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POLISH WOMEN ON THE BANKING SERVICES MARKET: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF POLISH WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS BANKING FOR WOMEN

This article presents an analysis of the behavior of Polish women in the banking services market. The empirical material is the results of surveys conducted among 1217 randomly selected Polish women. Using the collected and organized empirical material, developed in a descriptive, tabular, and graphical form, through the method of comparative analysis, the article estimates Polish women's level of interest in basic banking products, and their preferred forms of payment. It determines the level of customer satisfaction with the current banking service (the product portfolio offered, service quality, and bank employees' approaches to serving women). In addition, it examines the attitudes of Polish women to the need to create an offer dedicated to women and a bank that would serve only women. This confirms the research hypothesis that Polish women do not see the need to create a special bank for women, but they expect more interest from banks in providing them with an offer specially dedicated to women. The results presented in the article expand the state of knowledge about the behavior of Polish women in the banking services market.

Keywords: banking services, banking, women.

1. INTRODUCTION

Banks are one of the basic pillars of the functioning of every state. Both individual and institutional clients use their services on a large scale. The bank's success is measured primarily by the size of its annual profit. However, the basis of this success is his relationships with clients. Therefore, banks must pay special attention to dynamically changing customer expectations. On the one hand, that each product offered and the method of service provision must be accepted by potential customers. On the other hand, the fact that their potential customers are not a homogeneous group that has the same expectations as to the scope and manner of banking services. Therefore, banks carry out activities aimed at segmenting customers into smaller homogeneous groups whose members have similar characteristics and needs. This allows banks to develop personalised offers for individual customer groups.

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For hundreds of years, the activities of banks focused on meeting the needs of customers who were men. The offer of banks was developed to meet their needs, they were served by exclusively male staff, and even the decor of the banking units was adapted to their taste. This was due to the applicable legal regulations, which did not allow women to independently decide about their finances, including using the services of banks.

Such discrimination occurred not only in less developed countries or countries where the dominant religion put women on the margins of economic life, but also in countries considered highly developed, whose socio-legal systems were a role model for other countries. For example, in Germany, until 1962, a married woman could not open her own bank account (*Die erste Frau...*) without her husband's consent. In the United States, the right to have a bank account (without the consent of the husband) was granted to married women in the 1960s, in Canada in 1964, and in Great Britain in 1975 (*Women's...*, 2014; *Canadian...*). Also in 1975, Spanish married women obtained the right to own property (*BBVA: a history of banking...*). The French obtained the right to open bank accounts in 1965. From 1881, they were allowed to open savings accounts, and from 1895 to make deposits and withdrawals (*Histoire...*, 2013; *L'émancipation...*). At this point, it should be noted that in Poland already in 1921, the March Constitution rejected the possibility of discrimination on grounds of sex. In addition, it repealed the possibility of restricting the exercise of legal acts by married women.

Women were also discriminated against in their employment in banks. Practically until the 1920s, women in banks were very rarely employed (usually as typists or telephone operators, not customer service employees). During this period, absurd reasons were given as reasons for not employing women in banks: „the office air was harmful to women's health, they were not efficient and intelligent enough, they had no ambition” and the „terrible smell of violets” in offices disturbed men's work (*Frauen...*, 2004). As late as 1915, the Association of Banking Officers in Germany expressed the position that the employment of female bankers should always be combated. For example, in German banks in 1878, only four apprentices were employed. In 1912, the number of women employed in these banks was 2,408. However, it should be noted that most women performed auxiliary work (*Frauen...*, 2004).

The situation was no better in other countries. In 1894, the first women were employed at the Bank of England. Twenty years later, this bank had only 64 women out of 1,004 employees (*Women in the Bank*). However, the only exception in English banking should be pointed out, when in the second half of the 19th century a woman held a managerial position in a bank – it was Fanny Hopkins, who headed the Hawkhurst agency in London & County Bank from 1859 to 1905 (www.natwestgroup.com).

In turn, in Royal Bank Canada, the first woman was employed in 1902, she became a branch manager only in 1968, and a member of the Board of Directors in 1976. It should be noted that since 1947 women accounted for over 50% of employees of this bank (*Women at Royal Bank*).

The situation was even worse in Spain, until 1969 women were practically not employed in banks (*BBVA: a history of banking...*).

In turn, the Ottoman Bank operating in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey in the years 1910–1930 employed 226 women out of 6,000 employees. It is interesting that Catholic women dominated among them (33%). They were followed by Muslim (24%), Jewish (17%), and Orthodox (16%) women. 76% of the Ottoman Bank were virgins (*Baruh*, 2016). This bank allowed the employment of married women, which was prohibited in the case of banks in most European countries. Employees should quit their jobs after getting married. For

example, it was only in 1950 that the National Provincial Bank was the first British bank to remove the ban on marriage, which in practice meant that women employed in it could continue to work in the bank after marriage (www.natwestgroup.com).

In the twentieth century, there were initiatives that were supposed to lead to changes in the banking services market. On the one hand, to provide women with free access to these services, on the other hand, to enable them to take up work in institutions of the financial sector.

The first bank established to serve women inclusively was Die Genossenschaftsbank selbständiger Frauen (also called Frauenbank), founded in 1910 in Berlin. The Management Board and its Supervisory Board consisted exclusively of women. In addition to standard banking activities, the bank also carried out activities aimed at women's financial education. The bank ceased operations in 1916. Its failure was due, among others, to legal conditions that limited women's ability to use the services of banks (Henninger [ed.], 1999).

In 1919, First Woman's Bank of Tennessee was founded in Clarksville, Tennessee. The founder of this bank was Brenda Vineyard Runyon. The bank had all female staff and management. In 1926, it was acquired by The First Trust and Savings Bank of Clarksville. (Women's..., 2014).

In 1921, Bank of America in San Francisco opened a Women's Banking Department. The bank only employed women. Provided women with access to their own accounts, with the ability to manage their finances without involving their spouses. In addition, it offered counseling services and financial education to help women make the best decisions about their finances. Another branch was opened in 1923 in Los Angeles. In 1927, both branches operated over 20,000 customer accounts (Every woman's bank).

In 1964, the National Commercial Bank of Scotland experimented with serving female customers and opened the UK's first 'women's branch' in Edinburgh. This branch employed and served only women. This branch provided women with the opportunity to use banking services through other women (www.natwestgroup.com). The idea of operating such a branch could have been related to women's complaints about the quality of their service by men - treating them as customers of the „inferior kind”.

In 1973, the Spanish bank Banco de Bilbao created a special service, The Woman's Bank, which provided women with banking advice and assistance in setting up bank accounts and developing credit applications (www.bbva.com).

