

# Equal treatment – report on a study of the community at the University of Warsaw

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Maria Mirucka

Karolina Hansen

Wiktor Soral

Aleksandra Świderska

Kamila Zochniak

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# Introduction

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This report presents the results of the second edition of a survey conducted among students and employees of the University of Warsaw, aimed at deepening knowledge about the perceived prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment. Compared to the first edition (conducted in 2019), which focused mainly on gender inequality, the current study has been expanded to include dimensions such as national and ethnic origin and age. Guided by an intersectional perspective, gender expression, neuroatypicality and employee status were also taken into account. This made it possible to take a broader look at the phenomenon of discrimination in the university environment and to make comparisons over a five-year period in order to identify changes and trends.

As in the previous edition, the analysis covered types of unequal treatment, their frequency, situational context, reactions of the environment, mental well-being, and perceived institutional norms. In addition, the survey took into account well-being in the workplace. Furthermore, questions were added about the use and evaluation of institutions supporting equal treatment at the University of Warsaw, as well as general questions about how respondents feel at the University. In this edition of the survey, research questions similar to those from 2019 were formulated, which allowed for a comparison of results and analysis of possible changes.

The following research questions were asked:

1. What personal experiences of unequal treatment in the university environment do students and employees of the University of Warsaw have?
2. How do respondents perceive the prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment in the university environment?
3. What is the situational context of unequal treatment – who perpetrates it, who is most often affected by it, and in what circumstances does it occur?
4. What are the typical reactions of those around them to unequal treatment?

5. How are institutional norms and organisational culture perceived in the context of unequal treatment?
6. How does unequal treatment relate to the mental wellbeing, workplace wellbeing, stress and health of the respondents?
7. How do respondents perceive institutions that support victims of unequal treatment?

## Respondents

A total of 3,228 people took part in the study. The largest group were students (1,869; 57.9%; in 2019 they accounted for 83.5% of the entire sample), followed by people employed at the University of Warsaw (1,181; 36.6%; in 2019 they constituted 10.94% of the entire sample), and doctoral students (211; 6.5%; in 2019 they constituted 4.9% of the entire sample). Forty-three people (1.3%) selected more than one category of affiliation. **It is worth noting that 10,907 people took part in the first edition of the survey, conducted in 2019, which is a significantly larger sample than in 2024. Particular attention should be paid to the smaller number of respondents in the group of students, which fell from 8,876 to 1,869.**

Among the employed persons, the largest group belonged to the category of research and teaching or research staff (715 persons; 60.5%), followed by administrative staff (289 people; 24.5%), followed by teaching staff (90 people; 7.6%), technical staff (59 people; 5.0%), librarians (34 people; 2.9%), and 25 people (2.1%) indicated "other positions" (e.g. research and technical, managerial, coordination). The most common type of employment was employment based on an employment contract (1,146 people; 97%) for an indefinite period (938 people; 79.4%).

Among those pursuing a doctorate, the majority were in doctoral school (184; 87.2%), and most of them were in their first year (57; 27%). Among students, the largest number were in their first year (924; 49.5%), mainly in first-cycle studies – bachelor's degrees (1,138; 60.9%) and second-cycle studies – master's degrees (446; 23.9%) in full-time mode (1,574; 84.2%).

## Basic demographic information

The group of respondents included 1,866 (57.8%) women, 1,136 (35.2%) men, 146 (4.5%) non-binary persons, 41 (1.3%) persons who entered other options themselves (e.g. agender, genderqueer) or declared that they refused to answer; 39 persons omitted the question about gender.

The average age of the respondents was 31 ( $SD = 13.62$ ), ranging from 16 to 100 years old, while 70 people (2.2%) did not answer the question about their age. One may wonder how high school students (minors starting university are usually 17 years old) and very elderly people ended up in a university study. The latter in particular suggests that random numbers were entered, which in turn may affect the quality of the data. However, it should be emphasised that there were very few such people in the sample. In the future, consideration could be given to limiting the range of numbers that can be entered in response to the question about age.

The majority of respondents (2,911; 90.2%) had Polish citizenship and their native language was Polish (2,878; 89.2%). Other nationalities included countries from all over the world, as did national and ethnic affiliations and affiliations to more than one group, entered by a total of 258 people (8%).

