

Olena Shelest

Poznań University of Economics and Business

e-mail: olena.shelest@ue.poznan.pl

**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
AND THE LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS***

**EDUKACJA POZAFORMALNA A RYNEK PRACY:
ANALIZA PORÓWNAWCZA**

DOI: 10.15611/e21.2016.3.28

JEL Classification: J24, J21

Summary: The main objective of this article is the investigation of the relationship between non-formal education and labour market performance. The focus of the study is on selected issues related to educational activity of the employed population, as well as potential link between non-formal education and the main labour market indicators. The paper is based on the comparative analysis of available statistical data for Poland and the United Kingdom. Quantitative descriptive analysis was used to describe and compare the scale and nature of non-formal training which is an important element of the current focus of lifelong learning policies in both countries. The study suggests that observed differences in educational activity may result from different levels of skill specialisation in the economy, employment protection and employees mobility in the labour market.

Keywords: non-formal education, trainings, labour market, Poland, the United Kingdom.

Streszczenie: Głównym celem artykułu jest przeanalizowanie relacji pomiędzy edukacją nieformalną i funkcjonowaniem rynku pracy. Uwagę skoncentrowano na wybranych zagadnieniach związanych z aktywnością edukacyjną pracowników oraz na związku pomiędzy kształceniem pozaformalnym a głównymi wskaźnikami rynku pracy. Badanie przeprowadzono, opierając się na analizie porównawczej danych statystycznych dostępnych dla Polski i Wielkiej Brytanii. W celu przybliżenia skali i charakteru kształcenia pozaformalnego w analizowanych krajach wykorzystano statystyczną analizę opisową. Wyniki analizy wskazują, że zaobserwowane różnice w aktywności edukacyjnej można wyjaśnić, między innymi, różnicą w poziomie specjalizacji umiejętności w gospodarkach, mobilności pracowników na rynku pracy, a także ochroną zatrudnienia.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja nieformalna, szkolenia, rynek pracy, Polska, Wielka Brytania.

* Financial support for this paper was provided by the National Science Centre under grant DEC-2013/11/N/HS4/02969.

1. Introduction

Lifelong learning¹ is an integral part of the functioning of the modern human. To a great extent, it is a response to socio-economic changes, the pace of technological development and the challenges of globalisation [Korsgaard 1997]. The special role of lifelong learning in the smooth functioning of a person in all spheres of life, and in the labour market in particular, has already been emphasised [Casey 2011; Mirończuk 2013; Stalończyk 2014; Szłapińska, Bartkowiak 2013].

An important element of lifelong learning is non-formal education, which has been defined by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training as “non-formal learning [that] concerns learning that takes place through planned activities. (...) It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support” and has an intentional nature (as cited in [Komisja Europejska 2011, p. 17]). A reflection on non-formal education in isolation from the analysis of the most important processes that take place in the labour market would be incomplete. Changes in the labour market are crucial with respect to occupational and educational activities, and at the same time, the smooth functioning of the labour market is conditioned, among other things, by the quality of the available qualifications and skills of employees. In this context, it seems important to determine the role played by non-formal education in shaping the situation in the labour market; thus, this was the main aim of this paper. A deeper insight into the discussed research problem may be provided by a comparative analysis. Therefore, the present study focuses on a comparison of Poland and the United Kingdom, where different labour market models are implemented.

A large number of theoretical and empirical literature addresses the problem of adults' educational activity in European countries. Some recent works include Albert, Garcia-Serrano and Hernanz [2010], Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan [2004], Badescu and Saisana [2008], Bassanini, Booth, Brunello, de Paola and Leuven [2005], Riddell, Markowitsch and Weedon [2012]. In many cases the analysis was limited to comparing and presenting recent trends in non-formal education without any reference to the situation in the labour market. What is more, previous research focuses mainly on the lifelong learning participation, which, apart from non-formal education, includes also formal and informal education. This paper thus complements the existing literature by giving an in-depth look at non-formal education and training, and exploring its potential impact on the labour market performance.

¹ The concept of lifelong learning was proposed in the 1960s by UNESCO [Korsgaard 1997]. This concept assumes that learning takes place throughout a person's life and is not limited only to acquiring knowledge as part of formal education, but can occur in various life situations. Lifelong learning is focused on learning processes rather than on the formal education system. Attention was given to learning involving various spheres of human life, especially the workplace and the communities in which a person functions and develops. Also, the key role of the learner, who consciously determines all elements of this process, has been emphasised [Casey 2011, pp. 92-93].

In the first part of the paper, selected aspects of non-formal education in Poland and the UK were analysed. Next, indicators of the overall situation in the labour market in the analysed countries between 2004 and 2013 were presented and briefly discussed². In addition, the situation was compared to the situation in the European Union. As research methods, the study used statistical analysis based on the latest data available from Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as logical inference based on the critical literature review.

2. Non-formal education in Poland and the United Kingdom

Non-formal education in the labour market is as an important complement to formal education. In the case of employees with a lower level of education and skills, non-formal education may also constitute an alternative to gaining qualifications within the framework of formal education. In the context of the discussed research problem, the main focus of this part of the paper is on the educational activity of adults which is related to their current employment or planned professional activity.

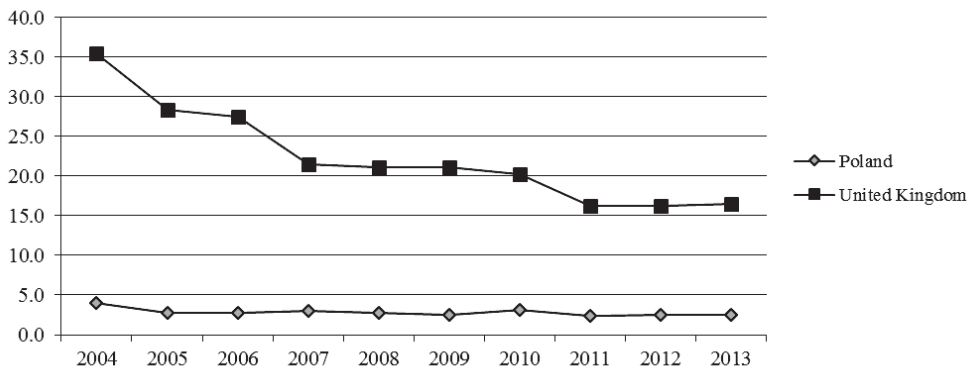


Figure 1. Participation of employees in non-formal education

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

While analysing the self-education activity level of employees, it can be observed that in Poland, the percentage of people participating in non-formal education between 2004 and 2013 was much lower than in the UK (Fig. 1). At the beginning of the period, the difference was even eight-fold. In Poland, the fluctuations of the discussed indicator did not have a clear trend in the studied period. In the UK, there was a decrease in the educational activity of employees, with the greatest decrease

² For some indicators, the temporal scope of the analysis is shorter due to the lack of available statistical data.