In 1975, First Women's Bank was established in New York. The purpose of establishing this bank was less feminist than business. The founders of the bank noticed the potential in the segment of high-income American women. The launch of this bank became an impulse to establish similar institutions in other states. For example, a year later, a group of businesswomen founded First Women's Bank of California in Los Angeles. The purpose of the bank was to help women save money and take loans. This bank focused on helping women manage their money, especially after divorce. The bank's clients included then-screen stars Jane Fonda, Loretta Swit, Phyllis Diller, Farrah Fawcett, and Anne Bancroft.

It should be noted that although in the 20th century the situation of women has changed, they have won a number of rights, including „equality” in the banking services market, one can still notice the worse situation of women in this market, especially in countries where culture and religion place them in the background of social life (Sołtysiak, Suraj, 2017). To counteract this, mainly in Islamic countries, banks aimed exclusively at women have been launched. Examples of such banks are Pratibha Women Cooperative Bank from India,

Grammen Bank from Bangladesh, First Women Bank from Pakistan, Tanzania Women's Bank sp. z o.o. from Tanzania, Women Microfinance Bank from Kenya and Enat Bank from Ethiopia.

The need to launch such institutions, not for religious reasons, but for the desire to meet the needs and expectations of women, was also noticed on the American continent, where Citigroup's Women & Co. was established in the United States, Women Entrepreneurs in The Royal Bank of Canada, in Canada and the Venezuelan National Bank for Development in Venezuela. Women (Spanish: Banco Nacional de la Mujer or Banmujer). In 2020, conditional approval from Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. First Women's Bank, which is set to become Chicago's first banking start-up, was given a start-up. The bank will focus its activities on granting loans to women-owned enterprises.

European banks also pointed out differences in the approach to finance and in the way representatives of different genders use banking services. An example of this is the bank launched for women in the Austrian resort of Gastein by Raiffeisen Bank. In turn, Bulgarian banks have created programs dedicated to women – Fibank the Smart Lady program and UniCredit Bulbank the Donna programme. The idea behind these programs was to „meet the needs of the modern woman”.

On the other hand, there are currently no products dedicated exclusively to women on the Polish market of banking services. Banks believe that banking products do not have a „gender”, so there is no need to create a separate offer for men and women. This is not a fully correct statement, especially considering the fact that in Poland the number of women using banking services is systematically increasing year by year. As a result, the predominance of men among bank customers has been obliterated. This is confirmed by the fact that the percentage of women with a bank account is higher than the level of banking among men. It should also be noted that women have been the majority in the adult population of Poles for decades. Currently, the number of women living in Poland is higher by 1,244.9 thousand. from the number of men (Rocznik Demograficzny, 2018). As a result, banks should approach servicing this customer segment with greater care. The more so that the conducted surveys showed that 46.27% of representatives of the young generation of Polish women report the need to create such an offer dedicated to them, and as many as 55.81% expressed their willingness to use the services of a bank for women. It should be emphasised that it is important for women that the bank, as part of a service dedicated to them, assigns them a personal advisor (46.06%) who will provide financial information (31.74%) and will have an individual approach to the client (21.58%). They also believe that such an offer should be accompanied by additional benefits, such as: programs with retail chains (40.04%) and cosmetics companies (32.78%), insurance (26.97%) and helpful packages: home (21.16%), car (20.33%), health (16.6%) (Sołtysiak, Suraj, 2019).

Despite the fact that, although banks recognise the differences between the needs of women and men in the field of banking services, they do not take actions aimed at personalising the offer for particular genders. Bank managers are of the opinion that there is no such need in Poland. And the offer for women should primarily be created in countries where women are discriminated against in access to banking services. It should be emphasised that not only bankers think so, a similar opinion is expressed by the majority of society. This is probably related to the fact that the majority of Polish society believes that Poland has a relatively low level of financial exclusion (Sołtysiak, 2019; Sołtysiak, 2020a). On the other hand, analyses of research reports on customer behaviour in various segments of the Polish financial market indicate that it is usually not analysed due to the

gender of the respondents, but primarily their age, income, education, or place of residence (Maison, 2017; Zasobność..., 2017; Morawski, Wieczorek, 2018). That is why there is a lack of studies that could be used to compare with the results of the conducted research presented in the next part of the article.

2. PURPOSE, EMPIRICAL MATERIAL AND RESEARCH METHODS

Empirical research on the behaviour of Polish women on the market for banking services was of the nature of primary research. They were conducted in the form of a direct survey. The non-random sampling method was used to select the research group. The analysed research group included 1217 respondents living in South-East Poland. The study participants were divided into six age segments (18–25 years old – 20.46%, 26–35 years old – 19.15%, 36–45 years old – 16.19%, 46–55 years old – 15.12% %, 56–65 years old – 15.04%, over 65 years old – 14.05%), into five groups by place of residence (rural area – 16.43%, city with up to 25,000 inhabitants – 22.51%, city of 25–50 thousand inhabitants – 18.32%, city of 50–100 thousand inhabitants – 17.17%, city of over 100 thousand inhabitants – 25.55%), and into three groups according to education (primary/middle school – 10.6%, secondary – 56.37%, higher – 33.03%).

The main objective of the conducted research was an attempt to determine the preferences of Polish women representatives in the use of banking products and forms of payment. Determining the level of satisfaction with the product portfolio offered, the quality of service, and the approach of the bank's employees to serving women. In addition, examining the level of interest in the introduction of an offer dedicated exclusively to women by banks and the establishment of banks for women.

3. WOMEN'S BANKING PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

Contemporary Polish women are aware of how important it is for the quality of everyday life to be able to provide banking services and to have a bank account. In the analysed group, over 98% of the respondents declared that they use banking services and almost 90% of the respondents said that they had a bank account. The level of banking among the study participants was higher by 2 pp from the average level of banking among women in Poland (The Little, 2018). The highest level of banking use (Figure 1) was found among female respondents aged 26–35 (95.71%), and the lowest among those aged over 65 (81.29%). It should be emphasised that among senior women, a very high level of banking coverage was recorded, higher by 24 pp from the average level of banking coverage of Polish women in this age group (Raport InfoSenior, 2018). The largest percentage of respondents with a bank account were residents of cities of 50–100 thousand (94.26%) and the lowest percentage of rural residents (84%). It should also be noted that the level of banking use of the study participants increased with the increase in their level of education; among respondents with primary/middle school it was 78.29%, with secondary education – 87.32% and with higher education – 98.26%.

