



The sense of security of Ukrainians and Belarusians studying in Poland

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Abstract

Introduction and Objective. Due to educational migration to Poland, students from Ukraine and Belarus may experience security to varying degrees. The aim of the study was to check the extent to which people from Ukraine and Belarus studying in Lublin feel safe, taking into account their own life and health. An attempt was also made to establish the relationship between the sense of security and selected features of the surveyed students.

Materials and Method. The research was conducted using a survey method among 403 students from Ukraine, Belarus and Poland. Eight independent variables were introduced into the analysis of relationships: gender, age, self-assessment of the financial situation, country of origin, place of origin, place of residence during studies, and year of study. The dependency analysis used Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis tests and CATREG optimal scaling analysis.

Results. The study showed that both Polish and foreign students assessed the level of safety in Poland and during their studies in Lublin as high. They feel safer during the day than after dark. Polish students are more afraid of theft, rape and being hit by a car than students from Belarus and Ukraine, and students from Ukraine are more afraid of verbal abuse. The predictors influencing students' sense of insecurity are, among others, their financial situation and gender.

Conclusions. The conducted research and analysis of the obtained results suggest that the situation of students from Ukraine and Belarus studying in Lublin, Poland, in terms of safety, is similar to that of Polish students, and even better in some aspects. This result suggests that Lublin is a friendly academic centre for students from across the eastern border of Poland.

Key words

sense of security, foreign students, migration for education, life and health threat

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly accepted that safety is one of the basic human needs. In A. Maslow's concept, the need for security is second in order among the basic needs, only physiological needs are more basic (food, water, shelter, sleep and air) [1]. According to Maslow, the need for security concerns areas such as financial stability, health, protection against danger and violence and personal safety; it is also the need to live in a predictable and orderly environment. According to Maslow's concept, satisfying the need for security is a condition for the fulfilment of higher government needs, such as the need for belonging, respect and recognition, or the need for self-actualization. The author emphasizes that the source of deprivation of security needs is the lack of stability in the environment, chaos, social conflicts, economic shortages, and various types of threats. The lack of a sense of security causes stagnation in the functioning of the individual, and even regression and return to lower-level needs [2].

From a psychological perspective, it is assumed that security means a certain 'objective state consisting in the absence of threat, subjectively felt by individuals or groups' [3]. From an objective perspective, it refers to the living conditions

external to man, and from a subjective perspective, refers to the individual experience of an individual. Both perspectives are interconnected because security related to the state, financial, energy, health, or any other type concerning a person, what matters is how that person perceives and experiences the current situation in the context of the lack of threats and mental comfort. Assuming that the opposite of a state of security is a threat, T. Tomaszewski [4] defines a situation of threat as one in which there is an increased probability of losing some value appreciated by a person, e.g. life, health, property, rights, social position, good name, one's work, opinions, well-being or self-esteem.

M. Marody, taking into account the sociological perspective, defines the concept of a 'sense of security' negatively by pointing to the lack of threat [5]. In turn, the feeling of threat is associated with blocking the ability to meet the needs necessary for the functioning of the individual. The author distinguishes three basic classes of such needs: 1) striving to ensure physical survival (biological level), 2) striving to establish and confirm one's own identity (psychological level), 3) striving to build a sense of meaning in life (level of conscious life of the individual).

The sense of security at the biological level refers to the satisfaction, among others, of health, material and living needs, and those related to the occurrence of sudden events. Marody emphasizes that 'one of the basic human needs is a situation characterized by the lack of risk of losing something that a person particularly values, for example, health, work, respect, feelings, material goods' [6].

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The sources of the sense of security can be found in family and friendly relationships, among acquaintances, as well as in high remuneration for work performed, professional and social recognition, savings in a bank account, and having a university diploma [7].

Taking into account the various theoretical perspectives presented in defining the concept of a sense of security, it was assumed, for the purposes of this work, that the term 'sense of health security' will be understood as the subjective feeling of the absence of threat to health and life. The opposite of this is the concept of 'feeling of threat', which is a state experienced when the subjective health needs cannot be met, and sudden events occur that threaten life and health.

