Poland, but in Europe as well. The article depicts the range of private lessons, reasons for taking private lessons, but also youth's learning strategies and reasons for not using private tuition. The paper is based on research done among psychology students at the University of Wrocław.

272 first year psychology students of the University of Wrocław (83 students in the academic year 2005/06: 62 women and 21 men; 189 students: 124 women and 65 men – in the academic year 2006/07,) participated in the research. The students completed the survey that included questions about the preferred strategies of preparing *to matura*, the reasons to take private lessons, the time spent on individual learning, as well as learning with a private teacher, assessment of private lessons as a method of learning, and student financial situation assessment.

The following conclusion can be drawn from the submitted data: private lessons in contemporary Poland are not only popular, but according to many students they are a “fashionable”, even “essential” form of additional training, and the extra classes increase chances for a successful examination.

Keywords: education, learning difficulties, private lessons, ways of preparing to *matura*

Introduction

Private lessons for a Polish secondary school student, costing his or her parents about PLN 2,000 (ca. € 400–500) per month, a summer language course for a student – a month's stay in a renowned British school – worth about PLN 12,000 (ca. € 2,400–3,000), an intense „education program” for a junior high school pupil worth about PLN 600 per month (ca. € 150) – English lessons twice a week, once a week a Polish class and tennis – these are only selected examples of costs borne by parents, which will probably continue in further years of education. Perhaps there will even be an intensification of actions in the field of parents' invest-

ments in children's education. In the context of more and more popular private lessons there is a sort of a paradox in Polish education. It is related to the fact, that education in Poland is free of charge, which is specified by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2nd, 1997 (Dz. U. of July 16th, 1997). Article 70 says „*Education in public schools shall be without payment. Statutes may allow for payments for certain services provided by public institutions of higher education.*” and „*Public authorities shall ensure universal and equal access to education for citizens. To this end, they shall establish and support systems for individual financial and organizational assistance to pupils and students. The conditions for providing of such assistance shall be specified by statute*”. Private tuition is, on the other hand, growing more and more popular.

The escalation of parents' financial “support” for studying children is caused, like in business, by expanding competition – best schools (best in opinions of parents and pupils aware of education market mechanisms) accept only the best pupils. The “best pupils” are not exactly keen on knowledge who gain knowledge by themselves by sitting with books or, which is nowadays more common, in front of a computer screen, but students who get the knowledge “pumped” by someone else: by experts, private tutors.

Private lessons, as the research shows, are becoming a sort of a “standard” in Polish education (Putkiewicz, 2005, 2006; Ciesielska, Czyczyło, 2002; Pendel, 2002; Maćkowiak, 2003; Paciorek, 2005; Dębosz, 2006). In all school types – primary, junior high, secondary, sometimes tertiary – private lessons are becoming a more and more common way of dealing with studying problems and a chance of getting better results. A MEN¹ report called „Edukacja 1997 – 2001” estimates that only one out of three primary school pupils and a half at junior high are capable of doing their homework only by themselves. In the research of E. Putkiewicz with Instytut Spraw Publicznych, done in 2004 (the last year of so called “old *matura*”²) on 9,000 first year students of state colleges, half of the respondents admitted that they had been taking private lessons before *matura* (Putkiewicz, 2005). It is worth to notice that nowadays private lessons are not a domain of weak students who cannot cope with learning, but they become a vital element of good and very good students' education, especially since the *matura* exam changed in its form and so called new *matura* was introduced in the frames of educational reforms initiated in 1999. The *matura* exam replaced tertiary school entrance exams. This is why it is worth to ask: is it a sign of pathology in Polish and not only Polish education, or is the more and more dynamically developing market of private lessons an attempt to solve problems in Polish educational system?

The article presents an attempt to analyse the educational, psychological and psychosocial phenomenon of private tuition.

¹ MEN – Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej – The Ministry of National Education

² *matura* – final examination taken by secondary school graduates

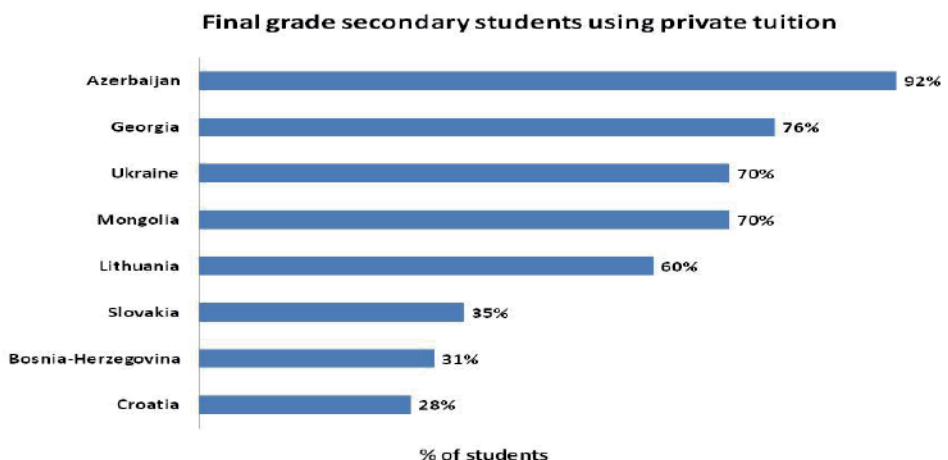
Do all students need private tuition?