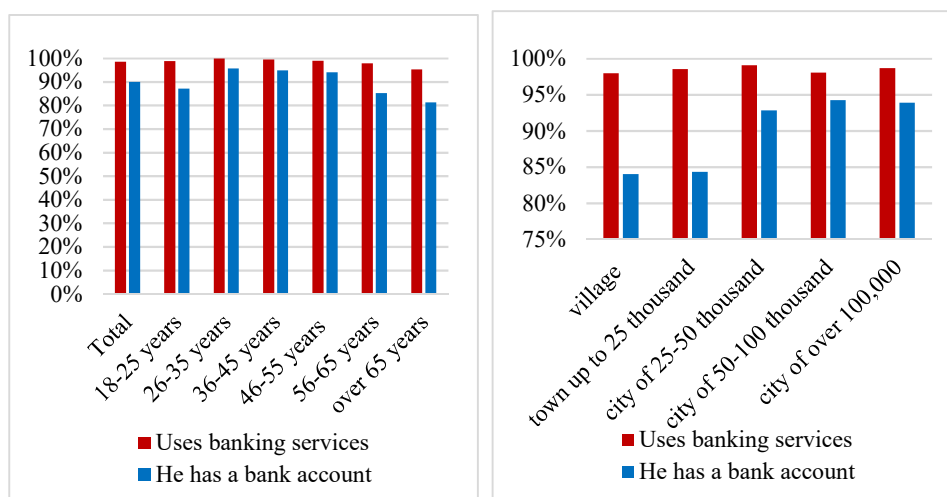


Figure 1. The level of banking by female respondents

Source: Study based on own research.

The study participants willingly use the bank cards attached to the current account (Figure 2). More than 86% of the respondents declared having debit cards. It should be emphasised that almost 93% of the respondents aged 26 to 55 years were of this kind. The results obtained were similar to the results obtained in the study „Poles' attitudes towards non-cash transactions” (Maison, 2017).

The percentage of respondents with debit cards increased in direct proportion to the size of the town they live in and the level of education. Among the inhabitants of rural areas, 82.48% of the respondents declared having a debit card, and among the inhabitants of cities of over 100,000 as many as 91.96% of the respondents.

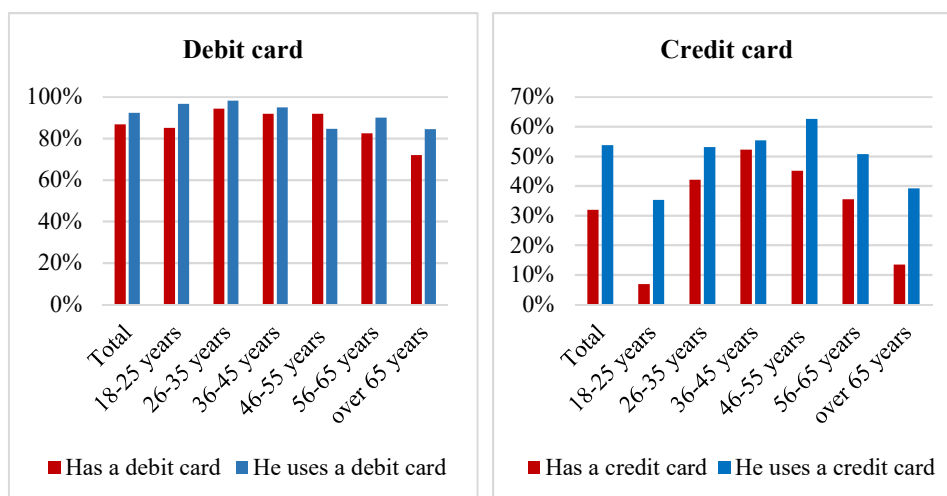


Figure 2. Percentage of female respondents who have and use bank cards

Source: Study based on own research.

It should be noted that the Polish women participating in the research were not only passive holders of bank cards. More than 92% of respondents who have a debit card declared that they make payments using it. As the main reasons for using this financial instrument, they indicated convenience, time savings, a greater sense of security associated with having a card than cash, the ability to pay for electronic services, and shopping on the Internet. Most often, debit card operations were performed by female respondents aged 26–35 years (98.18%), respondents living in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (95.10%) and respondents with higher education (96.44%). This is due to the fact that young women willingly use modern technologies and believe that the use of these technologies is safe. Respondents in the oldest age group over 65 years of age carried out the least frequent debit card operations. It should be emphasised that in this segment only 71.93% of respondents had a debit card and 84.55% of their holders declared that they used it. This is mainly due to the fact that this age group is dominated by the „cult of cash” and the fear of using modern payment instruments. However, in the analysed group, the percentage of users using debit cards was 9 pp higher than the value obtained in the study conducted in December 2018, commissioned by the Polish Bank Association, on the socioeconomic situation of the elderly in Poland. (Raport InfoSenior, 2019).

Every third research participant had a credit card in addition to a debit card. Most often it was declared by respondents from the age group of 36–45 (52.28%), inhabitants of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (38.91%), and respondents with higher education (34.33%). However, it should be noted that the level of education of the respondents had little impact on having a credit card. It was possessed by 31.01% of the respondents with primary/ middle school, 30.76% with secondary education and 34.33% with higher education.

In contrast to debit cards, which were used by the vast majority of their holders, only every second holder of credit cards used them. This may be due to the fact that in Polish society, there is a belief that using a loan to finance everyday payments should be a last resort. Therefore, respondents willingly use debit cards, which at the right time may signal a lack of funds in the account, rather than credit cards under which the granted limit can be used, which must be repaid from future proceeds.

Most often, women aged 46–55 (62.65%), residents of cities with up to 25,000 inhabitants (58.33%), respondents with primary/lower secondary education (57.5%) declared payments using credit cards. It is interesting that the percentage of those using credit cards decreased with the increase in the level of education of the respondents and amounted to 57.5% for respondents with primary/ middle school, 56.4% with secondary education and 48.55% with higher education, respectively.

Analysing the level of interest in using the two basic types of banking products, deposits and loans (Figure 3), we find that among Polish women there is definitely more interest in using savings products than loans. Almost 60% of the respondents declare that they use savings products, while only 26.38% of the respondents stated that they took loans. This may indirectly result in less interest in making payments with credit cards, the very name of which is associated with taking out a loan.

It should be noted that the greatest interest in using both savings and credit products was among the respondents from the 46–55 age group and the lowest from the 18–25 age group. This may be due to the fact that respondents from the 46–55 age group have a stable professional position, and their income allows them to use savings products. In turn, the use of credit products may involve the need to repay long-term loans taken out years ago to finance expenses related to creating appropriate living conditions for their families (e.g.

mortgage loans). In the case of the youngest age group, less interest in saving may result from the lack of funds that could be allocated for this purpose and the low interest in credit products due to the lack of creditworthiness.