Research conducted in 2023 by the Public Opinion Research Centre shows that 88% of respondents consider Poland to be a safe country to live in [8], which may constitute a basis for the belief that Poland is a safe country, also for people from other countries undertaking studies in Poland. However, it should be remembered that the situation of foreign students as educational emigrants is completely different from that of native inhabitants of a given country.

The number of foreigners studying at universities in Poland has been systematically increasing in recent years. Data from the National Information Processing Institute – National Research Institute (OPI-PIB) show that in the 2022–2023 academic year, 79,498 foreign students studied in Poland, of which 47% were students from Ukraine and 11.8% from Belarus [9]. For comparison, in the academic year 2012–2013, there was an almost 5-fold increase in the number of students from Ukraine and a 3.5-fold increase in the number of students from Belarus. The main reason for the arrival of Ukrainian students to Poland in recent years was Russia's act of aggression against Ukraine which began in February 2022.

Lublin is the largest academic centre in eastern Poland, and the Lublin Province recorded the highest rate of foreign students (14.4%) [9], among whom the biggest group are Ukrainians and Belarusians. The situation of foreign students, who are *de facto* educational migrants, is different from the situation of students who are native residents of a given country. The challenges for educational migrants are new living conditions in a culturally foreign country, often a language barrier, and a different nature of learning. Studying in a foreign country involves the need to establish communication with the environment. This process is often difficult due to lack or insufficient knowledge of the language, different cultural capital of the emigrant, limited opportunities to use the services of the host country's institutions, and limited economic opportunities. Difficulties in these areas limit independence and sense of security [9]. Difficulties in this area are confirmed by studies conducted in Poland over the past few years concerning the psychosocial situation and adaptation of foreign students [10, 11].

Taking into account the scale of the phenomenon of educational migrants from Ukraine and Belarus in Polish universities and the specificity of the situation of foreign students, it is cognitively interesting and socially important to assess the sense of security of this group of students. The aim of the study was to assess the extent to which people from Ukraine and Belarus feel safe studying in Lublin, Poland. In addition, an attempt was made to indicate factors related to the assessment of the sense of security of the surveyed students.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research was carried out using the diagnostic survey method, using an online questionnaire on the sense of security of students of three universities in Lublin – Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS), University of Life Sciences (UP), and University of Technology (PL). An invitation to complete the survey was sent to approximately 3,000 students from three groups based on nationality: students from Ukraine, Belarus and Poland. Invitations to complete the survey were sent to all foreign students (Ukraine – 881, Belarus – 565) and Polish students from selected faculties of the above-mentioned universities. The study was conducted between 26 June – 29 November 2023. All mandatory survey questions were completed by 419 people. A small group of doctoral students and surveys that contained missing data on variables used in statistical analyses as independent, were excluded from the analysis. The questionnaires of 403 students who answered all questions relevant to the discussed issues were accepted for analysis. The percentage of survey returns from the total number of invitations sent was 13.5%.

The questionnaire was prepared in Polish, in three versions: 1) for Polish students, 2) for students from Ukraine, 3) for students from Belarus. Each version differed in the form of the invitation – dedicated to each group of students and the number of questions. The version of the questionnaire for Ukrainians and Belarussians included an additional six questions regarding: the nature (status) of their stay, having ancestors of Polish nationality, and assessing the situation in their countries of origin. Other survey questions were identical in all versions.

The main sample of the research conducted were students from the east – 232 students – 57.6% of the total number of respondents, including 37.5% of the total number of respondents who are students from Ukraine, and 20.1% – students from Belarus (Tab. 1). The reference group are Polish students who constituted 42.4% of all respondents. Taking into account the total number of students of the three universities in Lublin (UMCS, PL, UP – approximately 28,000 – data for the academic year 2022–23), 17.14% of all students from Ukraine and 14.34% of students from Belarus took part in the study, and 0.6% of Polish students.

The majority of the surveyed students were women (64.3%), while approximately one-third of the respondents were men. The respondents ages varied, from 17 – 28 years of age. The youngest group, under the age of 20, constituted one-third of the total number of respondents (35.3%); 30.5% of the respondents were aged 20 – 21, and the remaining (34.2%) were aged from 22 – 28. Almost one-quarter of the respondents come from rural areas (24.1%) and the rest come from cities of various sizes (Tab. 1). Almost half of the respondents come from cities with over 100,000 inhabitants (47.4%), including 16.6% of all respondents from cities with over 500,000 inhabitants. When studying in Lublin, the largest percentage of respondents (40.7%) lived in rented apartments, and a slightly smaller number lived in dormitories (39.7%); 13.9% of respondents lived in their own apartment or house located in Lublin, and 5.7% of all respondents lived with family or friends.