Private tuition means basically „private lessons taken to support studying” (Słownik Języka Polskiego), and more specifically „an individual, paid, additional lessons with a teacher of subjects taught at school, supporting studying and taught in order to equalise knowledge with the rest, obtain outstanding results or prepare to an examination” (Putkiewicz, 2005, p.1).

An interesting thing here is the twofold character of individual paid lessons: they can be a way of compensating for lacks in education, revising material problematic for a pupil, a form of help for students threatened by a fail mark or no promotion to the consecutive grade. It is important to note that private lessons are sometimes treated as extra classes to not only complement, but also enrich the knowledge gained at school, at the same time enlarging the chances of a successful examination. Private lessons seem to have been associated with support for weaker pupils. Today private lessons grow more and more important. They are a form of complementary training and obtaining knowledge (Boćkowska, 2002).

Data quoted by Putkiewicz was based on research done with first year students. It indicates that 92% of pupils in Azerbaijan, 76% of pupils in Georgia, nearly 70% in Mongolia and in the Ukraine, 60% in Lithuania, 35% in Slovakia, 31% in Bosnia-Herzegovina and 28% in Croatia attended private individual or group lessons. Various forms of private tuition are more and more commonly used in coutures, where they have always been popular, which is in Japan, Singapore, South Korea and, as stated by E. Putkiewicz, very popular in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Canada.

Chart 1: Students – secondary school graduates attending private lessons (Putkiewicz, 2005).



“It is thought that private classes are more common in cultures in which school success depends from effort rather than from intelligence. Most children attend

private classes in well developed Asian countries – in large cities nearly all pupils do. In Japan the plague of private lessons is regulated by the state. There are special “extra lesson” schools which pay taxes and the authorities provide them with methodological supervision.” (Putkiewicz, 2005, p. 17).

The research quoted above, done by Putkiewicz with Instytut Spraw Publicznych (during the last year of so called old *matura*) among first year students of law, pedagogics and early education at the University of Warsaw and the University of Białystok indicates, that 40% of high-school graduates wanted to take private lessons, but they had no chance for them. The main reason for not taking private lessons was limited financial capability. This clearly shows that this form of additional training is available primarily to well-to-do students. Research quoted here proves that this form of training was used by children of wealthy and well educated parents (59%), less frequently from poorer and less educated families. This makes the statement “education in Poland is free but one has to pay for knowledge” seem to be a truism.

In Putkiewicz’s research 63% of students participating were convinced that one of the main reasons for private lessons is the teachers’ need to earn extra. It is obvious that private tuition is a “gray area of education” and an immanent element of the educational system. Actually there is a huge market and all the interested parties are aware of it – teachers, parents and pupils. The educational authorities, on the other hand, seem to not only tolerate, but even treat it as a solution to educational problems. Thanks to private lessons (unofficial, informal, tax-free, included in the “discreet educational program” of Polish school) teachers earn more, and busy parents aware of the importance of knowledge in the society of cognitarians influence the education level of their children by sponsoring teaching.

The average price of private lessons in 2005, taught by tertiary students (bottom “price level”) and qualified teachers, including academics (top “price level”) ranged from about PLN 30 to ca PLN 200 (€ 10 to € 80) per hour (www.ekorki.pl).

Why are they “fashionable” in Poland?

It is obvious that the specific “trend” for private lessons is determined by various, mutually related national, social, economic and psychological-educational factors. It is worth to pinpoint some of them and briefly indicate. For example, the changes in Polish educational system can be pointed out. The pupils frequently have more and more competitive attitudes. They take part in a “rat race” – they want to increase their chances on the educational market, where competition rules and what matters is the “profit” a place at a renowned university and then a prestigious profession. This should, in pupils’ and parents’ opinion, result in future financial profits. Sometimes students feel dignified because they take extra lessons. The parents, sometimes provident, sometimes even overzealous, are convinced of the necessity to “invest” in the best education for their children, including additional, paid and, as they believe, better lessons. There are finally the

teachers, exploiting the opportunity of improving their financial situation and the “demanding” school that both contribute to the escalation of the phenomenon.

School appears to be a place where the “discreet educational program” goes on. According to the “program”, briefly speaking, students not only attend classes, gain knowledge and get marks for how they have mastered the knowledge (sometimes in the reverse order) and participate in social life. School also teaches pupils how to “succeed”. For some a success means to upgrade a fail mark or a “victory” over difficult material, but for others it will be a successful examination which is supposed to guarantee a place at a popular college or an attractive course. School “requires success” on all levels – primary, junior high and secondary. Still, there are allegations that school teaches in a wrong way, as “covering” material is more important than understanding and independent work on an issue. (Pendel, 2002; Putkiewicz, Wiłkomirska, 2003). School does not prepare pupils to autonomous learning (Paciorek, 2005; Grudzień, 2007). Too extensive programs are carried out and not enough time is assigned to realise them. (Cieślińska, Czyczło, 2002, Grudzień, 2007). It must be mentioned that the school “facilitates” teachers by giving them the opportunity to earn extra. This cannot be belittled, yet it is a separate problem to be discussed in a separate paper (Kula, Borkowska, 2008).