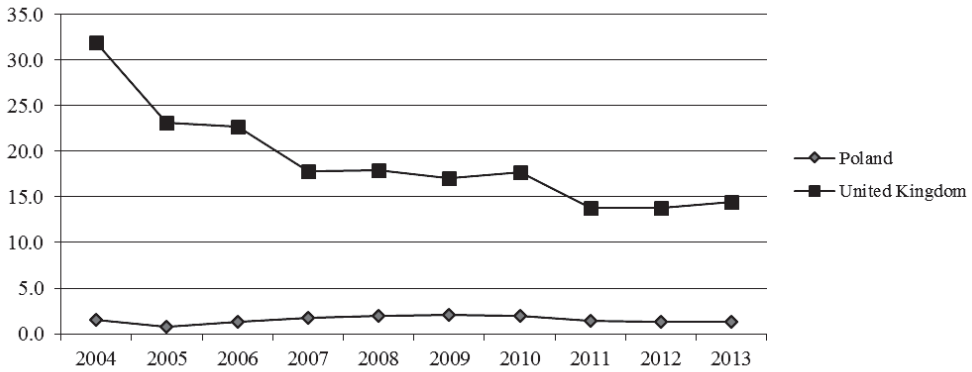


Figure 2. Participation of the unemployed in non-formal education

Source: author’s elaboration based on Eurostat data.

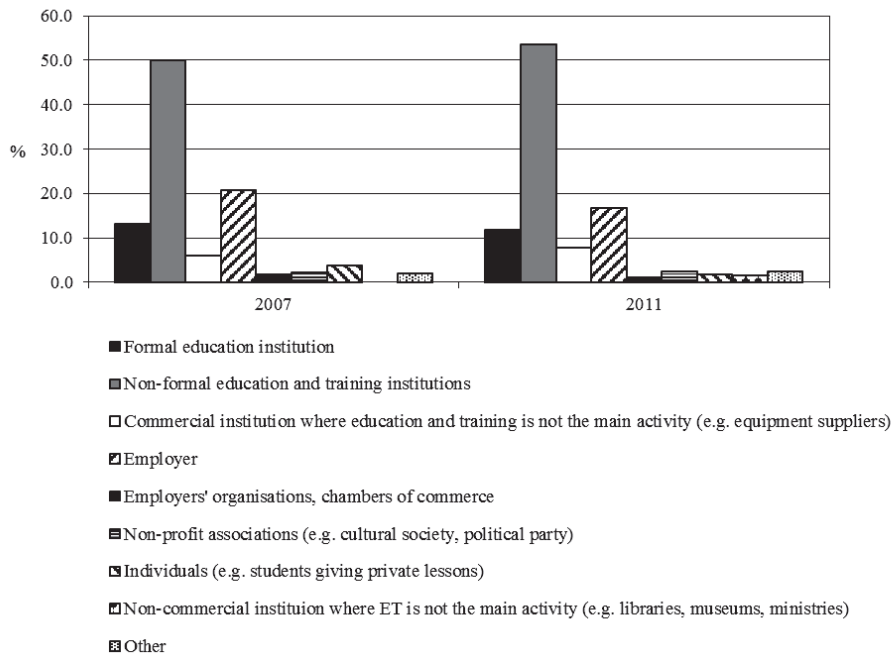


Figure 3. Training providers in the field of non-formal education in Poland

Source: author’s elaboration based on Eurostat data.

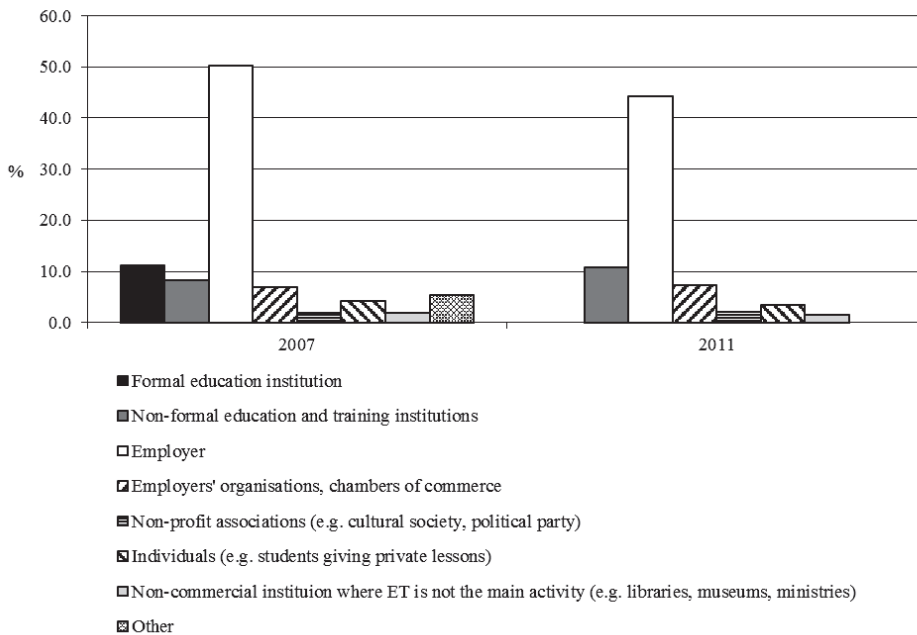


Figure 4. Training providers in the field of non-formal education in the UK

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

recorded between 2004 and 2007. In 2013, one in six employees in the UK were educated in the framework of non-formal education; in Poland, the statistic was one in forty employees.

A similar situation was observed in the educational activity of the unemployed (Fig. 2): it was higher in the UK than in Poland. In Poland, the absence of any tendency to change the educational activity of the unemployed can be observed in the studied period. In the United Kingdom, a clear decrease was observed in the percentage of the unemployed who participated in non-formal education between 2004 and 2007. In 2013, only 1.3% of the unemployed in Poland undertook self-education, while in the UK, this indicator amounted to 14.5%.

Among all of the training providers in the field of non-formal education in Poland, the greatest share belongs to institutions that specialise in providing such services (Fig. 3). The share of employers or institutions of formal education was much lower, and even in 2011, it decreased in comparison with 2007. On the other hand, in the UK, employers play the most important role in non-formal education; however, in 2011, a decrease was observed in their share compared to 2007. The significance of non-formal education institutions slightly increased (Fig. 4).

Interesting findings are provided by an analysis of the causes of participation in various forms of non-formal education. As it can be concluded based on the data presented in Table 1, in Poland, better performance at work or better career prospects are definitely the most important reasons for participating in non-formal education, as indicated by 67.5% of respondents. Broadening one's knowledge of an interesting subject takes second place (7.6% of respondents). Third place is taken by acquiring knowledge or skills useful in everyday life, increasing job opportunities or changing one's job/profession, as well as receiving a certificate (each declared by 7.2% of respondents).

The situation is different in the UK. Broadening one's knowledge of an interesting subject or related skills was mentioned as the main reason for participating in non-formal education (82% of respondents). It is important that compulsory participation and better performance at work or improvement of career prospects (55.7% and 55% of respondents, respectively) were only in second and third place. The frequently indicated reasons for participating in non-formal education also include acquiring knowledge or skills useful in everyday life (44.8%) and receiving a certificate (33.9%).