Self-assessment of the financial status of students during their studies showed that the largest percentage of respondents assessed their financial situation as average (44.4%) (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the surveyed students

Variables	Categories	N	% (N=403)
Country of origin	Poland	171	42.4
	Ukraine	151	37.5
	Belarus	81	20.1
Gender	Female	259	64.3
	Male	144	35.7
	Total	403	100.0
Age in years	17–19-years-old	142	35.3
	20–21-years-old	123	30.5
	22 or older	135	34.2
Size of place of origin	Village	97	24.1
	City up to 20,000 inhabitants	40	9.9
	A city with 20,000–50 thousand inhabitants	38	9.4
	A city with 50,000–100,000 inhabitants	37	9.2
	A city with 100,000–500,000 inhabitants	124	30.8
	A city with over 500,000 inhabitants	67	16.6
Place of residence in Lublin	Dormitory	160	39.7
	At family and friends' place	23	5.7
	At a guest house (rented apartment)	164	40.7
	Own or parents' apartment/house	56	13.9
Assessment of the financial situation of the family of origin	Bad	14	3.5
	Rather bad	50	12.4
	Average	179	44.4
	Rather good	90	22.3
	Good	70	17.4
University	Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS)	264	65.5
	University of Life Sciences (UP)	51	12.7
	University of Technology (PL)	88	21.8
Mode and degree of study	1st degree	307	76.2
	2nd degree	54	13.4
	long-cycle master's studies	42	10.4
Year of study	I	101	25.0
	II	107	26.6
	III	97	24.0
	IV	72	17.9
	V	26	6.5

A slightly smaller number of respondents (39.7%) claimed that their financial situation was rather good or good, and 15.9% assessed their financial situation as rather bad or bad.

The largest part of the respondents (65.5%) were studying at UMCS, 21.8% of at the Lublin University of Technology, and 12.7% were students of the University of Life Sciences (Tab. 1). The disproportion in the number of foreign respondents from individual universities resulted from the disproportion of students from Ukraine and Belarus in individual universities. In the academic year 2022–2023, 711 students from Ukraine and 480 from Belarus studied at UMCS at the Lublin University of Technology: and at the University of Life Sciences in Lublin: 100 from Ukraine and 54 from Belarus. The vast majority of respondents were full-time students of first-cycle studies (76.2%), 13.4% of the respondents were students of second-cycle studies, and 10.4% were students

of long-cycle master's studies. The structure of respondents depending on the year of study was characterized by a fairly even distribution. Each group of first-, second- and third-year students constituted approximately 25% of the total number of respondents. Fourth-year students constituted 17.9%, and fifth-year students 6.5%.

The collected data was analysed using the SPSS 29 software. Basic descriptive statistics were used – numerical and percentage summaries of individual variables. The opinions of the surveyed students on the sense of security were analysed in terms of eight independent variables: country of origin, gender, age, type of place of permanent residence, place of residence during studies, field of study and year of study. The significance of differences in selected subgroups, according to the above variables, was assessed using the Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis tests. Multivariate analyses of the level of anxiety caused by threats were also performed using Categorical Regression analysis and the Optimal Scaling method (CATREG).

RESULTS

The surveyed students were asked to provide a general assessment of safety in Poland and during their studies in Lublin on a 5-point scale, where the value of 1 meant no safety, and the value of 5 – complete safety. Analysis of the average safety ratings in Poland and Lublin indicated that respondents assessed the level of safety in Poland as being rather high (average value around 4) (Fig. 1). However, the level of safety in the entire country was assessed better ($M=4.14$) than in Lublin (3.96). The differences found are statistically significant ($p<0.001$). Very similar differences, also statistically significant, were found in the subgroups of students from Ukraine, Belarus and Poland.