## Other characteristics

In this edition of the survey, we asked several new demographic questions to take a closer look at the characteristics of our academic community. Of the 3,228 respondents, 1,422 (44.1%) declared that they belonged to a religion, and 1,458 (45.1%) were married or in a civil partnership. When asked if they were a person with a disability, 191 (5.9%) respondents answered yes, 731 (22.6%) identified as neurodiverse (22.6%) of respondents declared themselves to be neurodiverse, and 819 (25.4%) of respondents declared themselves to be LGBT+. There were 1,289 (39.9%) respondents who were the first generation in their family to attend university. Between 62 and 77 (1.9% - 2.4%) respondents did not answer the questions in this part of the survey. The data gaps were therefore similar to those in other measurements.

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## Procedure

As in the previous edition, the survey was organised by the University of Warsaw Equality Team in cooperation with the Centre for Research on Prejudice at the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Warsaw and the Education Quality Evaluation Laboratory (PEJK) of the University of Warsaw. The survey was part of the "Equality at the University of Warsaw 2024" project, aimed at developing a new Inclusive Gender Equality Plan for the University of Warsaw.

Data collection took place during the winter semester of the 2024/2025 academic year and was conducted online using the ANKIETER system. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent by email and through the university's USOS WEB system. We estimated that it would take approximately 25 minutes to complete the survey.

The first page of the survey contained basic information about the study, enabling participants to give their informed consent to participate, in accordance with the guidelines of the Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw. The respondents then completed our own survey, similar to the one used in the previous edition of the study. On the one hand, we wanted the surveys in both editions to be consistent, and on the other hand, we wanted to expand our knowledge of various forms of discrimination that we had not previously considered, e.g. due to health status, neuroatypicality or sexual orientation. The main thematic blocks consisted of questions about: 1) the well-being of the respondents, 2) the frequency of unequal treatment, 3) the characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim, 4) reactions to unequal treatment, and 5) the perception of institutional norms in the context of unequal treatment. At the end of the survey, respondents could add their own comments. In the following report, we discuss the results from the above sections, starting with section two, and we discuss section one at the end, looking at the relationship between wellbeing and unequal treatment.

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# Prevalence of unequal treatment

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## Unequal treatment based on gender

In this part of the survey, we presented respondents with a list of fourteen examples of unequal treatment, ranging from relatively minor (e.g. comments and jokes about character traits, referring to beliefs about what women and men are stereotypically like) to the most serious offences (i.e. sexual advances). These examples mainly concerned gender discrimination. They were taken from the previous edition of the survey, with minor corrections and modifications made to broaden the scope of the current survey.

The task of the respondents was to respond to each example by selecting one of five answer options: 1) the phenomenon is recognised as a problem and efforts are being made to solve it, 2) the phenomenon is recognised as a problem, but the respondent does not see any attempts to solve it, 3) the phenomenon is presented as normal, 4) the respondent has not encountered the phenomenon, 5) the respondent knows nothing about how such phenomena are dealt with in their unit. We asked respondents to comment on events from the last four years. In this and the following section of the report (except for Figures 2 and 3), we do not present the results broken down by persons working, doing a PhD and studying at the University of Warsaw, because the discussed aggregate results generally reflect the most and least frequently indicated manifestations of discrimination in all three groups.

The results showed that most respondents identified the first three examples of behaviour from the list (Figure 1) as a problem (to be addressed in their unit). These were comments or jokes about character traits, referring to beliefs about what women and men are stereotypically like (510 people; 15.8%), comments or jokes about non-binary and transgender people (467 people;