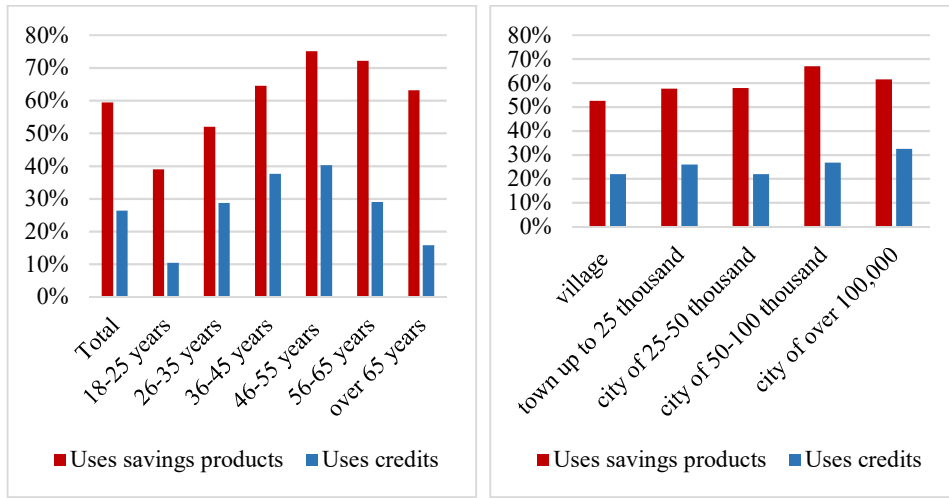


Figure 3. Percentage of female respondents using savings and credit products

Source: Study based on own research.

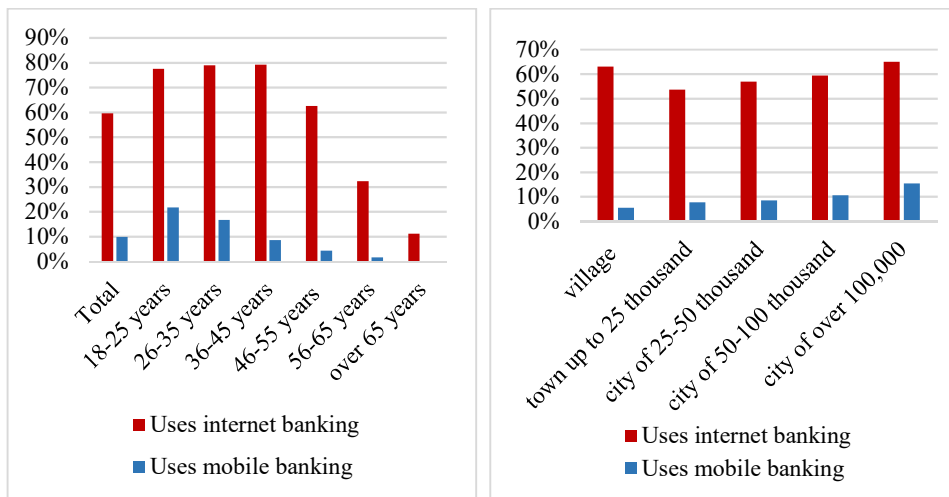


Figure 4. Percentage of female respondents using online and mobile banking

Source: Study based on own research.

Representatives of Polish women participating in the research indicated that they are also familiar with the use of modern banking products and their distribution channels. Almost 60% of the respondents declared that they use online banking. The increased

interest in this form of banking services is undoubtedly related to the changes that have taken place in both the private and professional lives of Polish women. Nowadays, it is practically impossible to be active on the labour market without using information technology on a daily basis. The same is true in private life. Polish women are very eager to buy goods online, use various types of information services or contact their relatives (this form of contact has become extremely valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic). One can be tempted to say that research conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic will show a significant increase in the percentage of Polish women using online banking.

In the study conducted, respondents from the 36–45 age group (79.19%), women living in rural areas (63%) and cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (64.95%), respondents with higher education (68.16%) most often declared the use of online banking services (Figure 4).

On the other hand, every tenth participant in the study used mobile banking services. This form of banking services was most preferred by women respondents belonging to the youngest age groups: 18–25 years of age (21.69%) and 26–35 years of age (16.74%), respondents living in large cities: 50–100 thousand inhabitants (10.53%) and more than 100,000 inhabitants (15.43%), respondents with higher education (12.69%). The fact that mainly representatives of the youngest age groups use mobile banking to provide banking services is due to the fact that they use modern devices on a daily basis with which it is possible to provide these services. However, respondents from older age groups usually indicate difficulties related to the use of these types of devices and fear of the possibility of fraud.

4. PREFERRED FORM OF PAYMENT

Respondents participating in the research, declaring the preferred form of payment (Figure 5), divided into two groups of similar size (51.43% were in favour of cash payments and 48.57% were in favour of non-cash payments). The analysis based on the age criterion allowed indicating a clear division of the research group between the generation of the cashless era and the generation of the cash era. Among the respondents, the division line was in the age group of 46–55 years. In this group, 52.18% of the respondents declared card payment as their preferred form, and 47.83% of the respondents declared cash payment. Younger respondents mostly declared that they more often make non-cash payments (63.92% of respondents aged 18–45 preferred card payments) and older respondents in cash (82.77% of respondents aged over 55 preferred cash payments). Such a division may result from the fact that the young generation prefers to make payments using tablets, smartphones, watches, etc. Devices and does not use cash, for which they would have to go to a bank or ATM. In turn, the older generation is more attached to cash, lacks skills in implementing modern forms of non-cash payments and lacks confidence in most of these forms of payment.

However, using the criterion of place of residence for the analysis, it was found that a higher percentage of respondents who preferred cash payments lived in rural areas (68%) and cities with 25–50 thousand inhabitants (54.7%) and a higher percentage of respondents preferring card payments in cities up to 25 thousand inhabitants (52.19%) and in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (52.09%). In turn, using the criterion of education, it was determined that cash payments were used most often by female respondents with primary/middle school (68.99%) and bank card payments by respondents with higher education (67.91%).