Pupils are aware that not only a successful secondary school final exam, but also a primary or junior high school final test which decides of a student’s place in secondary school, might determine the future. Pupils will attend private lessons because they are afraid that they will not be able to overcome difficulties in absorbing the material, because they do not understand what the teacher says in class (Dębosz, 2006) or because they have blanks in school knowledge, resulting from for example illness or a longer absence from school (Pendel, 2002, Putkiewicz, 2005). What is more, they do not know any learning techniques (Boćkowska, 2002). More and more often they are convinced that it is easier to pass exams thanks to attending private lessons (Putkiewicz, 2006).

Parents themselves extensively contribute to such great popularity of private lessons. They are nowadays often convinced that upbringing means providing education (Putkiewicz, 2005). They think it is their duty to “invest” in their children’s education (Putkiewicz, Wiłkomirska, 2003), because they do not trust the educational system represented by school (Boćkowska, 2002; 2007). Parents very frequently induce fear in their children that they will not do well at school and/or will not pass an exam. This is why they need to take some actions in order to secure (the child/themselves?) against a possible educational failure. They “transfer” the responsibility for exam results onto a private tutor (Paciorek, 2005). The parents’ intentions are clearly obvious – they want to provide their children with a better educational start (Putkiewicz, Zahorska-Bugaj, 2001).

The parents’ lack of belief that their children can study and get ready for exams themselves, the fear that other pupils will know more and be better prepared, because “it is possible solely thanks to the very work of the private teacher”, and maybe both factors make all sorts of consultations popular, not to say essential at Polish

school. It must be emphasised private lessons were usually attended by secondary students who wanted to prepare for their final exams, or to “fight” for a good certificate. Now, since externally graded school leaving tests were introduced, more and more primary and junior high school pupils take up private lessons.

Private lessons in an empirical research. How did Polish secondary graduates learn?

Psychology as a university course has been very popular among Polish secondary school graduates. Reasons for that can be looked for in many various factors. It is only worth to mention that the interest in psychology might be “a reaction to the everyday uncertainty, political twists, frequent and unpredictable changes”. “But not only – during the last years there has been a series of events, which made Poles ask themselves the question: what is personally good for them and in what kind of country they want to live in”³. Perhaps the situation in which young people found themselves, especially so called “new *matura* students” is a reflection of at least a part of their spiritual condition. They believe that psychology will be a sort of a cure for their and their friends’ problems. The belief that psychologists are “soul experts who have secret knowledge, unavailable for others” also attracted secondary school graduates, as the interest in psychology was explained by prof. Z. Bartkowicz, dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology (Gazeta Wyborcza, 2005).

As we can see, the standards set by the candidates who want to study psychology are very high. In order to get admitted to the first year at a university a student needs to obtain very good, even perfect secondary school final exam (new *matura*) results, and if the old *matura* had been taken, a student must pass the entrance examination in flying colours. The interesting thing is therefore the answer to the question: Did the students who got admitted to their dream faculty prepare to the final and entrance examinations in a particular way? Was their contribution an autonomous, hard work or multi-hour meetings with private teachers? How much and how long does a pupil have to study in order to be accepted to such a popular faculty? Where is the source of exam success? Do investments like private tuition, an expense often substantial, sometimes even exceeding some families’ capacity really pay off? Assuming that the questions will be best answered by students themselves, a research team⁴ of members of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Wrocław did a research among first year psychology students at day and evening studies. The research was conducted in two phases. 83 first

³ A TNS OBOP survey conducted from 1 to 4.07. 2005 on a countrywide random representative group of 1005 people aged 15 and more shows that people feel lost. The situation results in, among others, returning to traditional values and a decreasing acceptance for homosexual marriages, concubinages, abortion or women’s priesthood Gazeta Wyborcza 14.07.2005, p.7

⁴ dr Bogusława Błoch ,mgr Natalia Bartosz, Anna Cieślík, mgr Agnieszka Zubik mgr Tomasz Frąckowiak, .

year students of day and evening psychology students of UW took part in phase I of the research in 2005/06 – the first year of the new *matura* (39 students who had passed the old *matura* and 44 so called new *matura* students. Phase two involved 189 first year students of day and evening psychology students of the University of Wrocław in 2005/06 (61 students represented old *matura*, 128 – new).