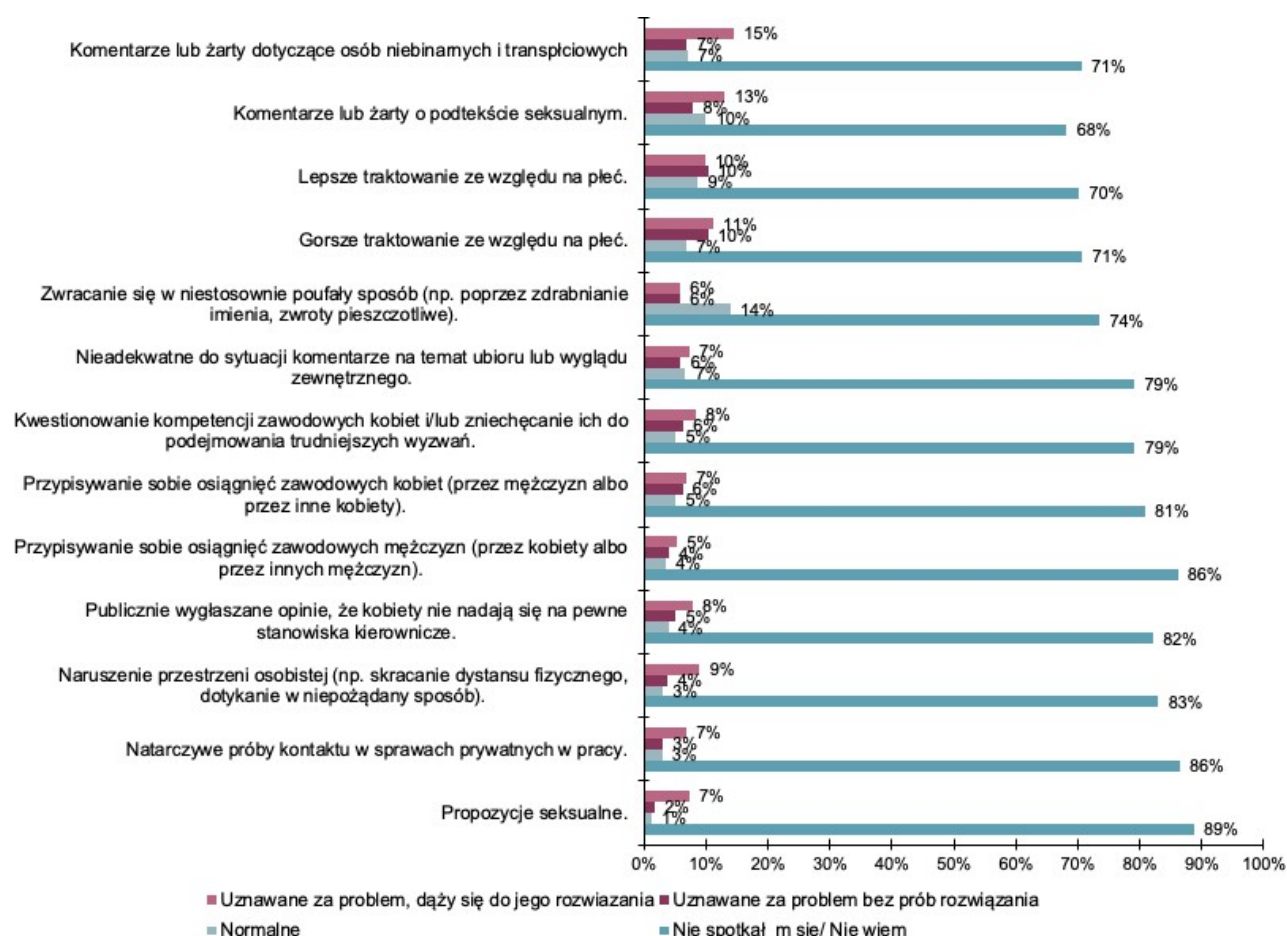
14.5%), and comments or jokes with sexual undertones (419 people; 13%). The responses were similarly distributed when it came to recognising a given behaviour as a problem without attempting to solve it (12.2%, 6.9% and 7.9%, respectively). Slightly more respondents considered these three behaviours to be presented as normal in their unit (12.5%, 7.1% and 10%).

The next two behaviours: worse and better treatment based on gender seemed to be recognised as a problem, with attempts to solve it, by 359 (11.1%) and 316 (9.8%) respondents, considered a problem but without attempts to solve it by 334 (10.3%) and 333 (10.3%) respondents, and considered normal by 221 (6.8%) and 282 (8.7%) respondents. All other examples of unequal treatment were assessed as being considered a problem by fewer than 300 respondents.

The least common were behaviours constituting the most serious offences. 2,575 people (79.8%) had not encountered sexual propositions and 286 people (8.9%) knew nothing about their occurrence in their workplace. 2,501 people (77.5%) had not encountered persistent attempts to contact them about private matters at work, and 286 people (8.9%) were unaware of such behaviour occurring. 2,417 people (74.9%) had never encountered violations of personal space (e.g. closing physical distance) and 262 people (8.1%) knew nothing about such behaviour occurring.