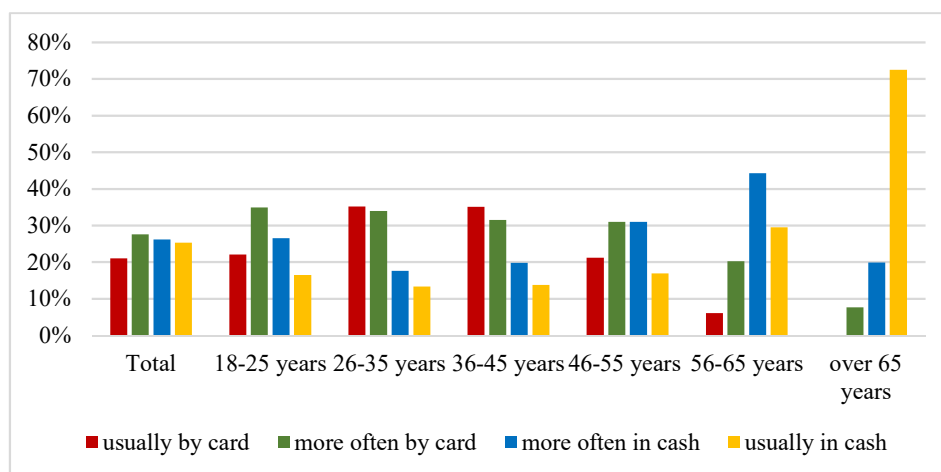


Figure 5. Preferred form of payment by the respondents

Source: Study based on own research.

5. THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE PORTFOLIO OF BANKING SERVICES AND SERVICE QUALITY

Based on the conducted research, the level of satisfaction with the product portfolio offered by banks, the quality of service and the approach of the bank's employees to serving women was estimated.

When analysing the level of satisfaction of the respondents with the product portfolio offered by the banks, it was found (Figure 6) that it was rated the highest by female respondents of the age group over 65 (34.5%) and the age group 18–25 (28.52%). It should also be noted that in the 18–25 age group there was the smallest number of female respondents who assessed it as low or very low (10.44%). On the other hand, the highest number of survey participants unhappy with the product portfolio offered by banks, who evaluated their level of satisfaction as low or very low, were in the 46–55 age group (33.7%).

This may be due to the fact that representatives of the oldest age group have very low expectations as to the offer of banking products – most of them use the services of only one bank not more than once a month, only every third of them use deposit products and every from credit products (Sołtysiak, 2020b). In addition, they prefer the traditional form of banking service and do not expect banks to introduce any innovations they do not trust. On the other hand, representatives of the younger generation use mainly the services of banks that offer the most modern forms of banking services on the market. However, they do not pay much attention to the deposit and credit products offered by these banks, which in turn are very important for clients belonging to the 46–55 age group.

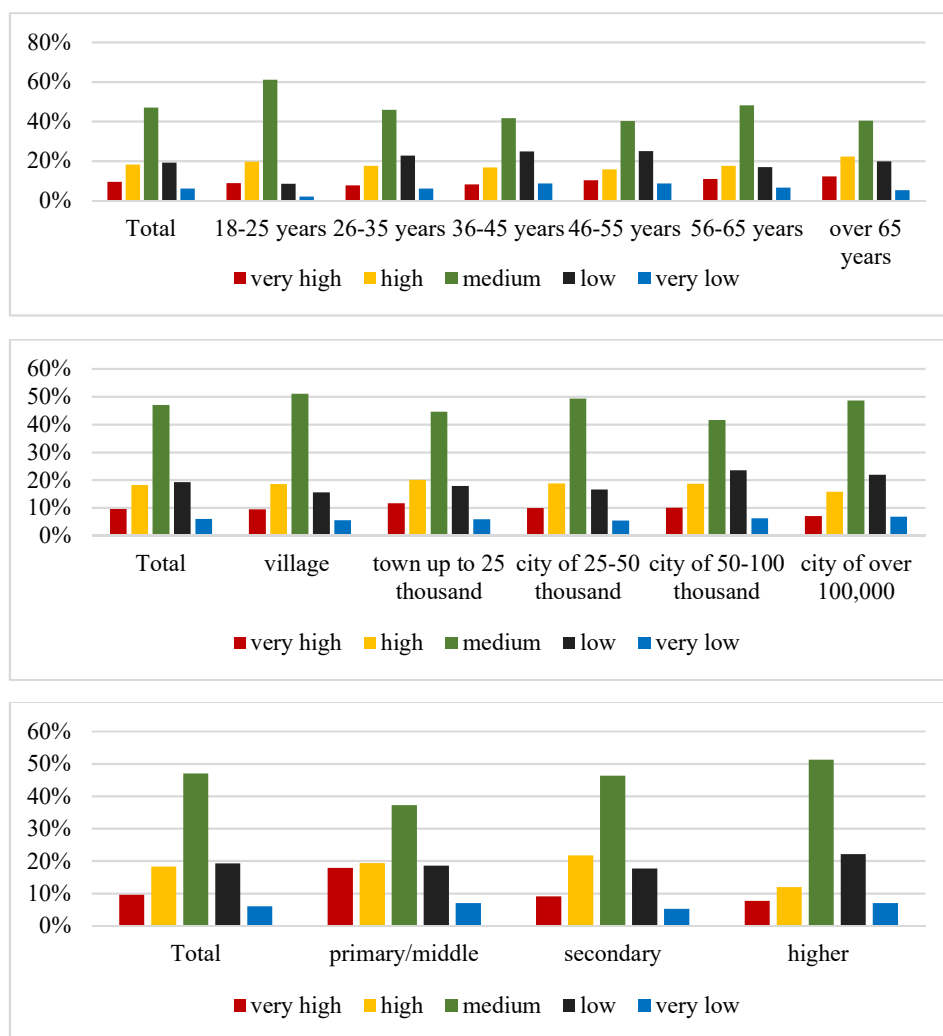


Figure 6. The level of female respondents' satisfaction with the product portfolio offered by the banks

Source: Study based on own research.

However, when analyzing the level of satisfaction with the offered product portfolio with respect to the criterion of the place of residence of the respondents, it was found that it was at a similar level among residents of rural areas and cities, the number of inhabitants of which does not exceed 100,000. It was city highest among the inhabitants up to 25,000 (31.75%) and the lowest among the inhabitants of cities over 100,000 (22.83%).