Table 1. Reasons for participating in non-formal education (in %, 2007)

Reasons for participating in non-formal education	Poland	United Kingdom
Reducing the likelihood of losing job	6.6	2.8
Compulsory participation	5.2	57.7
Increasing job opportunities or changing job/profession	7.2	18.1
Starting a business	1.4	9.3
Acquiring knowledge or skills useful in everyday life	7.2	44.8
Broadening knowledge of or developing skills related to an interesting subject	7.6	82.0
Meeting new people or having fun	0.5	9.7
Receiving a certificate	7.2	33.9
Better performance at work or better career prospects	67.1	55.0

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

It is noteworthy that reducing the likelihood of losing one's job was indicated as the reason for participating in non-formal education more often in Poland than in the UK. On the other hand, increasing job opportunities or changing one's job/profession and starting a business was indicated less frequently in Poland than in the UK.

The differences in the reasons for participating in non-formal education allow us to venture a hypothesis that participation in non-formal education in Poland is more connected with the intention to use the acquired skills at work. In the UK, on the other hand, greater emphasis is put on improving generally useful knowledge and skills. Interestingly, participation in non-formal education is one of the ways to

prevent losing a job in Poland. This reason was indicated by 6.6% of respondents, compared to 2.8% in the UK. The presented data fully corresponds with study results that indicate that internal mobility of employees is a more common phenomenon in Poland than in the UK, where employees are more inclined to change their place of employment more often [Andersen et al. 2008].

The analysis of the self-education activity of employees shows that in 2011, in both countries, slightly more than a quarter of employees participated in job-related education and training, whereas employees' participation in job-related non-formal education decreased in the UK, while in Poland it slightly increased, compared to the situation four years earlier. The majority of educational activities were financed by employers in both countries (Table 2).

Table 2. Share of employees who participated in various forms of job-related non-formal education (in %)

	2007	2011
Poland		
Job-related non-formal education	24.2	26.3
Job-related non-formal education (financed by the employer)	24.2	23.4
Job-related non-formal education (alternative source of financing)	0.0	2.9
United Kingdom		
Job-related non-formal education	38.7	27.8
Job-related non-formal education (financed by the employer)	35.2	25.5
Job-related non-formal education (alternative source of financing)	3.5	2.2

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

Employers play an important role in the development of their employees' professional skills. In terms of commitment to the professional development of employees, employers in Poland are significantly less active. According to Eurostat data (2014), in Poland, the percentage of entities in which any activity related to the occupational training of employees was undertaken in 2010 was 22%, and decreased by 7 percentage points in comparison with 2005. In the UK, as many as 80% of companies claimed to undertake activities in order to train employees, which is about 10 percentage points less than in 2005.

Analysis of the difference in the level of involvement of various companies based on their size indicates that the percentage of companies that train employees is the largest among large companies (Table 3). The difference between the groups of entities of different sizes is more visible in Poland than in the UK. In 2010, a decrease of involvement in the training of employees was observed in all groups of companies in Poland, while in the UK, this indicator slightly increased in groups of entities that hired between 50 and 249 employees or 250 or more employees.

Table 3. Companies that undertook activities involving the lifelong vocational training of employees (in %)

Number of employees	Poland		United Kingdom	
	2005	2010	2005	2010
10-49 employees	27	16	89	78
50-249 employees	55	41	92	93
250+ employees	80	75	96	98

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

If we take a look at the percentage of employees who participate in lifelong vocational training, the situation in each of the analysed countries will be different (Table 4). In Poland, more than half of employees (55%) participated in such courses and training programmes, while in the UK, this indicator amounted to only 37%. In addition, in the UK, an inverse relationship is clearly visible between the size of the company and the percentage of employees undergoing lifelong training. In contrast, in Poland in 2010, most employees undergoing lifelong training were in large companies (with 250 or more employees).

Table 4. Employees who participated in lifelong vocational training (in %)

Number of employees	Poland		United Kingdom	
	2005	2010	2005	2010
Total	36	55	39	37
10-49 employees	39	53	44	42
50-249 employees	32	48	42	36
250+ employees	36	57	37	36

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

Big differences can be observed in the case of training costs per employee-trainee (Table 5). Even though there was a decrease of this indicator from 2005 to 2010 in both countries, a relationship between the cost and the size of the company can be observed. In Poland, larger companies pay higher training costs per employee. In the UK, this relationship is reversed: the analogous cost of training is, on average, lower in larger companies.

Table 5. Training cost of lifelong vocational training per employee (purchasing power standard)

Number of employees	Poland		United Kingdom	
	2005	2010	2005	2010
10-49 employees	739	484	1223	1190
50-249 employees	941	584	1176	1112
250+ employees	943	692	977	736

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

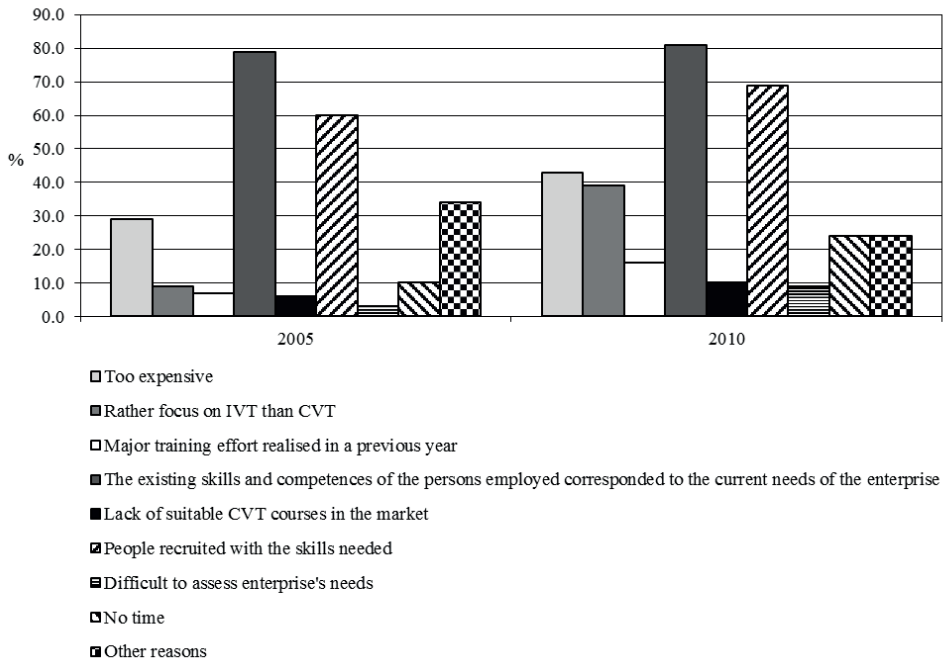


Figure 5. Reasons for not undertaking activities involving lifelong vocational training in Poland

Source: author's elaboration based on Eurostat data.