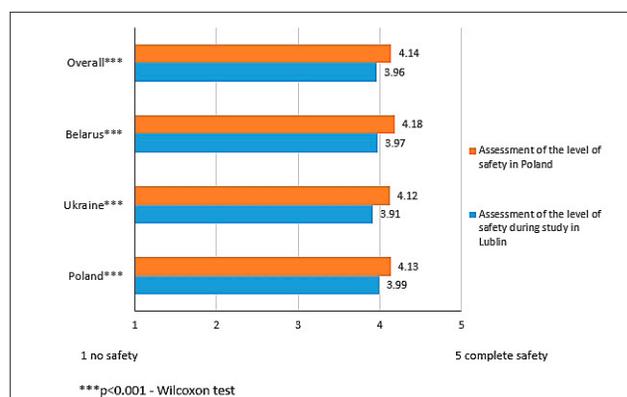


Figure 1. Average safety ratings by place and country of origin (average values)

The general assessment of safety in a specific place did not refer personally to a specific person, therefore the surveyed students were asked about their sense of safety during their studies in Lublin, taking into account the macro- and micro-location, and the time of day – during the day and after dark. The macro-location is the city of Lublin, and the micro-location is the nearest residential area, i.e. the area of a dormitory, house, parents' apartment, or own apartment. Students rated their sense of security on a 5-point scale, where the value of 1 meant no security and the value of 5 meant complete security. The average values of the sense

of security during the day were high, both in relation to the city of Lublin ($M=4.23$) and in the vicinity of the place of residence ($M=4.49$) (Fig. 2). The respondents' sense of safety after dark was lower – Lublin ($M=3.38$), and the area around where they lived ($M=3.71$). The differences found are statistically significant at the $p<0.001$ level (Tab. 2).

The average safety perception values during the day were high, both in relation to the city of Lublin ($M=4.23$) and in the vicinity of the place of residence.

Table 2. Differences in the average ratings of the sense of security in the general sample of respondents

Compared safety ratings	Difference of means	Wilcoxon signed-rank test				
		DS	ES	W	Z	p
City of Lublin during the day – after dark	0.839	0.865	0.043	125.40	-13.905	<.001
In the vicinity of residence: during the day – after dark	0.772	0.922	0.045	115.77	-12.822	<.001
During the day: city of Lublin – in the vicinity of residence	-0.250	0.68	0.033	72.91	-6.827	<.001
After dark: city of Lublin – in the vicinity of residence	-0.305	0.857	0.042	85.59	-7.001	<.001

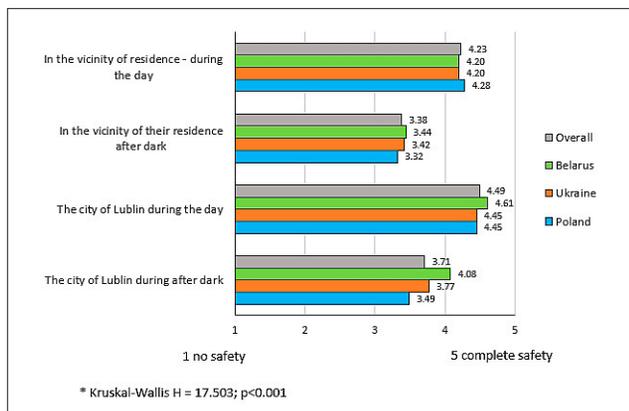


Figure 2. Average safety ratings within Lublin and in the vicinity of place of residence at different times of day, according to the country of origin of the respondents

According to this research, foreign students as well as Polish students feel safe in the Lublin city area in a similar way, both during the day and after dark. There were no significant differences in the assessment of the feeling of safety in the area of residence during the day, but foreign and Polish students differed significantly in the perception of safety in the area of residence after dark (Fig. 2). Polish students felt the least safe in the area where they live ($M=3.49$), students from Ukraine ($M=3.77$) felt a much higher level of safety, and students from Belarus felt the highest ($M=4.08$). The differences were statistically significant ($H=17.503$; $p<0.001$).

The general sense of threat usually resulted from specific threats that the students were aware of. They were asked to assess the level of anxiety (fear) before the occurrence of six events: verbal abuse, theft, beating, rape, being hit by a car, and other events. Each of these events was assessed on a 5-point scale of fear, where the value of '1' meant that fear did not occur, and '5' meant that fear did occur. Students rated the

level of concern about the above-mentioned events separately in relation to the city of Lublin, and separately in relation to the area of residence (dormitory, rented apartment, house).