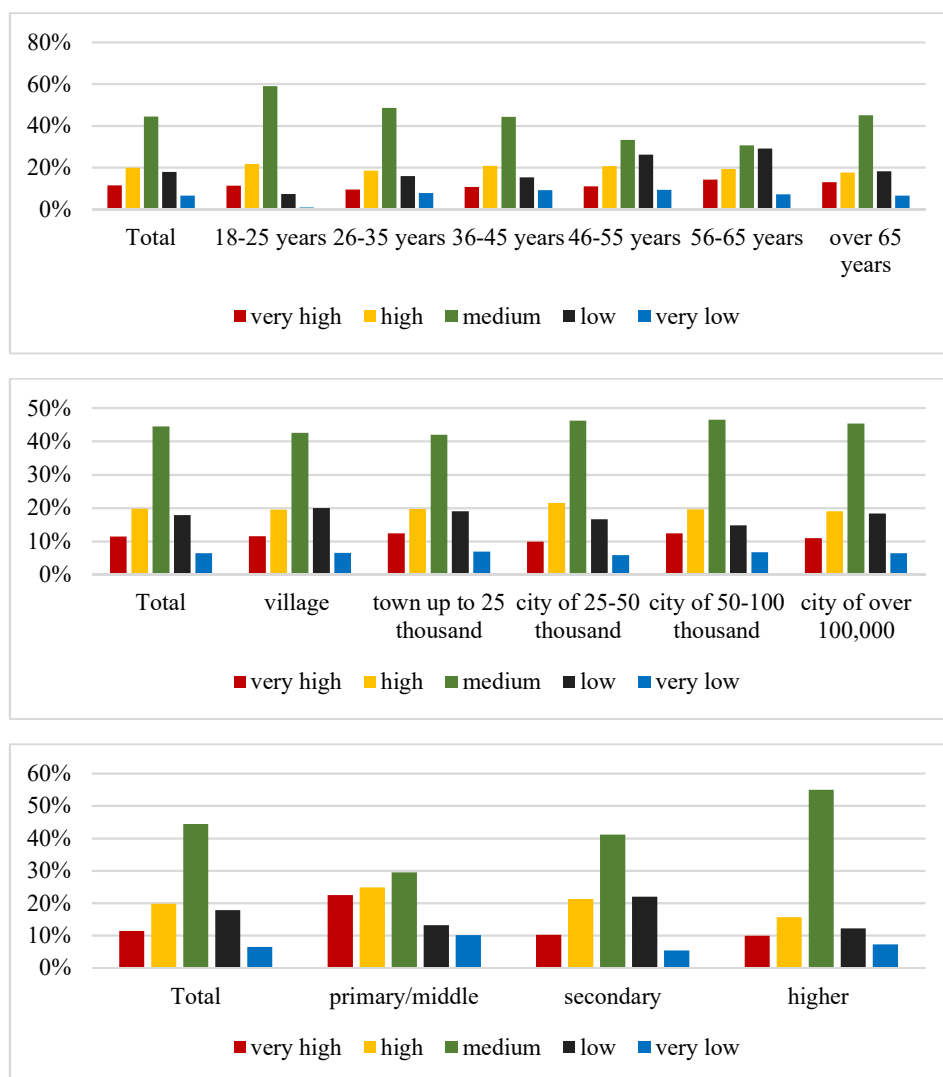


Figure 7. The level of female respondents' satisfaction with the quality of service

Source: Study based on own research

However, the analysis based on the criterion of education of the respondents indicated that the level of satisfaction with the product portfolio offered by the banks decreased with increasing level of education of the respondents. It was, respectively, 37.21% among the respondents with primary/middle school, 30.76% among the respondents with secondary education and only 19.65% among the respondents with higher education. This is due to the fact that educated Polish women with higher incomes are not satisfied with an „offer for everyone”, but expect banks to create offers dedicated to them, „tailor-made”, i.e. fully satisfying the needs of a modern woman in this respect.

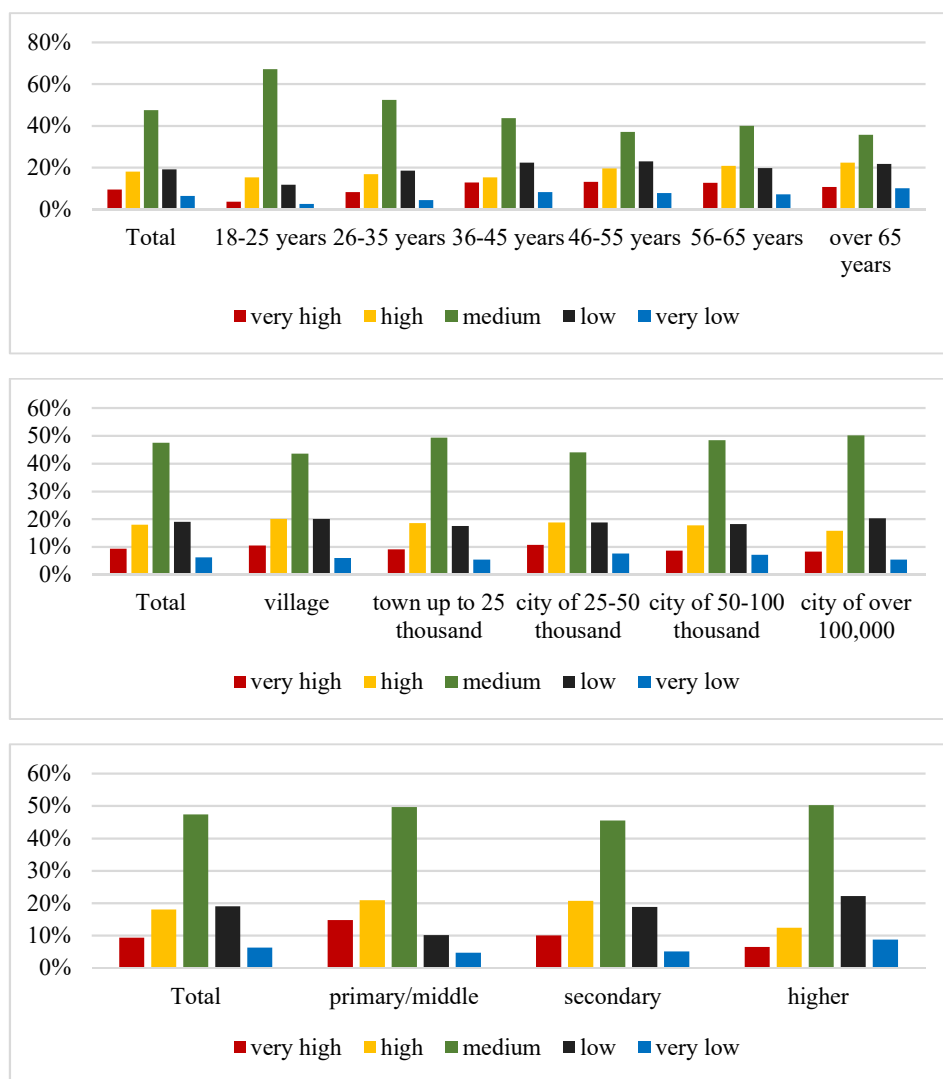


Figure 8. The level of satisfaction with the approach of the bank's employees to serving women

Source: Study based on own research.