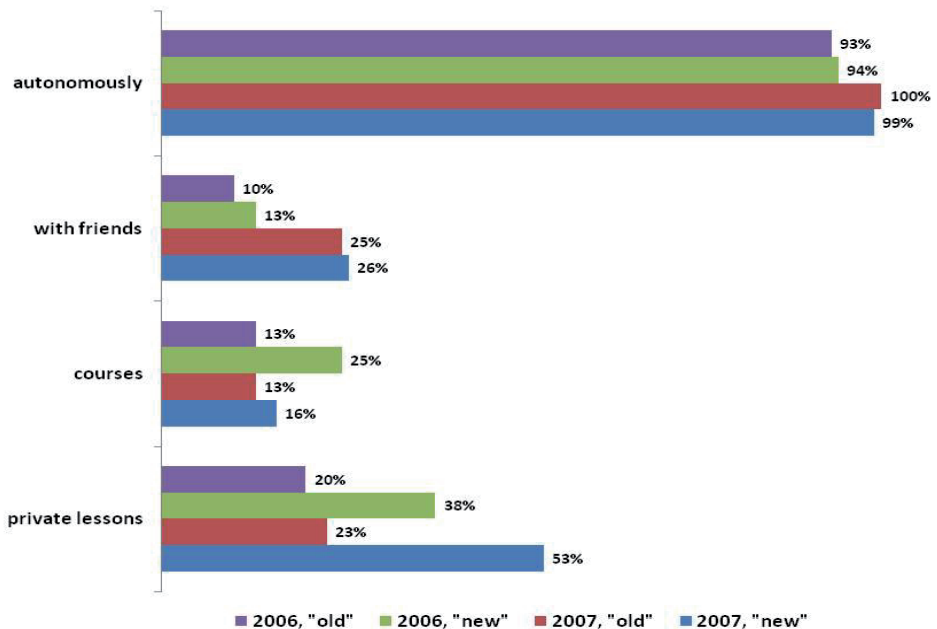
We concentrated on finding answers to the following questions:

1. Did psychology students attend private lessons before *matura* and entrance exams?
2. Are there differences in taking private lessons between students of old and new *matura*?
3. Do students think that they could autonomously cover the material they have worked on with their private teachers?
4. Did the extra lessons, in students' opinion, contribute to a success in the examinations?

How do Polish tertiary students study? Research results.

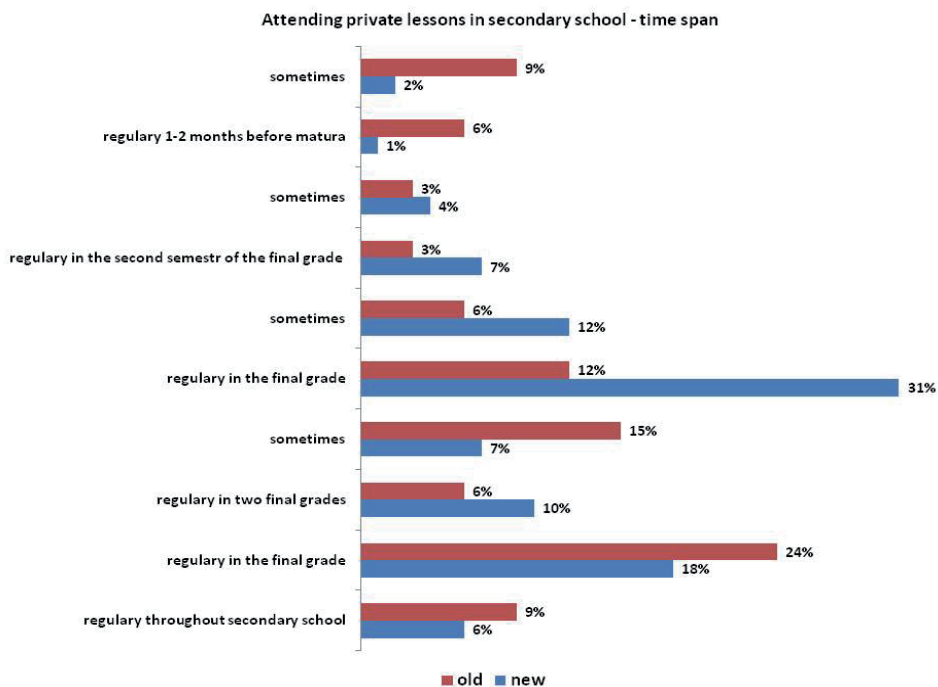
In the context of the research it is worthwhile to note some characteristic trends indicating how secondary graduates were getting ready for *matura* (old or new) and what place in the preparations private lessons took.

Chart 2: Ways of preparing to *matura*.



It is noticeable that first year psychology students in 2005/06 and 2006/07 (both day and evening mode) mainly prepared for *matura* by themselves (chart 2). Still, private lessons turned out to be a strategy exploited by a substantial part of candidates. First of all, new *matura* graduates used paid lessons in 2007 (53% of first year psychology students) and in 2006 (38% of first year psychology students). Fewer students who had taken old *matura* attended private lessons in secondary school final grade (23% in 2007 and 20% in 2006, respectively). This might prove that new *matura* in a form that differs from the known form of knowledge verification (at the same time being a “pass” to tertiary education), valid since 2005 implicated an attitude of uncertainty and a need to use some help “from outside”. There is an interesting question: Will this trend keep up despite “the taming” of new *matura* by teachers, secondary graduates and parents, or is private tuition going to become an essential element of the educational system. What is more, research results indicate that in the second year of new *matura* more graduates took up paid lessons than in 2006, when the new form of examination had just been introduced. Perhaps the experiences of the predecessors made private lessons very useful in preparations to *matura* exams.