Analysis of the assessments of individual events in the area of residence showed that the average level of concern of all surveyed students was rather low, and amounted to approximately 2 on a 5-point scale (Fig. 4). The highest level of fear was felt by the surveyed students due to the threat of theft ($M=2.39$) and verbal abuse ($M=2.21$), slightly lower due to the risk of beating ($M=2.07$), rape ($M=2.07$), and the possibility of being hit by a car ($M=2.00$). The lowest level of concern occurred due to other threats ($M=1.85$).

The average ratings for the level of concern about various threats in the area of residence were much lower than in the city of Lublin (Fig. 3, 4). Taking into account the city of Lublin, respondents were most afraid of verbal abuse ($M=2.70$), theft ($M=2.61$), and assault ($M=2.45$) (Fig. 3). The level of concern about being raped ($M=2.39$) and being hit by a car ($M=2.38$) was also relatively high. The fear of other threats in the city of Lublin were assessed similarly to that in the nearest area of residence (student dormitory, housing estate).

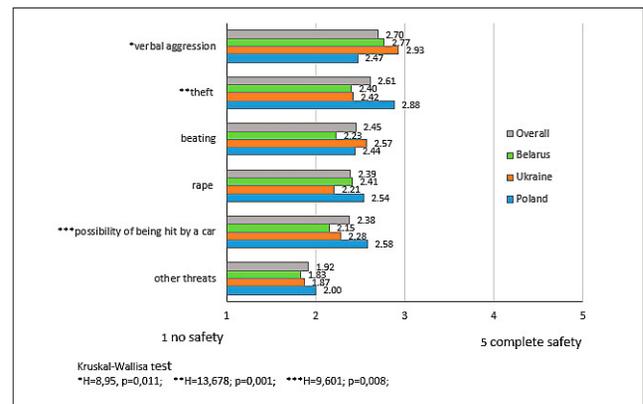


Figure 3. Students' concerns about threats in the city of Lublin (average values)

Analysis of the level of fear due to various threats in subgroups separated by country of origin, indicated that a greater variation in fear occurred in the city of Lublin. When assessing the sense of threat in the city, statistically significant differences were found in the case of fears due to verbal abuse, theft, and being hit by a car (Fig. 3). Students from Ukraine ($M=2.93$) and Belarus were most afraid of verbal abuse, while Polish students were much less afraid of such abuse ($M=2.47$). An inverse relationship was found in the case of the threat of theft, which was most feared by Polish students ($M=2.88$), and to a significantly lesser extent by students from the east (Ukrainians – $M=2.42$; Belarusians – $M=2.40$). Polish students also felt more worried about being hit by a car ($M=2.58$), compared to students from Ukraine ($M=2.28$) and Belarus ($M=2.15$).

The current study indicates that significant differences in the assessment of the level of fear of threats in the immediate area of residence, only concerned the possibility of being hit by a car. The relationship was the same as in relation to this threat in the city. A greater level of concern was found among Polish students than among foreign students (Fig. 4).

Although the average rating of fear of rape did not differ significantly between students' place of origin, it should be emphasized that both in relation to the city of Lublin

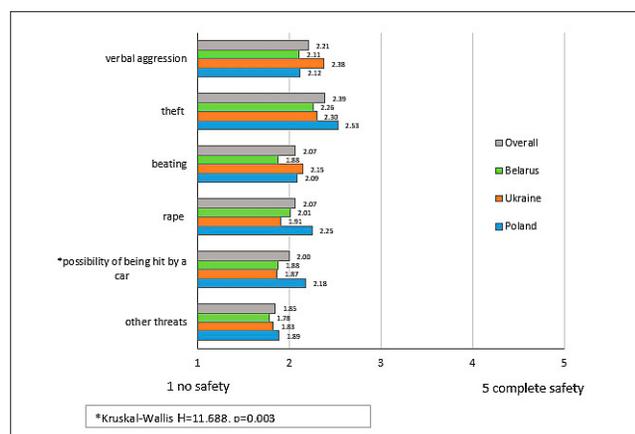


Figure 4. Students' concerns about threats in their area of residence; students' concerns about threats in the vicinity of their residence (average values)