**Figure 1**

*Prevalence of unequal treatment based on gender – response frequencies*



*Note:* For simplicity, we have combined the responses “the respondent has not encountered this phenomenon” and “the respondent knows nothing about how such phenomena are dealt with in their unit”.

Respondents were given a list of twelve situations relating to employees at the University of Warsaw (Figure 2) and ten relating to students and doctoral students (Figure 3). They were asked to assess each situation, indicating whether, in their opinion, it happened more often to men, women, or both sexes equally.

In the case of persons employed at the University of Warsaw, the respondents most often indicated that men more often than women experience: promotion, better treatment due to gender, encouragement to take on managerial positions in units and research projects, as well as speaking up in discussions during scientific meetings

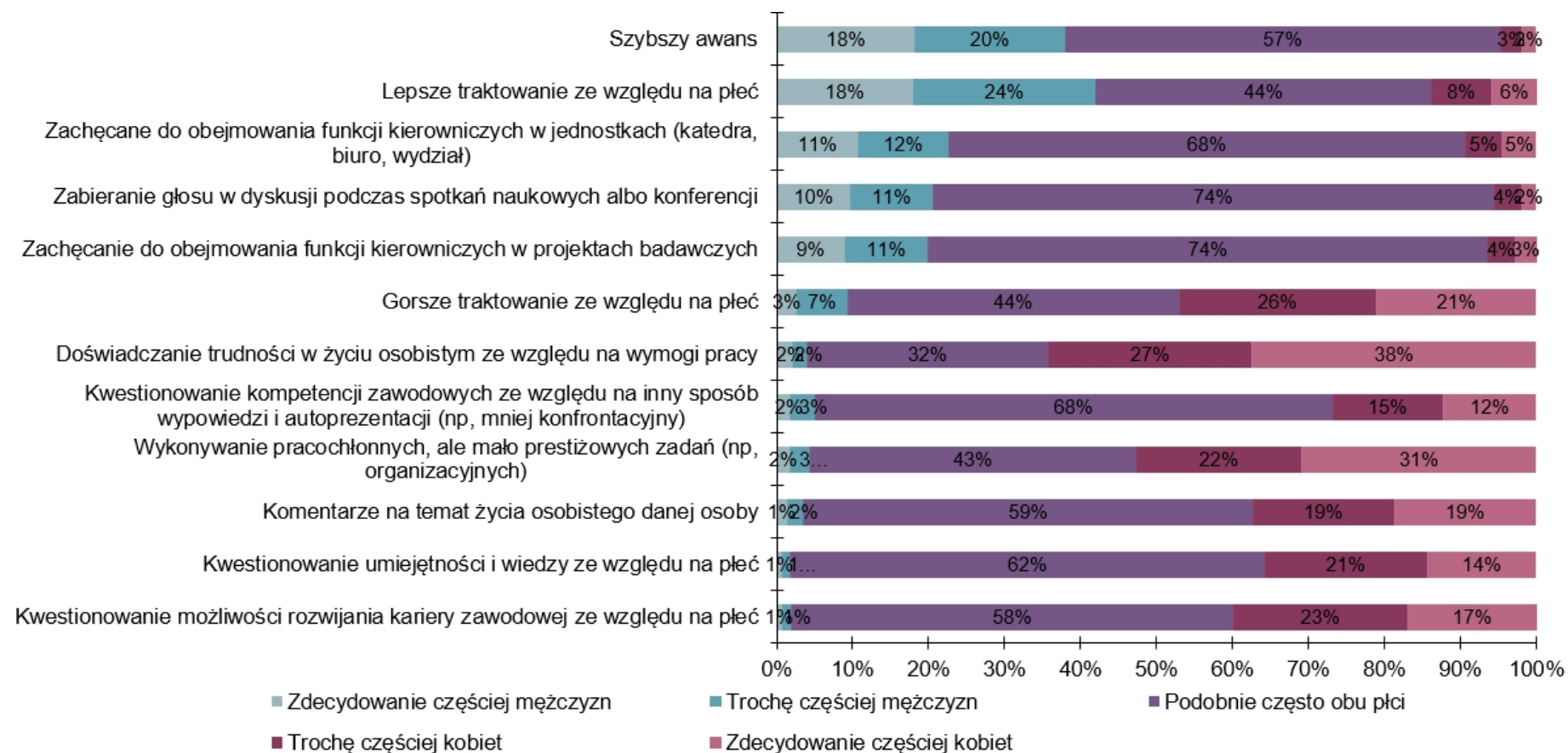
and conferences. Women, on the other hand, were more often perceived as experiencing: questioning of their career development opportunities and competences due to their gender, comments about their personal lives, being assigned laborious but less prestigious tasks (e.g. organisational), as well as difficulties in balancing their personal lives with the demands of work and worse treatment due to their gender.