The analysis of the assessment of the level of customer service quality (Figure 7) showed that every third participant in the study was satisfied with the level of this service, indicating a high (19.8%) or very high (11.42%) answer. On the other hand, every fourth respondent believed that the level of this service is low (17.83%) or very low (6.49%). It should be noted that this level was rated the highest by respondents belonging to the age group 56–65 (33.34%), women living in cities with up to 25,000 inhabitants (32.12%) and respondents with primary education (47.29%). On the other hand, the lowest percentage was recorded by female participants aged 26–35 (27.89%), respondents living in cities with

more than 100,000 inhabitants (29.9%) and female respondents with higher education (25.62%).

However, when analyzing the level of satisfaction of female respondents with the approach of bank employees to serving women (Figure 8), it was found that the percentage of respondents satisfied with this service (27.37%) was similar to the percentage of respondents who assessed the quality of this service negatively (25.22%). This level was rated the highest by respondents from the age group (33.34%), respondents living in rural areas (30.5%), and respondents with primary/ middle school (35.66%). On the other hand, the least satisfied with the attitude of bank employees toward their service were women respondents belonging to the age group over 65 years (31.58%), residents of cities with 25–50 thousand inhabitants (26.46%), respondents with higher education (30.85%).

6. BANKING FOR WOMEN

When segmenting customers, banks attach more importance to creating an offer for customers due to their income (most banks offer accounts for mass customers and VIP customers) or their stage of life (e.g., accounts dedicated to teenagers aged 13 to 18 years of age, young people aged 18–26 (30 years old) or seniors) than by the gender of the potential customer. Only a few banks made unsuccessful attempts to introduce to their portfolio products that would be intended only for representatives of one sex, e.g., women (Konto na Obcasach offered by BZ WBK or credit cards: Impresja offered by Bank Millennium and Citibank-Elle offered by Citi Handlowy Bank or MasterCard „Mała Czarna” debit card offered by Alior Bank). mBank even conducted an advertising campaign under the name „mBank is a woman”. However, it did not become the basis for creating a separate bank or an offer dedicated to women.

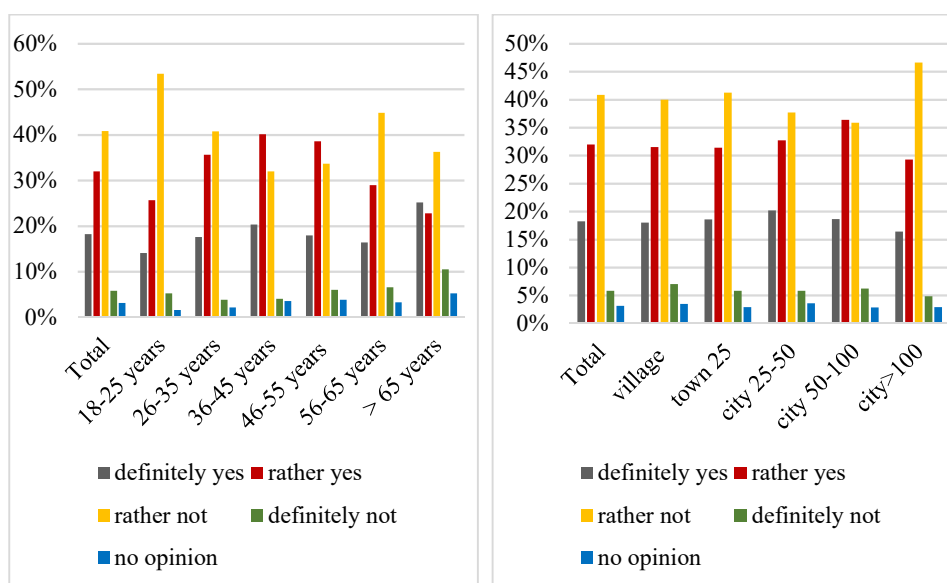


Figure 9. Opinion of female respondents on the introduction of an offer dedicated only to women

Source: Study based on own research.

This is probably why only 2.22% of the respondents declared that they had already had the opportunity to use the offer dedicated exclusively to women. And 4.27% of the respondents stated that they had heard of the existence of such an offer. The knowledge of the offer exclusively for women was most often declared by respondents in the age group of 46–55 (5.98%), respondents living in cities with 50–100 thousand inhabitants (7.66%), respondents with higher education (6.97%). However, this offer was most often used by female respondents of the age groups 36–45 (3.55%) and 46–55 (3.8%). Respondents living in cities with 50–100,000 inhabitants (3.35%) and cities with over 100,000 inhabitants (3.22%). Respondents with higher education (4.73%). It should also be noted that in the analysed research group, none of the respondents with primary education and 18–25 years used the offer for women.

Half of the women who participated in the survey (50.2%) expressed the opinion that Polish banks should introduce an offer dedicated exclusively to women (Figure 9). This opinion was most often expressed by female respondents from the age groups 36–45 (60.4%) and 46–55 (56.52%), respondents living in cities with 50–100,000 inhabitants (55.02%), and respondents with higher (60.7%). On the other hand, the lack of such a need was most often indicated by respondents from the youngest age group of 18–25 years (58.63%), women living in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (51.44%) and respondents with primary education (60.47%).

A different attitude is presented by the participants of the study in relation to the proposal to establish a bank for women in Poland (Figure 10). This action is supported by only 27.28% of the respondents. On the other hand, up to 64.83% of the respondents are of the opposite opinion. The highest percentage for enthusiasts of the establishment of such an institution in Poland was among respondents in the age groups 36–45 (30.45%) and 46–55 (30.44%), respondents living in cities with 50–100 thousand inhabitants (32.53%), of respondents with primary/middle school education (33.34%). In turn, the largest group

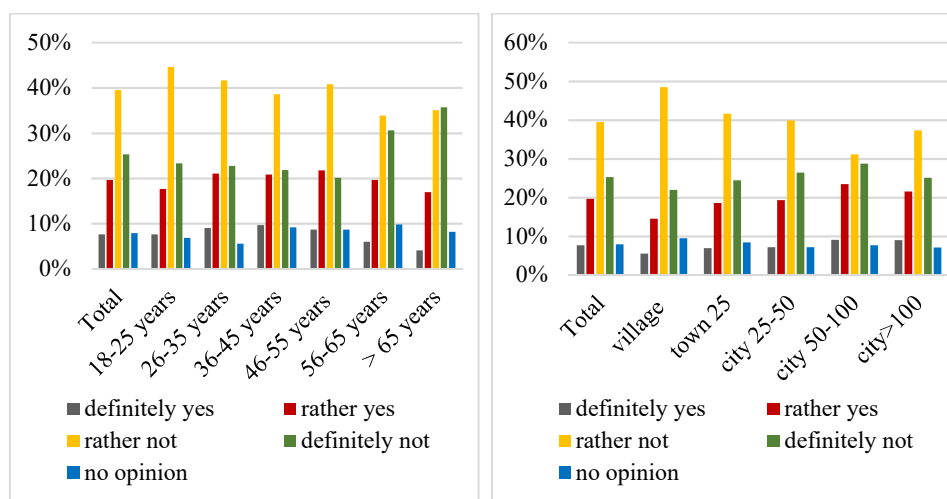


Figure 10. Opinion of the respondents on the bank for women

Source: Study based on own research.

of opponents of the creation of such an institution was among respondents aged over 65 (70.76%), respondents living in rural areas (70.5%), and respondents with higher education (69.15%).