and the respondents' area of residence, the level of fear was much higher among Polish students than among the foreign students. Determining the actual differences in this respect required taking into account the specificity of the threat, which mainly affected women. The level of fear of this situation among women was very high, especially when it concerned the city of Lublin ($M=3.03$ on a 5-point scale) (Tab. 3). The level of fear of rape was slightly lower in relation to the area of residence ($M=2.53$). Big differences in the level of fear of rape were found in the groups of Polish and foreign students. Female students from Ukraine and Belarus felt the fear of being raped to a similar extent ($M=2.82$ and $M=2.76$ in relation to the city; $M=2.29$ and $M=2.29$ in relation to the area of residence, respectively). Polish female students experience a much higher level of fear of rape (city of Lublin – $M=3.35$; area of residence – $M=2.85$). The differences found in the level of anxiety felt by women in groups separated by country of origin, were statistically significant at the level of $p<0.01$ (Kruskal-Wallis test).

Table 3. Average rate of women's fear of rape by country of origin

Threats	Country of origin	M	N	M rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	p
Lublin	Poland	3.35	108	147.00	10.143	0.006
	Ukraine	2.82	89	119.37		
	Belarus	2.76	62	115.64		
	Total	3.03	259			
Residential area	Poland	2.85	108	146.75	9.902	0.007
	Ukraine	2.29	89	118.18		
	Belarus	2.29	62	117.80		
	Total	2.53	259			

Based on the assessment of fears related to the possibility of experiencing dangerous events (verbal abuse, theft, physical assault, rape, being hit by a car, and other events) in the city of Lublin, and in the area of residence, a general index of fear of dangerous events was developed. This indicator is the arithmetic mean of the values of 12 dimensions of concern. Respondents rated each dimension (event) on a 5-point scale, where 1 meant anxiety did not occur, and 5 it did occur. The general anxiety index was on a scale from 1 – 5, where 1 means no anxiety, and 5 means severe anxiety.

The general anxiety index of the respondents due to threats to life and health was relatively low and amounted to 2.10 (on a scale from 1 – 5). The anxiety index in the group of Polish students was the highest ($M=2.18$), slightly lower in the group of students from Ukraine ($M=2.07$), and the lowest among students from Belarus ($M=1.98$). The differences found were statistically insignificant, while the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that the difference in each pair of mean anxiety index values was statistically insignificant ($H=2.656$; $p=0.277$).

Despite the lack of significant differences in the feeling of anxiety among foreign students compared to Polish students, it was assumed that the determinants of the level of anxiety in groups of people from different countries are different. In order to determine differences in the determinants of experienced anxiety, three conditioning models were developed – separately for students from Ukraine, Belarus and Poland. In the theoretical model, the dependent variable is the general index of anxiety due to various threats (quantitative variable). Seven independent variables were introduced into the model: age, gender, size of the place of origin, living in a students' dormitory, number of close friends during studies, assessment of one's own financial situation during studies, and general assessment of safety in the country of origin.

Two additional variables were introduced into the models of determinants of the level of anxiety of students from Ukraine and Belarus: having ancestors of Polish origin and level of knowledge of the Polish language. Categorical Regression analysis using the Optimal Scaling method (CATREG) in SPSS software was used to determine (test) the model of anxiety level determinants. The model was tested separately in the three groups of students: 1) Polish students, 2) students from Ukraine, 3) students from Belarus. As a result, three separate models were obtained, which had a slightly different set of independent variables related to the level of anxiety of respondents of a specific group. In the model of conditions among Polish students, the following factors had a significant relationship with the level of anxiety: age and gender of the respondents, as well as their financial situation during their studies. The level of anxiety increased with the older age of Polish students and in the group of men, while the level of anxiety decreased with an increase in the assessment of their financial situation.