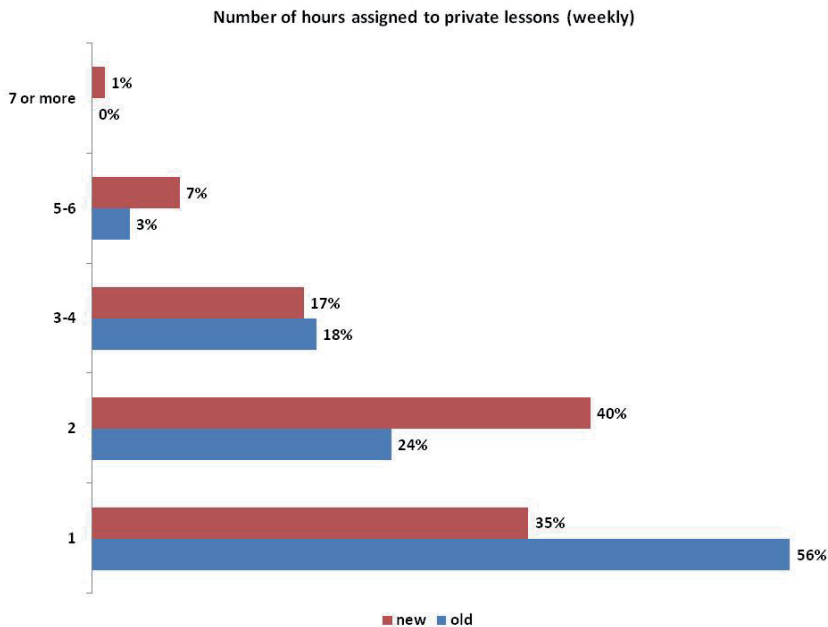
Chart 3: Time span of attending private lessons in secondary school by first year psychology students, 2006/07.



As the results depicted in chart 2 indicate, private lessons are a form used mainly by secondary school final grade students applying for the Faculty of Psychology

in 2006/07. 31% of students taking new *matura* and 12% of the students who had taken old *matura* attended this form of additional training on a regular basis in the final grade. The “old *matura*” students mostly took private lessons from time to time. It seems that traditionally private lessons were used as a means of dealing with learning problems, when *matura* had no impact on the admittance to a tertiary school. Along with the appearance of new *matura* the importance of private lessons increased. Perhaps now, in the graduates’ and parents’ opinions paid lessons began influencing *matura* exam and admittance to a university or college. Still, it is important how much time was devoted to private lessons in order to successfully pass such an important examination? Data on time assigned are presented in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Number of hours assigned weekly to private lessons by first year psychology students in 2006/07.

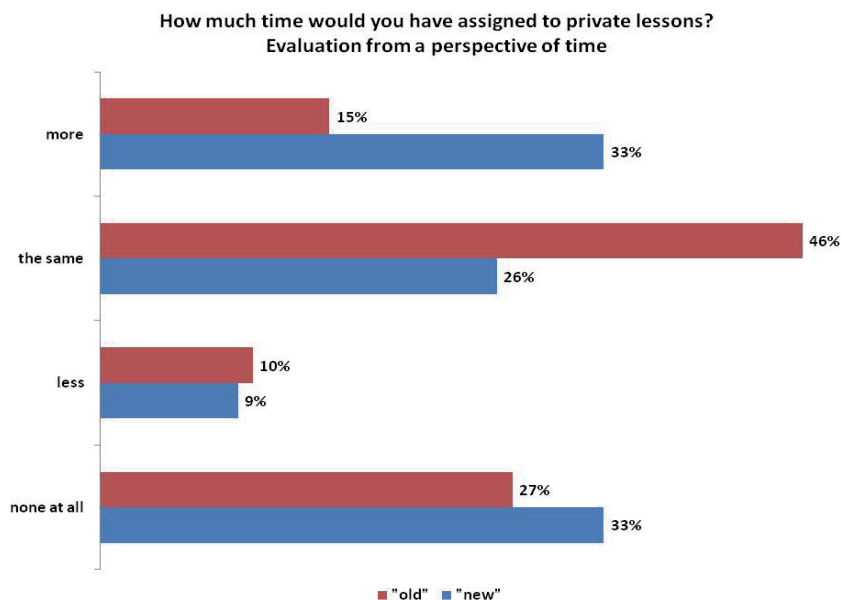


In the context of regular private lessons taken by secondary final grade students intending to study psychology in 2006/07 it is worth to take a close look at an interesting fact. Over a half of “old *matura*” private lesson users consider one hour of private tuition a week enough. 40 % of “new *matura*” students devoted two hours a week for paid lessons. This form of extra lessons was therefore more often used by secondary students who, by taking the final exam, at the same time “took an entrance exam” to a college or university. Probably the “stake” was high enough to convince students and their parents that another lesson with a private teacher increases the chances of success.

First year psychology students of 2006/07, when asked how much time they would have assigned to paid lessons said (72%), that as much as they had actually

devoted. What is more, 48% of students, from a perspective of time, stated that they would have assigned even more time to paid lessons. What may that prove? On one hand, it may prove the maturity of no longer pupils but already students? It may also indicate that the value of knowledge whose importance increases along with experience? Probably tertiary students notice the positive results of private lessons, too (both those who took old and new *matura*).

