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**WPLYW UCZELNI WYŻSZYCH NA AKUMULACJĘ KAPITAŁU
LUDZKIEGO WOJEWÓDZTWA PODLASKIEGO
W LATACH 2000-2020**

SUMMARY

In the era of the post-industrial economy, synonymous with knowledge-based economy, there is a focus on non-material forms of capital accumulation. Research, development and the quality of higher education, determine the maintenance of high regional competitiveness. The influence of higher education institutions on socio-economic development is undisputed. Efficiently operating institutions have a positive impact on both physical and human capital.

The subject of the analysis discussed in the study is higher education institutions in the Podlaskie Voivodeship. The primary tasks of universities include education and knowledge creation utilizing factors, such as material resources, teaching infrastructure, number of students, funding, methods of acquisition, as well as a qualified academic staff enabling the achievement of educational and research objectives. Actions aimed at ensuring an appropriate level of education quality should be conducted in such centers. However, in the first two initial decades of the 21st century, the development of human capital in the Podlaskie Voivodeship did not accompany sufficient changes in the operating conditions of this capital, thus limiting the possibilities of educational achievements in the region.

The main goal of the research is to examine the impact of selected higher education institutions on the scale and quality of human capital in the Podlaskie Voivodeship. The existing configuration of the higher education system in Poland does not seem to be fully efficient in terms of economic benefits. Moreover, the expansion of tertiary education initiated in the early 1990s, marked by a more than quintuple increase in student enrollment, has not distinctly affected the level of accrued human capital.

Reflections within the study show the need to transform the potential of human capital into real power to become a source of sustainable economic growth. A proper method of its accumulation is essential. Maintaining the productivity of this resource in the present and

preserving its value is an essential element of the regional competitiveness growth. Gathering talented and educated young individuals in a particular place leads to the accumulation of knowledge and creativity resources, resulting in the increased attractiveness of the region. The problem of low human capital accumulation, understood as deepening the gap between the Podlaskie Voivodeship and highly developed voivodeships, was the reason for undertaking this research.

The first two chapters address theoretical issues. The first chapter attempts to present the theory of human capital from an educational perspective and outlines the essence of human capital investment and accumulation. The second chapter focuses on changes in higher education institutions at the systemic and institutional levels over the past three decades, as well as on the impact of universities on human capital development in the region. The third chapter focuses on demographic situation in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, such as aging society, shrinking demographic potential, and increased mobility of young and educated people. The fourth chapter analyzes the functioning of higher education in the Podlaskie Voivodeship compared to Poland. The fifth chapter attempts to measure the quality of human capital.

The analysis conducted in the theoretical and empirical parts of the work revealed important links between the efficiency of higher education institutions and the level and quality of accumulated human capital. Based on a review of the literature, it was noted that the productive skills acquired through knowledge accumulation in individuals, like other forms of capital, yield returns in the economy. The explication of these relationships allowed for the verification of the hypotheses adopted in the work and the formulation of conclusions.

The demographic crisis in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, which was initiated at the beginning of the 21st century, was exacerbated by high migration balances. The region ranked 13th among Polish voivodeships in terms of internal migration balance per thousand people. Warsaw remains the focal point of internal migration. Attractive employment conditions and better wage contributed to numerous departures for studies immediately after their completion. In the face of the demographic crisis in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, it is particularly important to halt the outflow of young and educated residents.

Furthermore, the system of funding in higher education has not significantly transformed. The conclusion drawn from the work is the insufficiently high level of funding and the structure of these expenditures, leading to the peripheralization of the region. In the Podlaskie Voivodeship, expenditures on research and development were over six times lower than in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship and accounted for less than 1.3% of expenditures allocated in Poland in 2020. This phenomenon may be concerning because one of the region's

characteristics is one of the smallest shares of the state budget in financing research and development activities.

The study of dependencies assessing the quality of human capital showed that changes occurring in the Podlaskie Voivodeship differ from other voivodeships. The Podlasie region experienced the greatest decline in the ranking of Polish regions in terms of human capital quality by two places. To compare voivodeships, the available national ranking of academic universities regarding the evaluation of the best higher education institutions in Poland was utilized. Obtaining the average value of the academic university quality index in 2020 on a regional basis allowed for the creation of a ranking list of voivodeships. The obtained results of the positions of all voivodeships in both rankings allowed for the identification of the similarity of the places they occupied. Similar values of variables confirm that there is a high correlation (0.746) between the quality of higher education institutions and the quality of human capital.

The theoretical analysis and empirical verification of the hypotheses lead to the conclusion that higher education institutions are a factor accelerating human capital accumulation. Regardless of the retrospective synthesis of the economics achievements in the area of human capital theory, human capital is undeniably one of the most important factors of economic development. Therefore, investments in education, particularly at the level of higher education, contributes to the development of human skills and knowledge, leading to increased productivity and regional competitiveness.