The model of determinants of the level of anxiety in the group of students from Ukraine, similarly to the model of Polish students, included students' gender and self-assessment of their financial situation (Tab. 4). The direction of the relationship was the same, lower levels of anxiety were experienced by people with a better financial situation, and men. Moreover, three characteristics had a significant relationship with the level of anxiety in the group of Ukrainians: living in a student dormitory, having close friends and assessing the level of safety in the place of residence in Ukraine. Living in a dormitory increased the level of concern about life or health, while having more friends reduced the level of concern in this respect. The level of anxiety of Ukrainian students was also lower when they better assessed safety in the place of their permanent residence in Ukraine.

In the model of determinants of the level of anxiety of students from Belarus, it is significantly related to 4 variables: the size of the place of permanent residence, living in a

Table 4. Models of determinants of fear for life and health (the Optimal Scaling CATREG)

Predictor (encoding)	Model fitting (ANOVA)					
	Beta	F	p	Adjusted R ²	F	p
A model for Polish students						
Age	0.137	3.991	0.047	0.226	5.500	<0.001
Gender (1 female, 2 male)	-0.418	39.291	<.001			
Self-assessment of financial situation (1 bad to 5 very good)	-0.281	15.42	<.001			
Model for students from Ukraine						
Gender (1 female, 2 male)	-0.184	5.066	0.026	0.125	2.778	0.002
Room in a dormitory (1 – no, 2 – yes)	0.146	3.606	0.049			
Self-assessment of financial situation (1 – bad to 5 – very good)	-0.184	4.592	0.012			
No. of close friends	-0.182	5.244	0.024			
Assessment of level of security in place of origin (1 – lack to 5 – complete)	-0.226	5.366	0.006			
Model for students from Belarus						
Size of place of origin	0.353	3.287	0.044	0.153	2.033	0.028
Room in a dormitory (1 – no, 2 – yes)	0.259	4.149	0.046			
Professing a religion (1 – no, 2 – yes)	0.249	5.104	0.009			
Self-assessment of financial situation (1 - bad to 5 - very good)	-0.352	2.660	0.050			

dormitory during studies, professing any religion and the financial situation of the respondents during their studies. A higher level of anxiety is associated with coming from larger towns, living in a dormitory during studies and professing any religion. The level of fear among Belarusians is lower the better they assess their own financial situation.

The presented models turned out to be statistically significant, the model for the group of Polish students at the level of $p < 0.001$, for the group of students from Ukraine at the level of $p < 0.01$, and for the group of students from Belarus at the level of $p < 0.05$. The values of adjusted R^2 for individual models explain a significant part of the variance of the dependent variable: for the model of Polish students – 22.6%, for the model of students from Ukraine 12.5%, for the model of students from Belarus – 15.3%.

DISCUSSION

Research conducted by CBOS on a representative sample of 1,081 adult residents of Poland indicates that 88% of respondents consider Poland to be a safe country to live in [12]. The results of the current research confirm that both Polish and foreign students highly evaluate the level of safety in Poland, and during their studies in Lublin. Similar results are presented by Czerwińska et al. [13], according to which students of four Polish universities rated their sense of security in their place of residence as high (58% of respondents) or very high (18%), and 24% of surveyed

students as average. Students' sense of safety at home was quite high, but in public transport, such as trains, trams or buses, students unfortunately rated safety at an average or low level. Most students felt the safest travelling by train, then by bus, and felt least safe travelling by tram. Students indicated hooligans, thieves, homeless people, alcoholics, drug addicts and aggressive people as threats on public transport. Moreover, students most often felt threatened in parks, forests, and around liquor stores.

In the current study, the students rated the level of security in Poland much better than in Lublin, the city where they study. At the same time, they felt safer during the day than after dark. Students felt less safe after dark than during the day when they assessed their functioning in the city of Lublin, as well as when they assessed the immediate surroundings of their residence (around the dormitories, and apartments on a housing estate).

Similar relationships were found in studies conducted among students from southern China [14]. Their perception of feeling safe varied depending on the time of day. Students reported significantly lower feelings of safety after dark than during the day, regardless of whether they were commuting to classes or walking around the campus. Similar results were obtained by N. Czerwińska et al. [13]. Their analyses showed that students felt a greater sense of threat in the evening and at night.