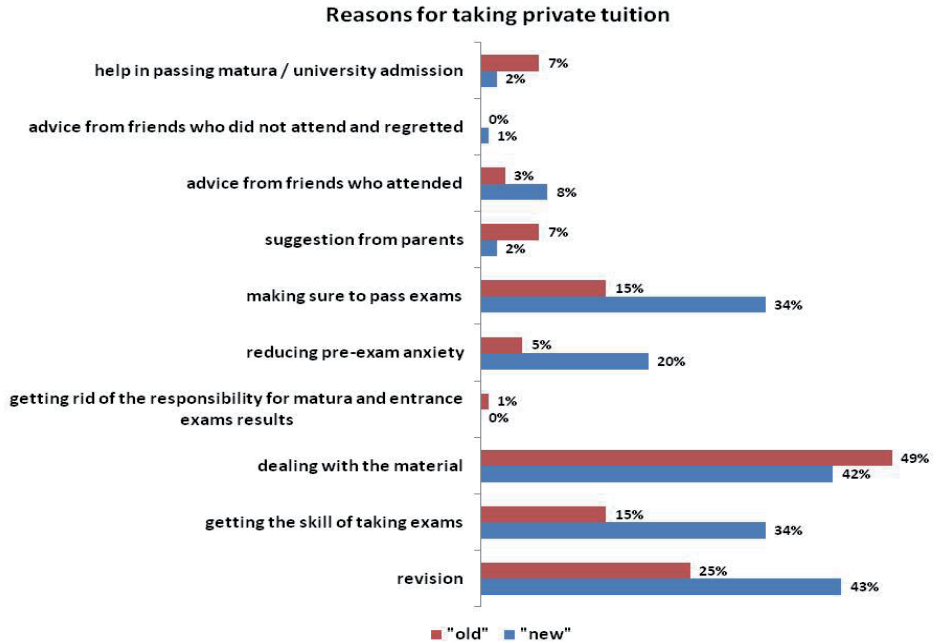
Chart 5: Assessment of private lessons from a perspective of time by first year psychology students of 2006/07.



Still, there is a difference between students who had taken old and new *matura*. The new *matura* students (46%) would have assigned the same amount of time, whereas old *matura* students (33%) would have spent more time with a private tutor. That may prove that students, especially experienced ones, perceive the lessons as effective, valuable and profitable for their knowledge. Still, when the students were asked for a detailed reasons for using this form of study they pointed out many additional factors, shown in chart 6.

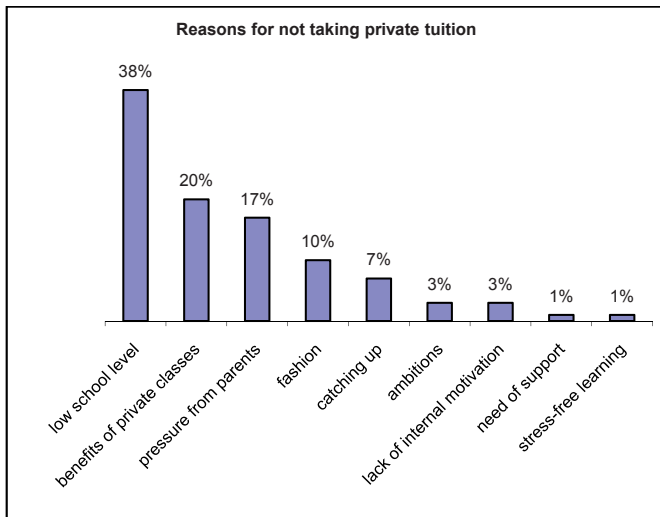
New *matura* students used private tuition mainly because, as they said, it was a way of revising their knowledge (43%) and managing (difficult of extensive) material (42%) and a way of learning how to pass exams (34%) and making sure that the exam will be a success (32%). Old *matura* students, on the other hand, who took a traditional entrance exam used private tuition primarily in order to “deal with the material”(49%). We can thus see a change in the approach to private tuition. Today they are extra lessons designed to provide “comfort” – a better preparation, extra knowledge, and competence in exam taking.

Chart 6: Reasons for taking private lessons by first year psychology students of 2006/07.



Other reasons for the popularity of paid lessons are interesting, too. It turns out that pupils take up such forms of study because of their schools' low level, which does not provide knowledge sufficient to get accepted to a tertiary school. (chart 7).