As reasons for not undertaking any activities in terms of the lifelong vocational training of their employees, companies in Poland and the UK most frequently indicate the fact that the skills of the employees correspond to the current needs of the company, or that they hired people who already had the required skills (Fig. 5 and 6). In addition, in Poland, high training costs were important, while the lack of time was indicated in the UK.

Based on the analysis of statistical data, a conclusion can be easily reached that companies in both Poland and the UK focus on recruiting employees who already have the currently required skills and qualifications. In the case of Poland, this trend is distressing given the much lower participation in self-education of employees and the unemployed.

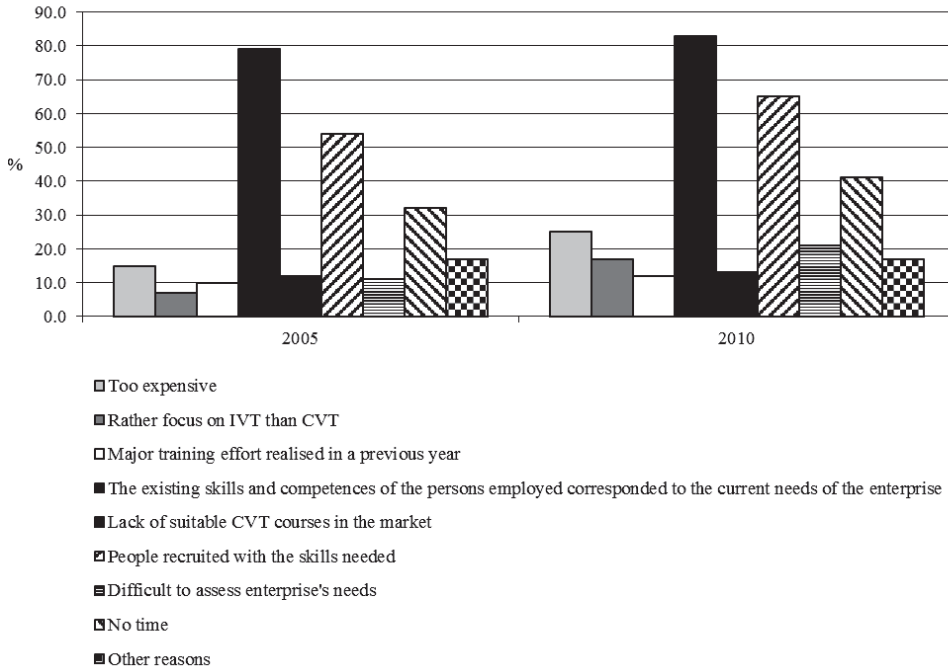


Figure 6. Reasons for not undertaking activities involving lifelong vocational training in the UK

Source: author’s elaboration based on Eurostat data.

3. Labour market indicators in Poland and the United Kingdom

This part of the study presents and discusses the most important indicators of the functioning of the labour market in the analysed countries. The Anglo-Saxon model of labour market implemented in the UK is characterised by a high level of liberalisation of employment relationships [Boeri 2002; Nagel 2011; Sapir 2006]. Sapir [2006] describes the British labour market as efficient in terms of employment rate. Indeed, when comparing the overall situation in the labour markets in the UK and Poland between 2004 and 2013, including a comparison to the European Union, it can be observed that it was much more favourable in the British labour market (Fig. 7). The employment rate in the UK is constantly higher than in Poland and the EU average. In 2013, it amounted to 71.3%, while it was 64.8% in the EU and 60.0% in Poland.

Although it slightly increased in the period of crisis, the unemployment rate in the UK remained lower compared to Poland and the average value for the EU (Fig. 8). A difference can be observed in the dynamics of the unemployment rate in the UK and Poland in the period of 2004 to 2013. At the beginning of the analysed period,

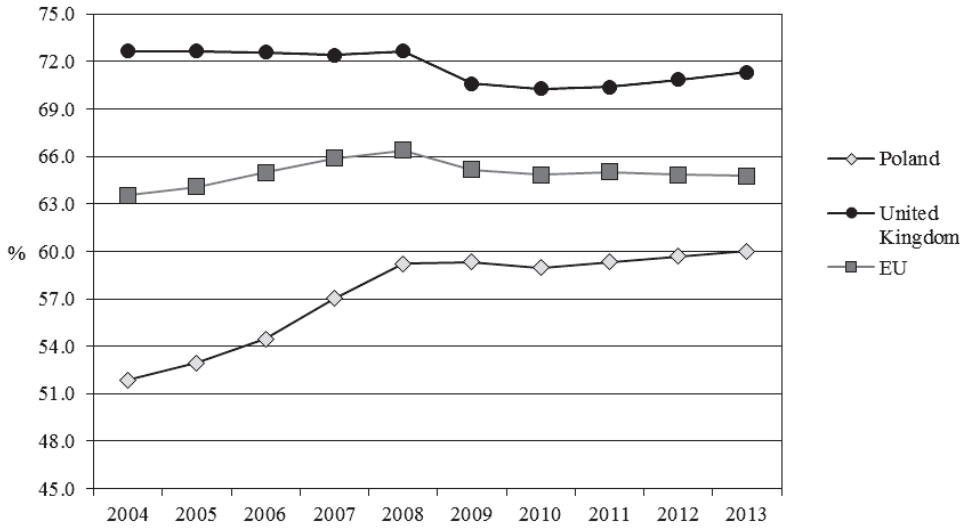


Figure 7. Employment rate between 2004 and 2013 (among persons aged 15 to 64)

Source: author’s elaboration based on OECD data.

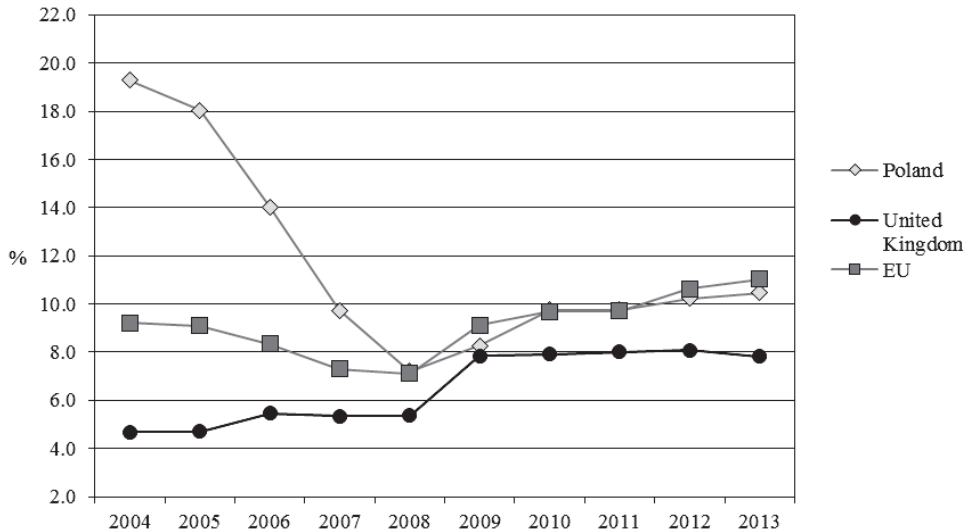


Figure 8. Unemployment rate between 2004 and 2013 (among persons aged 15 to 64)

Source: author’s elaboration based on OECD data.