The current study found that, regardless of the time of day, the immediate area of residence (dormitories, housing estate) was perceived as safer than the city of Lublin as a whole (agglomeration). This regularity is confirmed by the research of Huang et al. [15], which shows that Chinese students feel safer on university campuses than in urban villages and green areas. They indicated accommodation and teaching areas as safe places. The most frequently mentioned factor influencing the safety of places was the presence of pedestrians, the installation of CCTV cameras, and appropriate lighting conditions. As reported by Odufuwa et al. [16], people who are less familiar with a given place feel less safe than people who are experienced, and who often visit and know a given place.

An interesting result of the presented research is the relationship between the sense of safety after dark and the country of origin of the surveyed students. Students from Belarus and Ukraine experienced a significantly higher level of safety after dark than Polish students. This relationship is confirmed by the analysis of threats perceived by students from different countries [17, 14, 15]. Polish students were more afraid of theft, rape and being hit by a car than students from Belarus and Ukraine, while students from Ukraine were more afraid of verbal abuse than students from Poland and Belarus. The greatest differences in the way threats were perceived between Polish and foreign students were found in the group of women, in the case of the threat of rape. Regardless of the time of day, a significantly higher sense of risk of rape was observed in the group of Polish students than in the group of students from Ukraine and Belarus. The general conclusion that the sense of threat is lower among student educational migrants (Belarusians and Ukrainians) compared to native residents of Poland (Polish students), contradicts the belief that the situation of migrants in the host country is significantly worse than that of native residents. [18].

A similar relationship between the sense of threat and the student's status (native resident, educational emigrant)

was found by Mualla, conducting research among students in Turkey [17]. The analyses conducted show that the fear of crime against persons and property varied significantly depending on the nationality of the respondents. Turkish students were more afraid of assault and theft than students from Northern Cyprus who were studying in Turkey. Similar results were obtained by Özaşçılar et al. [19], who indicate that Turkish students are more afraid of physical attacks than students from other countries studying in Turkey.

Moreover, it should be assumed that the greater sense of security of foreign students in the current study results from the situation in the countries of origin of Ukrainians and Belarusians. The war in Ukraine and the Lukashenko dictatorship in Belarus are certainly reference situations for assessing the level of security in Poland by students from these countries. Objectively worse security conditions in Ukraine and Belarus may well have influenced the better assessment of the security conditions in Poland.

A multivariate analysis of data from the current research showed that the predictor influencing students' feelings of insecurity, both from Poland and from Belarus and Ukraine, was their financial situation. Students who assessed their financial status worse, felt more at risk. The second important predictor of the sense of security was the gender of the respondents, which significantly affected the sense of threat in the group of Polish and Ukrainian students. In both groups, women were more at risk than men. Gender was also indicated by other researchers as an important factor in the sense of security [15, 20]. Studies by Petherick [20] and Huang et al. [15] show that male students feel safer, compared to women. This relationship is also confirmed by the research of Özaşçılar et al. which shows that women are more afraid of crime than men [17, 21, 22]. The main reason for these differences in fear of crime between men and women is the belief that women are at greater risk of sexual assault, regardless of cultural differences [23, 24]. This threat is confirmed by Mualla's research [17] indicating that female students are more exposed to sexual assault, violence and threats.

CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted and analysis of the obtained results allow the assumption that the situation of students from Ukraine and Belarus studying in Lublin, Poland, is similar to the situation of Polish students in terms of safety, and in some aspects even better. At the same time, it should be admitted that the sample of respondents is not representative of the population of people studying in Lublin, and therefore it is not certain whether the observed regularities can be generalized to all students from Belarus and Ukraine. However, the similarity of the results obtained with the research of other authors allows the assumption that the results of the current research are reliable. They also provide grounds for believing that the city of Lublin is a friendly academic centre for students from beyond Poland's eastern border.

The presented characteristics of students' sense of security are quite general and certainly require further development, both in terms of describing specific threats, and taking into account other factors that may be related to both the sense of security and threat. It seems that it would be advisable

to take into account psychological variables characterizing respondents.

The conducted analyses revealed the need to expand the scope of research on the situation of educational migrants. An interesting area of focus in this regard is the assessment of foreign students' access to healthcare and preventive programmes. The differences in healthcare systems between their countries of origin may pose challenges for educational migrants in effectively utilizing the health services in the host country. This, in turn, poses a risk of adverse health phenomena within this group, with the potential to extend to other groups.

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