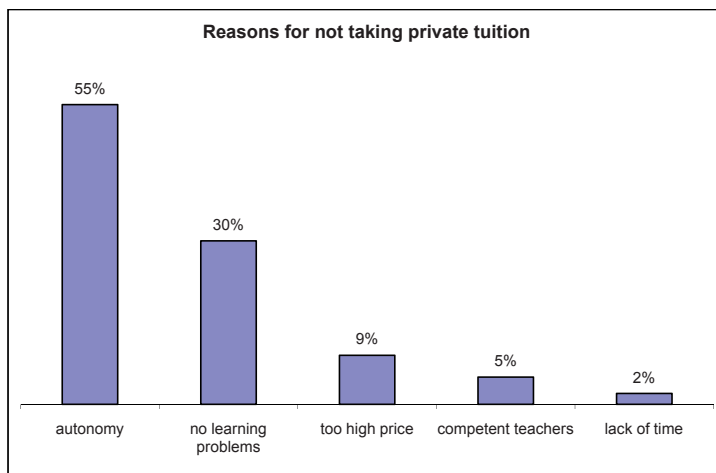
Chart 7: Other reasons for taking private lessons by secondary pupils (by first year psychology students of 2006/07).



As much as 38% of first year psychology students of 2006/07 say that school education does not guarantee passing the secondary final examination and/or admittance to a university (both old and new *matura* students said so). What is even more disturbing, since extra lessons are paid, they can be taken only by those pupils whose parents can afford it. There is, on the other hand, a vast group of pupils for whom this form of training is unavailable because of their parents' financial capability. They have no means of compensating the "poor school level" with paid lessons. As a result, at least some faculties will be unavailable to their children.

It must also be pointed out that secondary school graduates of 2006 spotted some benefits of individual lessons (like direct contact with the teacher who has time for the student; the teacher explains an issue in an accessible way, adapted to the pupil's capabilities; the student is free to ask questions and admit he or she does not know something without the fear of getting a bad mark).

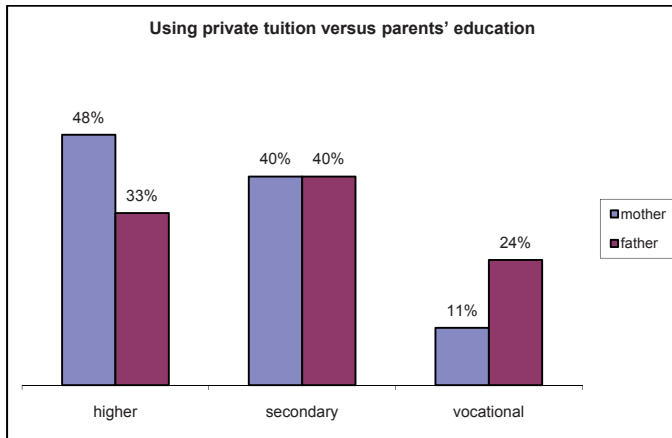
Chart 8: Reasons for not taking private lessons by first year psychology students of 2006/07.



It seems interesting to analyse the reasons why secondary graduates of 2006 did not use additional, paid lessons. Is it all about money? This argument was given by 9% of the students. The primary reason was the autonomy in gathering knowledge necessary to pass the *matura* exam. That was stated by both old and new *matura* students. Thus, the belief that students are able to manage learning by themselves (absorbing the material, understanding difficult issues, preparing for examinations, etc.) turned out to be the main reason for not taking up private lessons. If autonomy, as a sort of a specific competence, is accompanied by problem-free studying, there are no reasons why pupils, and parent either, should turn to private tutors. Perhaps pupils should be persuaded that autonomous problem solving, including learning problems, can contribute to competence development. Particularly educated parents (especially mothers) who themselves had probably

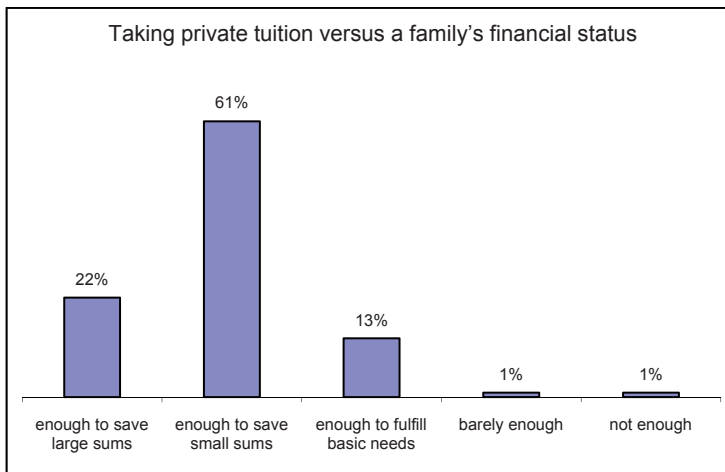
taken private tuition in a lesser degree than their children perhaps should take care about their children's autonomous approach towards learning (chart 9).

Chart 9: Using private tuition versus parents' education.



Parents with university diplomas (especially mothers – 48%) and parents of secondary education tend to invest in their children. It is probably related to their financial capabilities and the emphasis put on educating the children. In this context it appears to be essential to take a look how the students who took extra lessons perceived the financial status of their families.

Chart 10: Taking private lessons versus a family's financial status perceived by first year psychology students of 2006/07.