A similar pattern was observed among undergraduate and doctoral students. Men were more often than women perceived as being treated by lecturers as experts, better evaluated on the basis of their gender, and more likely to speak up during classes and academic meetings. Women, on the other hand, were more often identified as experiencing worse treatment due to their gender, comments about their appearance and personal life, questioning of their competence and opportunities for academic career development, as well as difficulties in balancing their private life with the demands of studying. Importantly, the only area where gender differences were not apparent was in the recognition of students by lecturers.

Interpreting these results, it can be noted that respondents consistently attributed greater opportunities for promotion and recognition in academia to men, and more frequent experiences of barriers, questioning of competence and additional burdens to women. This indicates a persistent perception among respondents of systemic gender inequality in academia, affecting both employees and students or doctoral candidates.

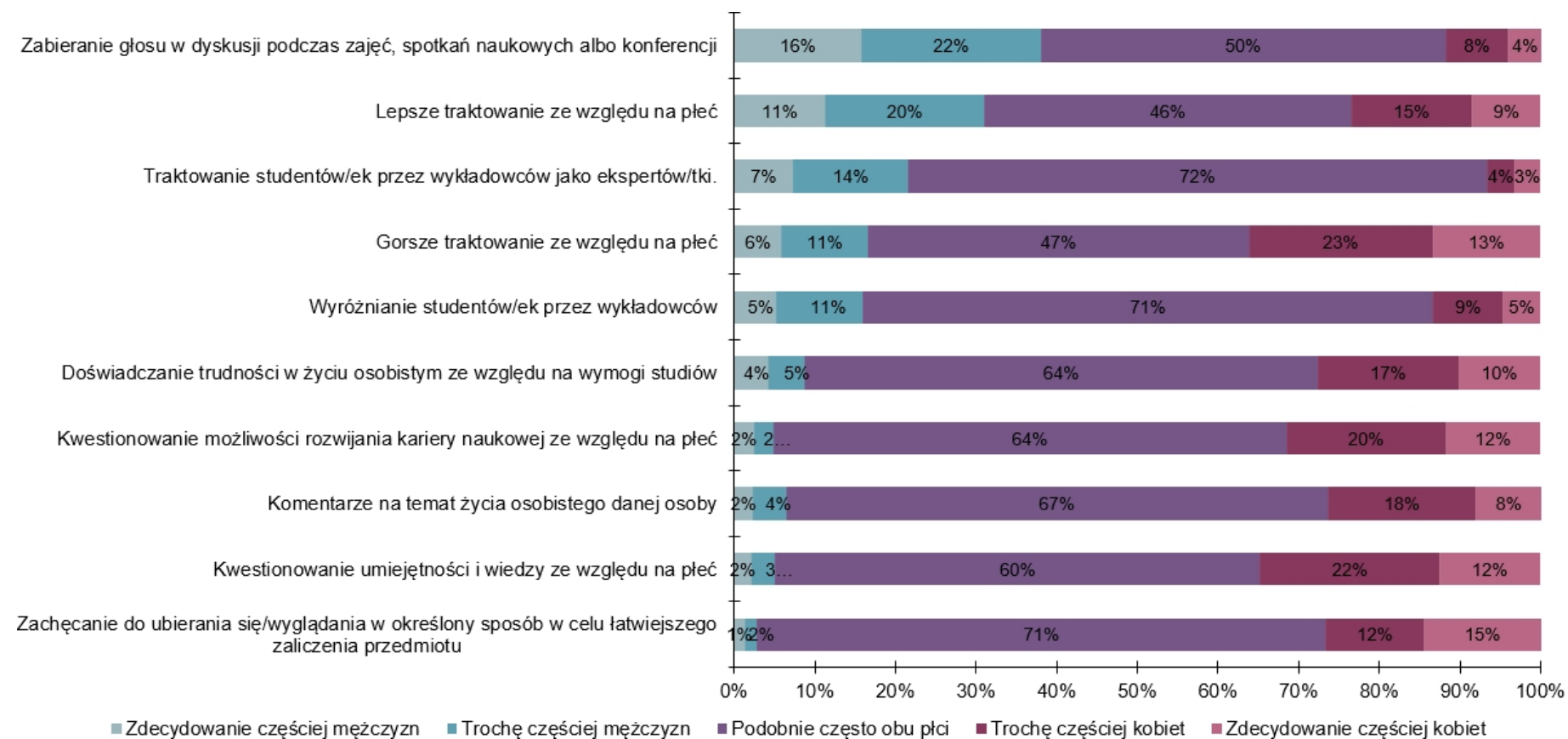