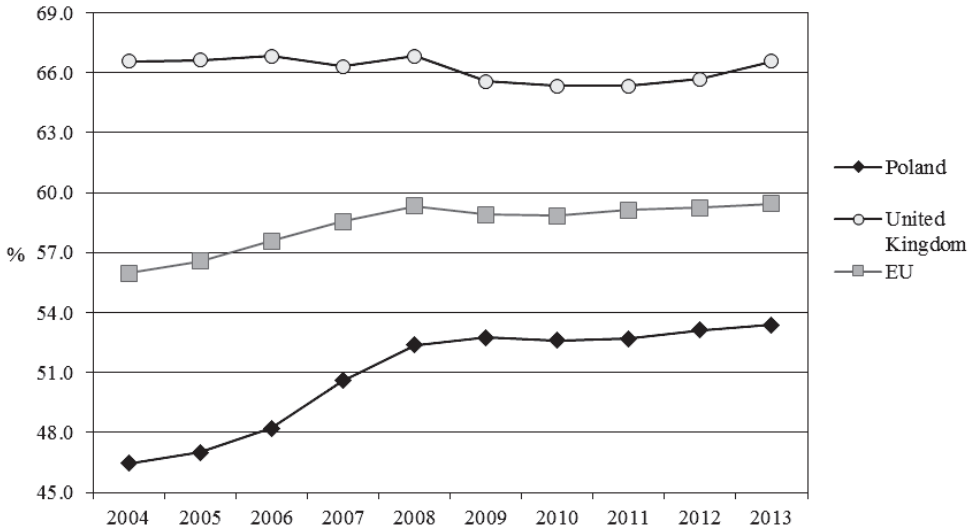


Figure 9. Employment rate of women between 2004 and 2013

Source: author’s elaboration based on OECD data.

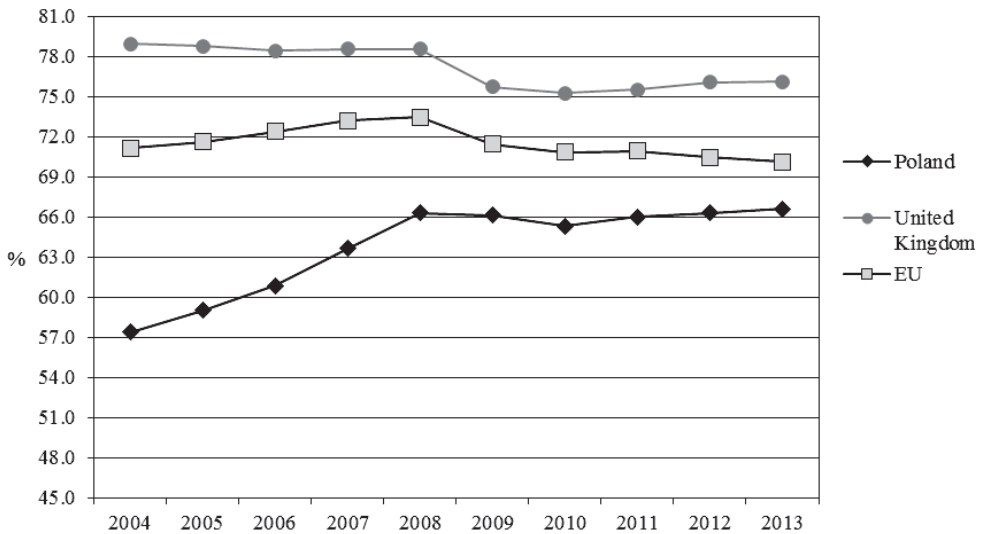


Figure 10. Employment rate of men between 2004 and 2013

Source: author’s elaboration based on OECD data.

the unemployment rate in Poland was 19.3%; later, it systematically decreased until 2008, when it reached the level of 7.2%, and was higher than the EU average by only 0.1 percentage points. Starting in 2008, the unemployment rate in Poland was

characterised by an upward trend, but it differed only slightly from the average unemployment rate in EU countries. In 2013, the analysed rate amounted to 10.5% in Poland, while in the EU it was 11%. In the UK, an increase in the unemployment rate was observed in 2009, and in the next four years, this rate oscillated around the level of 8%, but still remained below the EU average.

The difference in employment rate is even more evident when analysing the situation of women and men in the labour market in both countries (Fig. 9 and 10). The high employment rate among women in the labour market in the UK (66.6% in 2013) compared to Poland (53.4% in 2013) is noteworthy. The difference in the employment rate of men in the analysed countries is lower.

Smaller disproportions can be observed when comparing the unemployment rate among women and men. In the analysed period, the unemployment rate of women in Poland was higher than the unemployment rate of men (Fig. 11 and 12). In 2013, the rate was 11.2% for women and 9.8% for men. The unemployment rate of women in Poland was higher than the EU average since 2010, while the unemployment rate of men in Poland was lower than the EU average. The situation in the UK is the opposite, as there is a higher unemployment rate of men. In 2013, the percentage of unemployed women amounted to 7.2%, and the percentage of unemployed men was 8.4%. However, in comparison with EU countries, the situation in the UK was more favourable in the analyzed period.

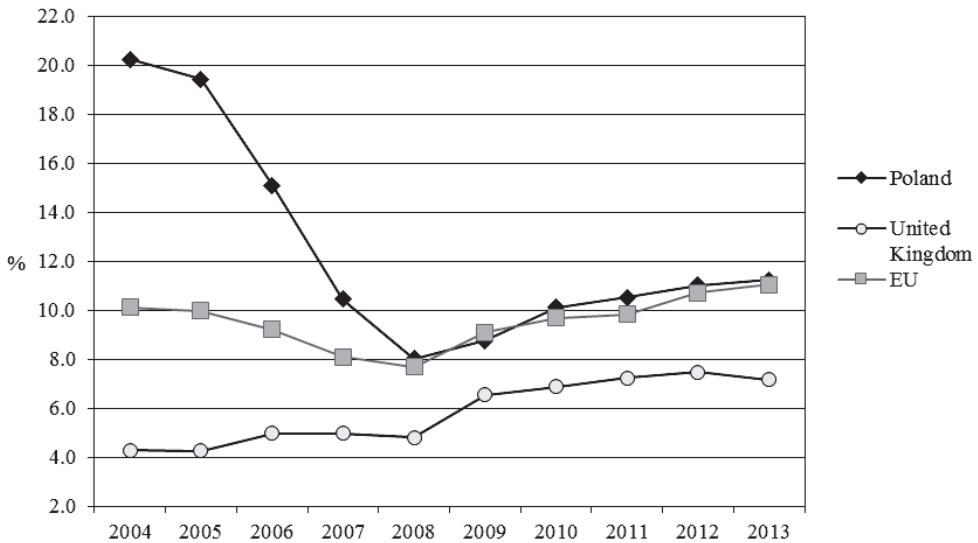


Figure 11. Unemployment rate of women between 2004 and 2013

Source: author's elaboration based on OECD data.