Students who used private lessons, when asked how they perceived the financial status of their families, in 61% stated that they parents “earn enough and they can save up small amounts”. 22% of respondents said their families

earn enough to be able to save up large sums, which probably means that buying private lessons is not a serious load for the family budget. 13% of students said that the financial situation at home allowed to fulfil only basic needs. In such situation paid lessons were probably a load for parents, who decided to pay for extra classes while giving up other expenses. If we consider the financial status of parents whose children attended private lessons we need to note that not very well earning but rather moderately well earning parents invest in this form of training. Perhaps secondary school graduates are not aware of the (good?) financial status of their parents.

Private tuition – for whom and why?

First year psychology students who took part in the research – in 2006 and 2007 at the University of Wrocław (day and evening studies) attended private lessons while preparing for *matura* and entrance exams. The “new *matura*” students used private tuition more frequently than the “old *matura*” ones. We can therefore assume that the form of “new” *matura* is in favour of private tuition. What is more, they ceased to be a domain of so called weak pupils (with learning problems), but became a form of additional training and obtaining better education. As experience and discussions in media indicate, especially in the context of so called new *matura* which is “still warm”, private lessons can decide of and exam. Especially, when a student applies for a popular faculty like psychology, medicine or law.

While analysing the results of the research it needs to be pointed out that along with new *matura* the role of private lessons changed. They are, in students’ opinion, a way to get two kinds of skills: “hard” and “soft”. First of all extra lessons allow to gain knowledge which guarantees passing the secondary school final exam. Thanks to paid lessons pupils also obtain soft skills like the ability to pass exams, confidence that the exam will be a success, or dealing with stress in an exam situation. It needs to be pointed out though, that paid lessons (the “grey area of education”) might become one of strategies of excluding the poorer pupils. Since not available for all pupils, private lessons generate educational inequalities and they act against equalising chances. There is no doubt – in the context of gathered data – that they also have positive results – they induce confidence and might develop interests and passions. The problem is that they are not accessible for everyone, but for selected ones only – for those, who can pay for them. To be precise, this way of individual teaching is available to students, whose parents are able to bear costs of education.

Private classes may also model attitudes and “outside-induced” behaviours – lack of confidence, lack of trust for autonomously gathered knowledge, rationalisation of failures (not only in terms of education), a belief that help from outside is essential to realise one’s goals (Riesman, 1996).

Conclusion

The escalation of the phenomenon of private lessons should not only be analysed, but also raise alarm. Will a good pupil with no learning problems “persuaded” by parents that he or she should take extra classes (not only maths or a foreign language, but history, geography etc.) trust oneself and one’s abilities? Won’t he or she search for help and support in the adult life even though he or she might manage it by themselves? Perhaps these predictions are not fully justified, but modelling some behaviours and attitudes may influence their self-esteem and motivation. Teaching young people that they will not make it without help from others can make their self-confidence and unsupported motivation weaken.

The role of knowledge becomes more and more important. On the other hand, the phenomenon called mutual pupil help (a better pupil helps a weaker colleague) is today practically extinct.

There is a kind of paradox: in 2005, for the first time for the last 15 years the number of tertiary students did not increase. In 2005 the number of candidates was smaller than the number of vacant places prepared at colleges and universities (GW, 30–31.07.2005). There were 100,000 more places than candidates. In 2005 there were about 3.9 million young people aged between 19 and 24. According to estimations and forecasts in five years’ time there will be 600,000 less, in ten years – 1.1 million less (Kula, 2005). Still, it must be remembered that „*All men by nature desire knowledge.*” (Aristotle), but only some of them can obtain it through private lessons...

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JAK ŘEŠÍ POLŠTÍ STUDENTI POTÍŽE S UČENÍM? SOUKROMÉ HODINY – MÓDA NEBO NUTNOST

Článek popisuje psychologické aspekty užívání soukromých hodin (doplňkové placené výuky) polskými žáky. Problém se týká využívání soukromé výuky žáky a studenty různých škol (základních, nižších středních, středních a vysokých). Mnohé zprávy naznačují, že tento fenomén není na vzestupu pouze v Polsku, ale také po celé Evropě. Článek se zaměřuje na rozsah soukromých lekcí, důvody vedoucí k jejich využití, ale také na učební strategie u mladých lidí a na důvody nevyužívání soukromých hodin. Příspěvek staví na výzkumu provedeném se studenty psychologie Wroclawské univerzity.

Na výzkumu participovali 272 studenti prvního ročníku Wroclawské univerzity (83 studenti v akademickém roce 2005/06: 62 ženy a 21 muž; 189 studentů v akademickém roce 2006/07: 124 ženy a 65 mužů). Studenti vyplnili dotazník, který obsahoval otázky týkající se upřednostňovaných strategií přípravy *k maturitě*, důvodů vedoucí k využití soukromých hodin, času stráveného samostatným učením a také výuky soukromých učitelů, zhodnocení soukromých hodin jako metody učení a zhodnocení finanční situace studenta.

Ze získaných dat lze vyvodit následující závěr: soukromé hodiny v současném Polsku nejsou pouze populární, ale podle mnohých studentů jsou „módním“, dokonce „základním“ druhem doplňkového výcviku a hodiny navíc zvyšují pravděpodobnost úspěšného vykonání zkoušky.

Klíčová slova: vzdělávání, potíže s učením, soukromé hodiny, způsoby přípravy na maturitu