**Figure 2**

*Frequency of situations experienced by male and female employees – response frequencies*



**Figure 3**

*Frequency of situations concerning students and doctoral students - response frequencies*



**Summary: As in the previous edition of the survey, the most Verbal communication in the form of comments and jokes proved to be a widespread form of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw. These mainly concerned character traits stereotypically attributed to women and men and, secondarily, were statements with sexual undertones. What is particularly worrying is that among the most frequently mentioned messages were those about non-binary and transgender people. This item was not included in the previous edition of the study. However, it seems that such statements are becoming a serious problem for the University of Warsaw community.**

## **Unequal treatment based on other characteristics**

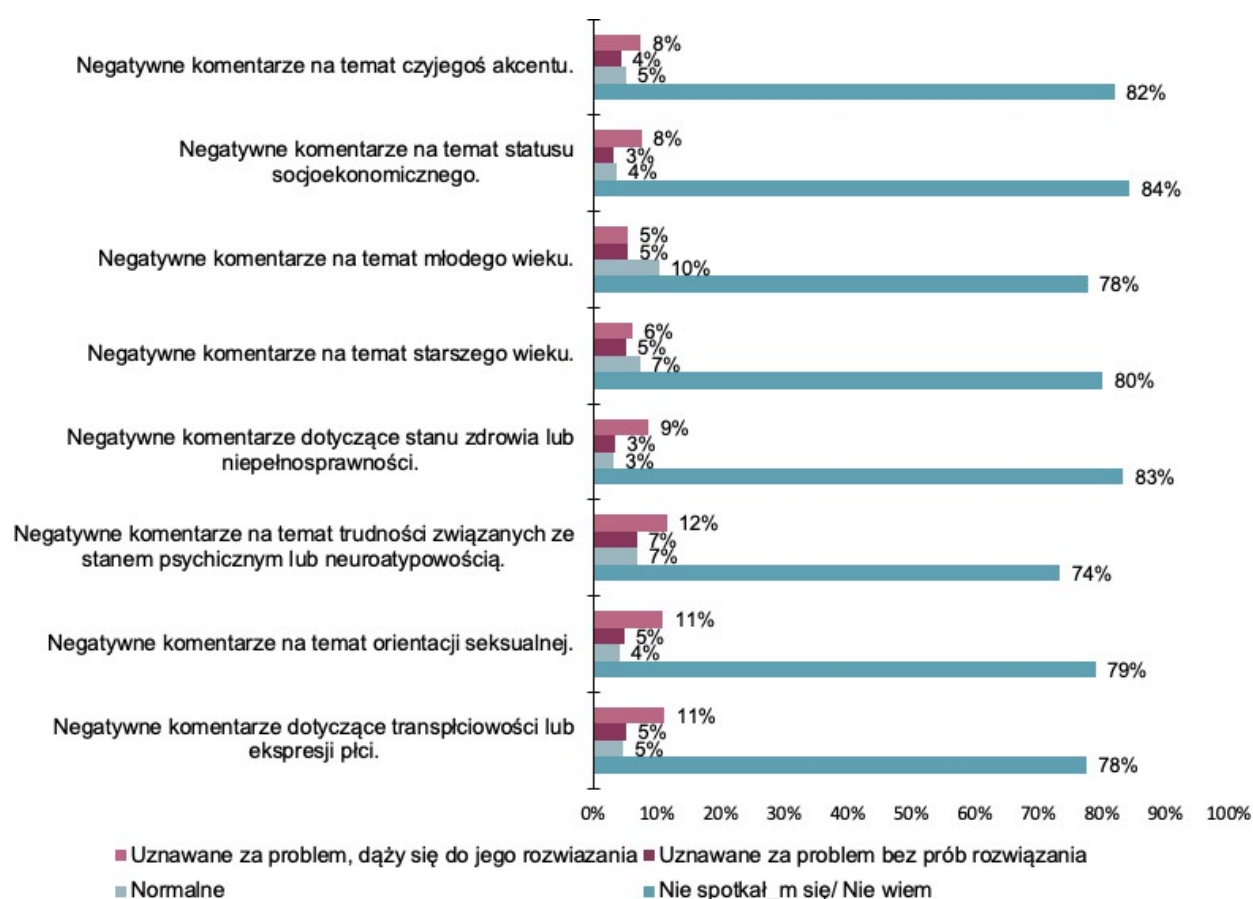
A new element of the survey was a question about the reactions to negative comments concerning characteristics other than gender. Respondents were presented with a list of nine such characteristics. Their task was the same as before when assessing various forms of gender discrimination.