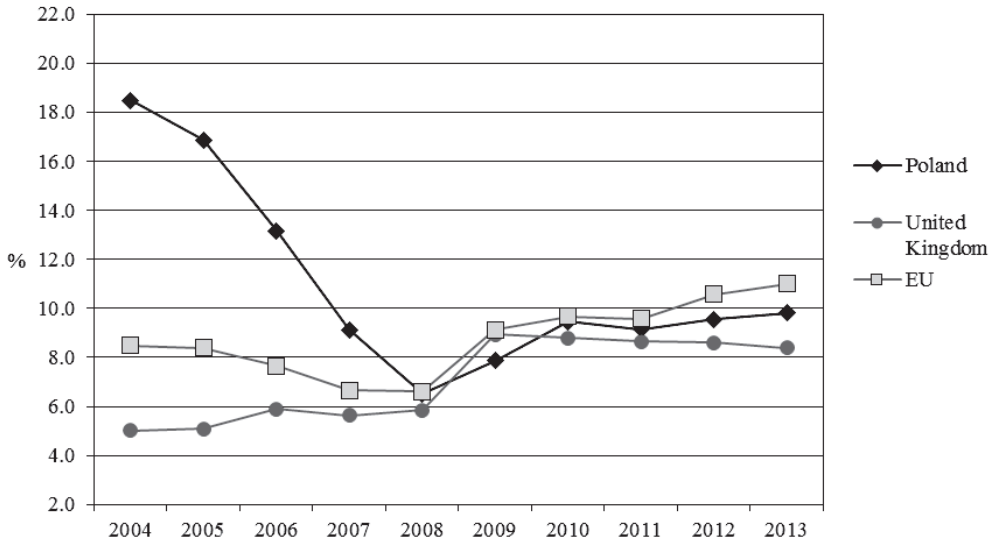


Figure 12. Unemployment rate of men between 2004 and 2013

Source: author’s elaboration based on OECD data.

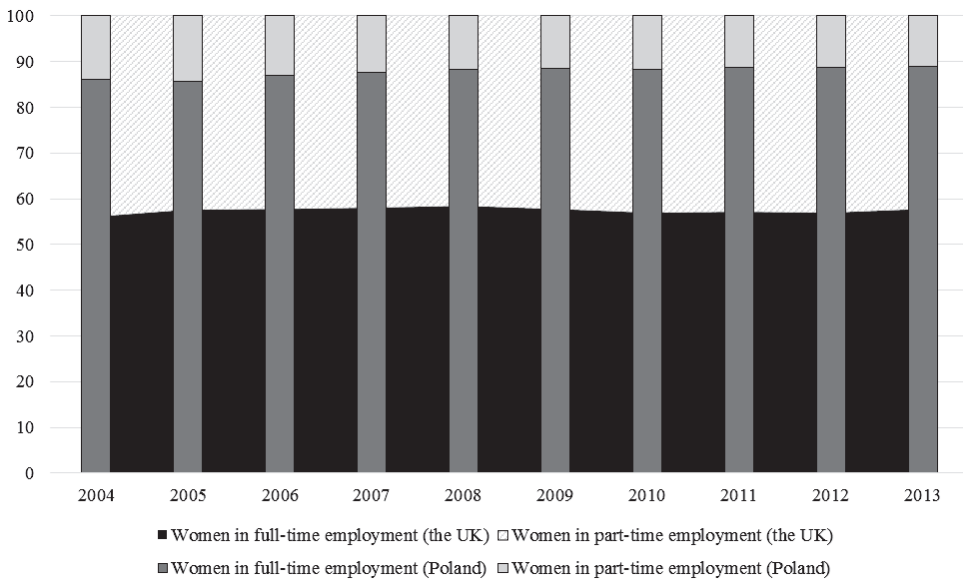


Figure 13. Share of women employed on full-time and part-time bases

Source: author’s elaboration based on OECD data.

The high employment rate and lower unemployment rate of women compared to men in the UK can be explained by a high share of women who are employed on a part-time basis (Fig. 13). In 2013, the percentage of women employed on a part-time basis was 42.3%; for comparison, they accounted for only 11.1% in Poland. It can also be observed that this rate gradually decreased in Poland, while in the UK, it oscillated around 42 to 44%.

The possibility of employment on a part-time basis is an important element of labour market flexibilisation. It allows, among other things, for combining professional work with family responsibilities, while preventing the loss of employees' human capital, which is one of the negative consequences of remaining unemployed [Schultz 2014]. This is particularly important for women returning to the labour market after a break related to maternity and childcare. In addition, flexible forms of employment lead to improvement in the situation of young or long-term unemployed persons. Data from the OECD [2014b] shows that in 2013, one in four people in the UK worked on a part-time basis, while in Poland, only 7.8% were employed on such a basis. This is striking, given the fact that part-time employment is usually associated with lower level of investments in training.

Flexible forms include temporary work, which can lead to the activation of employment. Data presented in Figure 14 shows that in the analysed period, the share of people employed under temporary employment contracts was much higher in Poland than in the UK (in 2013, 26.9% and 6.2%, respectively).

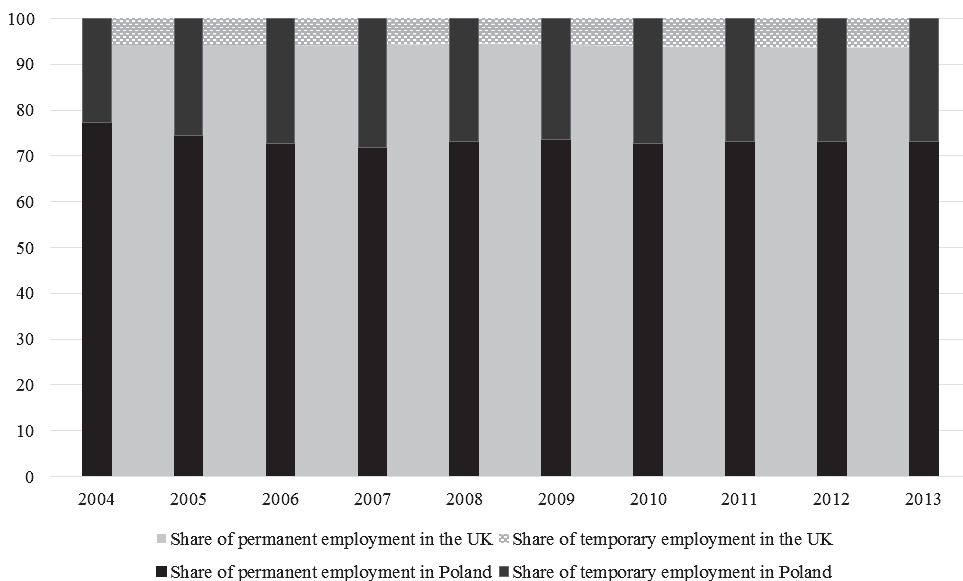


Figure 14. Share of people employed under permanent and temporary employment contracts

Source: author's elaboration based on OECD data.