However, it should be noted that as many as 48.48% of the respondents declared their willingness to use the services of a bank for women. The largest percentage of respondents who expressed their willingness to use the services of such a bank was among those in the age groups 46–55 (53.26%) and 18–25 (53.06%). On the other hand, the least willing were among representatives of older age groups: 56–65 years (34.43%) and over 65 years (33.92%). Using the criterion of education for the analysis, it was found that interest in servicing women by the bank increased with the increase in the level of education of the respondents and amounted to: 35.66% among respondents with primary/middle school education, 43.44% with secondary education and 61.2% with higher education.

Among the main factors affecting the intention to use the bank's services for women, the respondents mentioned (Figure 11) waiting for the offer of services for women (36.78%), dissatisfaction with the product portfolio offered (28.98%) and dissatisfaction with from previous service (20.34%).

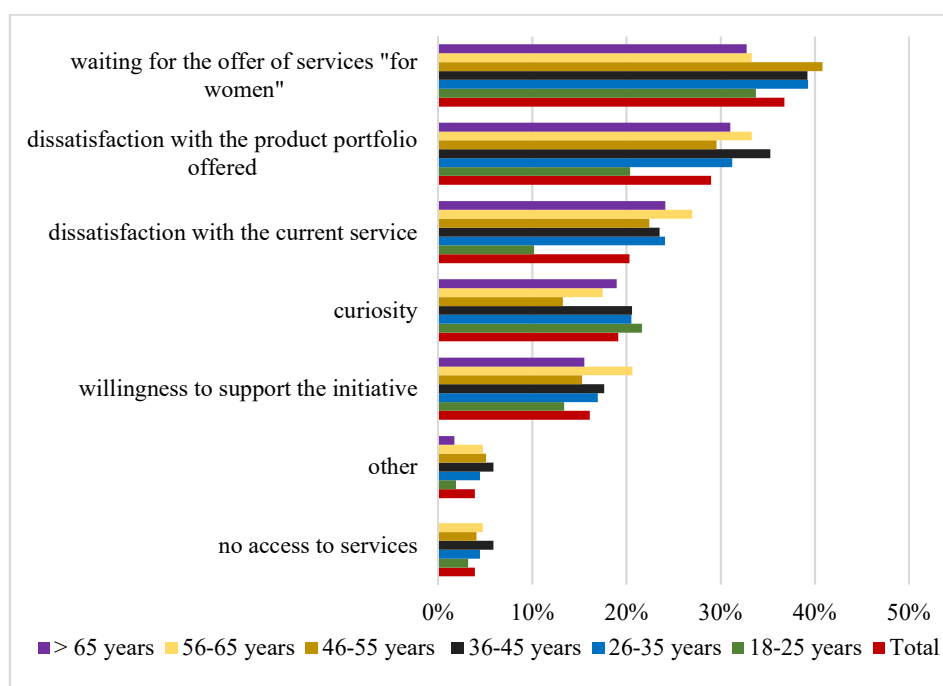


Figure 11. Reasons for the intention to use the bank's offer for women

Source: Study based on own research.

Every fifth respondent stated that the reason would be curiosity about how such an institution functions. Most often, respondents who belong to younger age groups indicated 'curiosity' as a reason for using the services of a bank for women: 18–25 years (21.66%), 26–35 years (20.54%), 36–45 years (20.54%), 59%). Respondents living in large cities:

50–100,000 inhabitants (21.82%) and 100,000 inhabitants (20.25%). Respondents with primary education (30.43%).

On the other hand, every sixth respondent wanted to support the operation of such an institution by using the services of a bank for women. The willingness to support such an initiative was most often indicated by respondents with higher education (17.07%), respondents living in cities with 50–100 thousand inhabitants (17.27%), respondents belonging to the 56–65 age group (20.63%).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Polish women are active participants in the banking services market. According to the World Bank, their level of banking coverage is 88% and is higher than the level of banking coverage of Polish residents, which is 86.7% (The Little, 2018). The research conducted showed that the phenomenon of financial exclusion is concerning to a small extent. Among them, as many as 89.98% had a bank account and 98.5% declared the use of banking services. Most of the study participants also have the option of making non-cash payments using debit cards (86.77%) and credit cards (31.96%). Almost 60% of the respondents declared the use of savings products and over 26% of credit products. However, it should be noted that the level of their satisfaction with the activities of the banks was moderate. Only 27.73% of the respondents assessed the level of satisfaction with the product portfolio offered by the banks as high or very high. However, such levels of satisfaction in service case of the quality of service and the approach of bank employees to serving women, respectively.

These opinions indicate that banks should thoroughly analyse these issues and pay more attention to the basic challenges that have always faced them over the years, i.e., to adapt the product portfolio and methods of offering services to the expectations of potential homogeneous customer groups. It should be taken into account that individual homogeneous groups of customers may have different needs and expectations in this regard. In most cases, banks do not divide their offer based on the gender criterion. This is mainly due to the fact that for centuries the offer of banks was addressed primarily to men. Currently, many bankers are of the opinion that the difference between a female client and a male client has been blurred. However, at the same time, they see the need to use a different form of „packaging” for some banking products (e.g. different images of bank cards). The Polish women participating in the research are also divided on the need to introduce women's banking. Half of the respondents (50.2%) see the need for banks to create an offer specifically dedicated to women. However, only one in four respondents (27.28%) were of the opinion that a women's bank should be established in Poland. It is interesting, however, that up to 48.48% of respondents would like to use the services of such a bank, and the main reason for this is „waiting for an offer of services for women” (36.78%).

Analysing the situation on the Polish banking market, one can agree with the opinion of the research participants that there is currently no need to create a bank that would serve only women. Such a bank would probably have limited chances for dynamic development in the Polish reality. However, its creation would have an impact on changing the attitude of banks operating on the Polish market to date regarding services for women. These banks would probably be more willing to take into account the demands made by the participants in the research regarding the creation of an offer dedicated to them.

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