Negative comments about nationality or ethnic origin were identified as a problem that the unit is trying to solve by 467 people (14.5%), as a problem without any attempts to solve it by 225 people (7%), and as something normal by 174 people (5.4%, Figure 4). In second place were negative comments about difficulties related to mental health or neuroatypicality – 373 people (11.6%) rated them as a problem that is being addressed, 220 people (6.8%) as a problem that is not being addressed, and 224 people (6.9%) – as something normal. In third place were negative comments about transgenderism or gender expression – these were indicated by 363 (11.2%), 168 (5.2%) and 152 (4.7%) people, respectively.

Negative comments about socio-economic status were indicated by the largest number of respondents, 2,475 (76.7%), as those they had never encountered, while 248 people (7.7%) knew nothing about how to deal with such comments. Negative comments about health or disability were never encountered by 2,451 respondents (75.9%), and 243 (7.5%) did not know how to deal with them. Negative comments about someone's accent were also uncommon – 2,399 people (74.3%) had not encountered them and 248 (7.7%) did not know how to deal with them. Between 29 and 41 people (0.9% - 1.3%) did not answer the questions in this and the previous part of the survey.

**Figure 4**

*Prevalence of unequal treatment based on other characteristics – frequency of responses*



**Summary:** The most frequently reported negative comments concerning characteristics other than gender that the respondents encountered in their units were negative comments about nationality or ethnic origin, mental health or neuroatypicality, and transgender status or gender expression. It can be noted that in this question, once again, members of the LGBT+ minority were identified as the target of negative messages. The addition of new questions in this section of the survey therefore provided important information on forms of unequal treatment based on various characteristics of individuals in the UW community. These questions should be included also in subsequent editions of the survey, as they draw attention to which groups are most vulnerable to everyday discrimination and, therefore, which groups may be most in need of protection in the context of functioning at the University of Warsaw. Additionally, consideration could be given to including transgender as a response option in the demographic question about gender. In the current version, we have included a simplified binary gender division and non-binary, thus ignoring the fact that transgender people may not consider themselves to belong to these categories.

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## Perpetrators, victims and the context of unequal treatment

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### Gender and cases of unequal treatment