Data presented in Figures 13-14 shows that temporary employment contracts are the flexible form of employment that is preferred in Poland, while in the UK, the more prevalent form of employment is work on a part-time basis.

An important indicator that determines the functioning of the labour market is the level of skill match between employees' skills and their job requirements. According to the OECD Employment Outlook report, the UK has one of the highest skill mismatch levels in the European Union [OECD 2014a, p. 229]. The analysed indicator involves several aspects: level of qualification, field of study and literacy rate. In 2012, the skills of nearly 74.4% of employees aged 16 to 29 did not fully match the work performed. It was the second highest percentage in the EU after Spain (74.94%). In Poland, it was 59.2%.

The consequence of the high level of skill mismatch with work performed is underemployment. Recently, increasingly more attention has been paid to this phenomenon on the British labour market [Bell, Blanchflower 2013; Blanchflower 2015; ONS 2014; Walling, Clancy 2010]. Studies have shown that underemployment in the UK is the most frequent in the youngest age group (ages 16 to 19) and among women. In addition, the largest percentage of underemployed persons was observed among persons employed on a part-time basis. Among occupational groups, the largest percentage of underemployed employees was observed in the group of professions that do not require high or even medium-level skills (elementary occupations) [ONS 2014].

4. Discussion and conclusions

The study was an attempt to make a comparative analysis of non-formal education from the perspective of its importance in the functioning of the labour market in Poland and the UK. The following conclusions can be drawn in the light of the analysis of statistical data.

During the period from 2004 to 2013, the situation in the labour market in Poland visibly changed. Between 2004 and 2008, there was a significant improvement in the employment rate. However, in the analysed period, the key indicators were more favourable in the UK than in Poland. Considering the period from 2004 to 2013, it can be stated that the differences in employment and unemployment rates in the UK and Poland are now lower than at the beginning of the analysed period.

Substantial differences were observed in the situation of men and women in the labour market in the analysed countries. A high percentage of women employed on a part-time basis in the UK translates into a high employment rate and lower unemployment of women than men. In Poland, the situation of women is characterised by a higher unemployment rate. Women are also less active in the labour market than men in terms of employment.

Despite a relatively more favourable situation in the labour market in the UK, in terms of employment rate, unemployment rate and occupational mobility, the

data indicates a higher level of skill mismatch with job requirements than in Poland. At the same time, studies indicated an increase in the underemployment rate in the UK, which included an additional labour supply available in the labour market that was not fully used due to the lack of suitable work [Walling, Clancy 2010, p. 20]. It is important that underemployment most frequently occurs in the most vulnerable groups, that is women and young people. The described phenomenon has serious economic and social consequences. For example, when studying underemployment among young people, Kiersztyn [2007, p. 25] emphasises that “the lack of access to a stable employment matching one’s skills is an important factor that delays the decision to start a family and have children”. In addition, low efficiency of the allocation of employees’ knowledge and skills in the labour market increases the risk of investing in work-related training and other forms of non-formal education.

The level of involvement of employees and the unemployed in non-formal education significantly differs between the two countries. In the analysed period, participation in self-education was much higher in the UK than in Poland. The consequence is the improvement in the employability of the employees in the external labour market and an increase in the flexibility of the human capital held, leading to a high employment rate. This, in turn, is reflected in employees’ subjective perception of their position in the labour market. As the Eurobarometer survey shows, 80% of the British who plan to continue their career in the next two years believe that they will have a job, while in Poland, this belief was expressed by only 50% of respondents [Special Eurobarometer 377 2011].

Regarding training providers in terms of non-formal education, the majority of training programmes and courses in Poland were carried out by institutions that specialised in providing training and educational services, while in the UK, they were carried out by employers. This can be explained, among other things, by a higher staff turnover in the UK, which requires more frequent involvement of employers in new employees training in order to increase their skill match for the employment requirements.

A relationship has been observed between a company’s size, its undertaking of activities for improving employees’ qualifications, the percentage of employees involved in lifelong vocational training and the cost of training per employee. In both countries, larger entities most frequently declare their involvement in the professional development of their employees. In the UK, the percentage of employees undergoing training programmes in large organisations was lower than in smaller companies, while an inverse relationship was observed in Poland. In addition, larger entities in Poland declare higher costs per trainee, while in the UK, higher costs are borne by smaller companies.

The reasons for participating in non-formal education are clearly different in both countries. They reflect, to some extent, employees’ orientation towards stable employment in Poland, while in the UK, they reflect employees’ readiness to frequently change jobs or start their own business. Different reasons for undertaking

educational activities may reflect different levels of employment security in the analysed countries, as well as differences in the level of occupational mobility.

When comparing the level of employment security in the analysed countries, it can be observed that it is higher in Poland than in the UK. According to the report of the OECD [2013], the protection of employees against individual dismissals is twice as high in Poland than in the UK. In addition, better legal protection of employees hired on the basis of temporal contracts or through temporary employment agencies was observed in Poland. A more restrictive legislation in Poland may explain the low educational activity of employees who are protected against dismissals, and who therefore do not feel as great a need for updating or increasing their skills, which is more often felt by those who seek to change jobs. However, taking into account the above results of the Eurobarometer survey on employees' confidence in employment after years, the passivity of Poles in their self-education is distressing.

The UK's low security and low stability of employment, compared to Poland, translate into the relatively greater professional mobility of employees in the labour market, shorter periods of keeping the same job, low internal mobility and a higher percentage of people who experience changes in the labour market (including changes in employment status) [Andersen et al. 2008]. This is also confirmed by the Eurobarometer survey, in which respondents were asked to specify the number of changes of employment in their previous career. The value of this rate for the British amounted to 4.4 (in second place after Denmark), while the Polish average was 2.7, and the EU average was 3.2 [Special Eurobarometer 377 2011]. Moreover, according to the data in the report "Job Mobility in the European Union: Optimising its Social and Economic Benefits" [Andersen et al. 2008], in the UK, there is a higher rate of voluntary changes of employment, while in Poland, a higher level of forced mobility was observed. A higher activity in non-formal education in the UK may therefore be a result of employees' frequent changes of employment or their position in the labour market. The development of professional skills improves the ability to adapt to changes in the structure of employment and the requirements of employers.

The results of the analysis of statistical data presented in this paper seem to be quite consistent with the opinion that there is a close relationship between investing in education and training and the implemented model of market economy [Estevez-Abe et al. 2001; Goergen et al. 2012]. Estevez-Abe et al. [2001] advanced the hypothesis that the level of skill specialisation in the economy is connected with the policy of employment protection, support for the unemployed and the guaranteed pay levels implemented by the state. When the scope of protection of employees is smaller, they face a greater risk of investing in specialist skills because they are more dependent on the employer or the situation in the industry. From the point of view of an employee who may receive a bonus from investing in human capital, the development of transferable skills is safer, as they facilitate finding employment in other sectors or industries. An example of such an economy is the United Kingdom,

where employees' acquisition of transferable skills helps them to find jobs more quickly.

It can be assumed that the self-education of employees in the UK compensates for weak protection of employment and translates into a high employment rate and relatively low unemployment in that country. On the other hand, in Poland, factors such as a lower employment rate, higher unemployment and educational passivity in adults were observed. The last phenomenon results from, among other things, employees' lack of confidence in their future position in the labour market and low occupational mobility, which, in turn, results from a higher level of regulation of labour relations. It should also be mentioned that in Poland, there is better support for the unemployed, which also contributes to the relatively low involvement in educational activities.

The presented situation in the labour market reflects existing differences in the focus on particular skills and applied legal structures. As Estevez-Abe, Iversen and Soskice [2001] demonstrated, various social protection institutions such as employment protection and unemployment protection can determine which skills profile (firm-specific, industry-specific, general or their combination) is most valued by the employers. What is more, the authors suggest that an orientation toward particular skills requires appropriate investments in training and educational policy as well as system of wage coordination.

There are several practical concluding remarks that could be of interest to various groups of decision makers. For current and future employees participating in non-formal training would foster the process of applying for higher level positions and gaining career goals. However, when planning participation in non-formal training, more attention should be paid to its compatibility with the current level of knowledge and skills as well as future career prospects. Furthermore, participating in non-formal education and training can counterbalance high employment protection and encourage employees to be more mobile in the labour market. This is especially important for young employees, women and older workers.

There is a need for the development of the partnership between employers which are actively involved in the improving employees' work-related skills, with non-formal education and training institutions. Partnership can involve planning courses according to the emerging labour market requirements, developing teaching and learning materials as well as validating skills. Also, it is crucial that employers enable employees to apply upgraded knowledge and skills in the workplace by creating favourable working conditions. This will result in translating training outcomes into better skills match and higher level of productivity.

Since non-formal education has become a policy focus in many European countries, the presented findings could provide important guidance to policy makers for developing coherent policies and planning actions. For example, cooperating with employers will help to identify emerging demands for skills. In addition, policy support for the partnership between non-formal educational institutions and

employers can contribute to transferring the skills learned in the training to the workplace. Finally, more attention should be paid to encouraging young people to continuously improve individual human capital after completing their formal education.

References

- Albert C., Garcia-Serrano C., Hernanz V., 2010, *On-the-job training in Europe: Determinants and wage returns*, International Labour Review, no. 149(3), pp. 315-341.
- Andersen T., Haahr J.H., Hansen M.E., Holm-Pedersen M., 2008, *Job mobility in the European Union: Optimising its social and economic benefits*, (Final report for the European Commission, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities), Danish Technological Institute, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=514&langId=en>, (referred on 12.11.2014).
- Arulampalam W., Booth A.L., Bryan M.L., 2004, *Training in Europe*, Journal of the European Economic Association, no. 2(2-3), pp. 346-360.
- Badescu M., Saisana M., 2008, *Participation in lifelong learning in Europe: What can be measured and compared?*, CRELL Research Paper.
- Bassanini A., Booth A.L., Brunello G., de Paola M., Leuven E., 2005, *Workplace training in Europe*, IZA Discussion Papers, no. 1640.
- Bell D.N., Blanchflower D.G., 2013, *Underemployment in the UK revisited*, National Institute Economic Review, Vol. 224, no. 1, pp. F8-F22.
- Blanchflower D.G., 2015, *As Good as it Gets? The UK Labour Market in Recession and Recovery*, National Institute Economic Review, Vol. 231, no. 1, pp. F76-F80.
- Boeri T., 2002, *Does Europe Need a Harmonised Social Policy?*, [in:] *Wettbewerb der Regionen und Integration in der WWU*, Grau W. (ed.), Oesterreichische Nationalbank, Vienna, pp. 55-64.
- Casey C., 2011, *Economy, Work, and education: critical connections*, Routledge, New York and London.
- Estevez-Abe M., Iversen T., Soskice D., 2001, *Social Protection and the Formation of Skills: A Reinterpretation of the Welfare State*, [in:] *Varieties of Capitalism. The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, Hall P.A., Soskice D. (eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 145-183.
- Goergen M., Brewster C., Wood G., Wilkinson A., 2012, *Varieties of capitalism and investments in human capital*, Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, Vol. 51, no. s1, pp. 501-527.
- Kiersztyn A., 2007, *Underemployment: nowe zjawisko, czy nowy termin?*, Polityka Społeczna, Vol. 10, pp. 17-26.
- Komisja Europejska, 2011, *Dorośli w systemie edukacji formalnej: polityka i praktyka w Europie, Komisja Europejska*, wyd. polskie: Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, Warszawa, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/128PL.pdf, (referred on 20.10.2014).
- Korsgaard O., 1997, *The impact of globalization on adult education*, [in:] *Globalization, adult education and training: impacts and issues*, Walters S. (ed.), The National Organization for Adult Learning, Leicester, pp. 15-26.
- Mirończuk J., 2013, *Kapitał ludzki w dobie globalizacji i integracji*, Studia Ekonomiczne/Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach, Vol., no. 139, pp. 29-40.
- Nagel K., 2011, *Modele polityki rynku pracy w krajach europejskich*, [in:] *Współczesny rynek pracy. Wybrane problemy*, Kotlorz D. (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach, Katowice, pp. 397-414.

- OECD, 2013, *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD Publishing, http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/employment/oecd-employment-outlook-2013_empl_outlook-2013-en#page1, (referred on 7.11.2014).
- OECD, 2014a, *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD Publishing, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/oecd-employment-outlook-2014_empl_outlook-2014-en, (referred on 7.11.2015).
- OECD, 2014b, *OECD.Stat*, <http://stats.oecd.org/>, (referred on 5.11.2014).
- ONS, 2014, Underemployment and Overemployment in the UK, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_387087.pdf, (referred on 28.04.2015).
- Riddell S., Markowitsch J., Weedon E., 2012, *Lifelong Learning in Europe: Equity and Efficiency in the balance*, Policy Press, Bristol.
- Sapir A., 2006, *Globalization and the reform of European social models*, Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 369-390.
- Schultz T.W., 2014, *Ekonomia kapitału ludzkiego*, Wolters Kluwer SA., Warszawa.
- Special Eurobarometer 377, 2011, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_377_en.pdf, (referred on 2.11.2015).
- Stalończyk I., 2014, *Edukacja formalna i pozaformalna w procesie kształtowania społeczeństwa wiedzy*, Nierówności społeczne a wzrost gospodarczy, Vol., no. 37, pp. 320-332.
- Szłapińska J., Bartkowiak M., 2013, *Determinanty aktywności edukacyjnej absolwentów*, Studia Edukacyjne, Vol. 24, no., pp. 271-287.
- Walling A., Clancy G., 2010, *Underemployment in the UK labour market*, Economic and Labour Market Review, Vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 16-24.