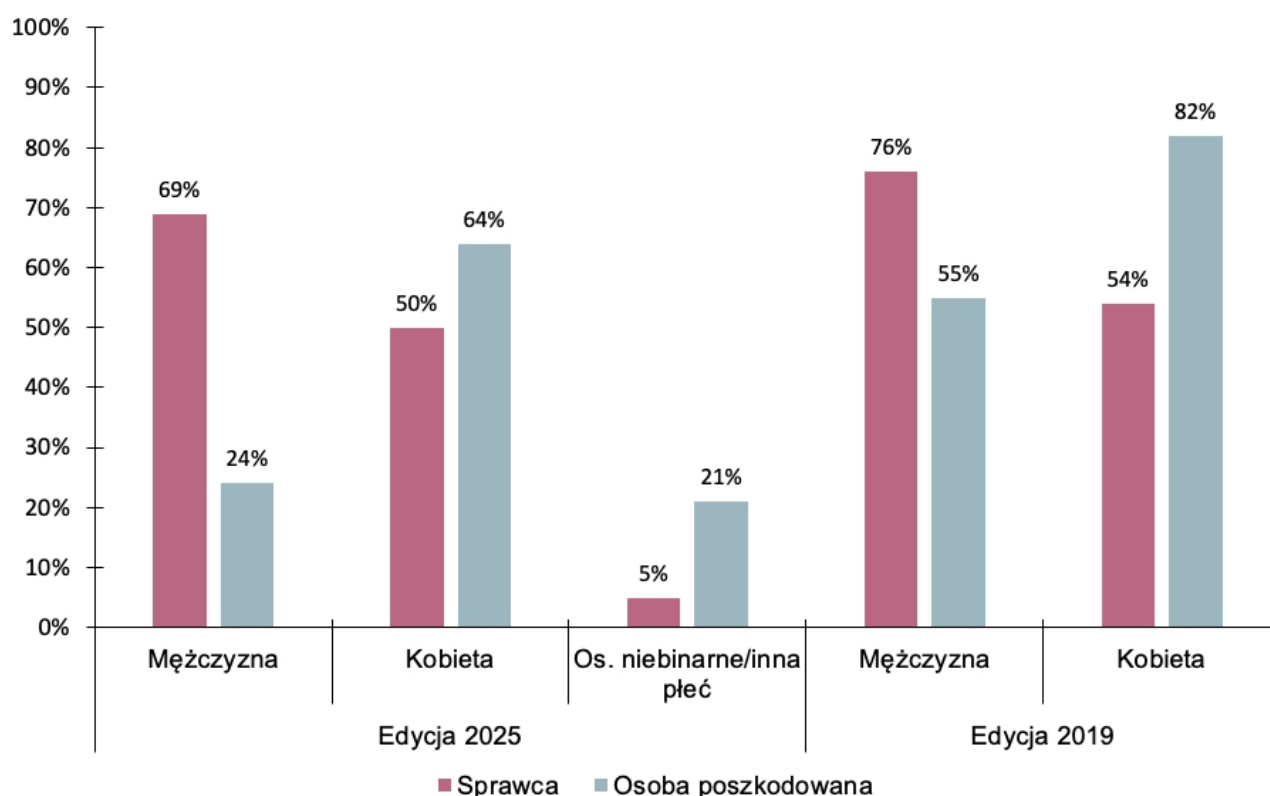
As part of the survey, we also asked respondents who they most often perceive as perpetrators and victims of unequal treatment. Since respondents could indicate more than one category, the percentages of responses do not add up to 100%. The data shows that 69% of respondents indicated men as the more frequent perpetrators of unequal treatment (Figure 5). In comparison, 50% of respondents



respondents indicated women as perpetrators of such actions. While the majority of respondents (64%) identified women as the most frequent victims of unequal treatment, a smaller proportion of respondents (24%) identified men as victims of this phenomenon. In addition, it is worth noting that people of other genders and non-binary people also experience unequal treatment. Our data shows that 21% of respondents considered non-binary/other gender people to be experiencing unequal treatment, while 5% identified them as perpetrators.

**Figure 5**

*Gender of persons committing and experiencing unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw – frequency of responses*



The responses were also analysed by different groups. The difference in how often men and women were identified as perpetrators was smallest among people working in administration, libraries and technical services. In this group, women and men were identified as perpetrators with similar frequency, which may reflect

the unique dynamics in these work environments. The difference was greatest among students, doctoral students and those working in research and teaching - these individuals reported significantly more cases in which women were the victims than men.

Compared to 2019, in 2024 men were still more often perceived as perpetrators of unequal treatment. Comparisons between editions of the survey must be approached with great caution. The fact that this difference decreased from 76% to 69% may be due to a change in the situation or to the fact that in the latest edition, the percentage of students fell significantly, and these are people who are more likely to consider women as victims and less likely to consider them as perpetrators. Similarly, women were also less likely to be identified as victims (from 82% to 64%), and fewer people identified men as victims (from 55% to 24%), but it is difficult to separate the influence of time and the composition of the sample here. A new feature in 2024 was the inclusion of non-binary and other gender individuals – 21% of respondents considered them to be victims, 5% considered them to be perpetrators. In both studies, the differences in the perception of the gender of perpetrators were smallest among administrative, library and technical staff.

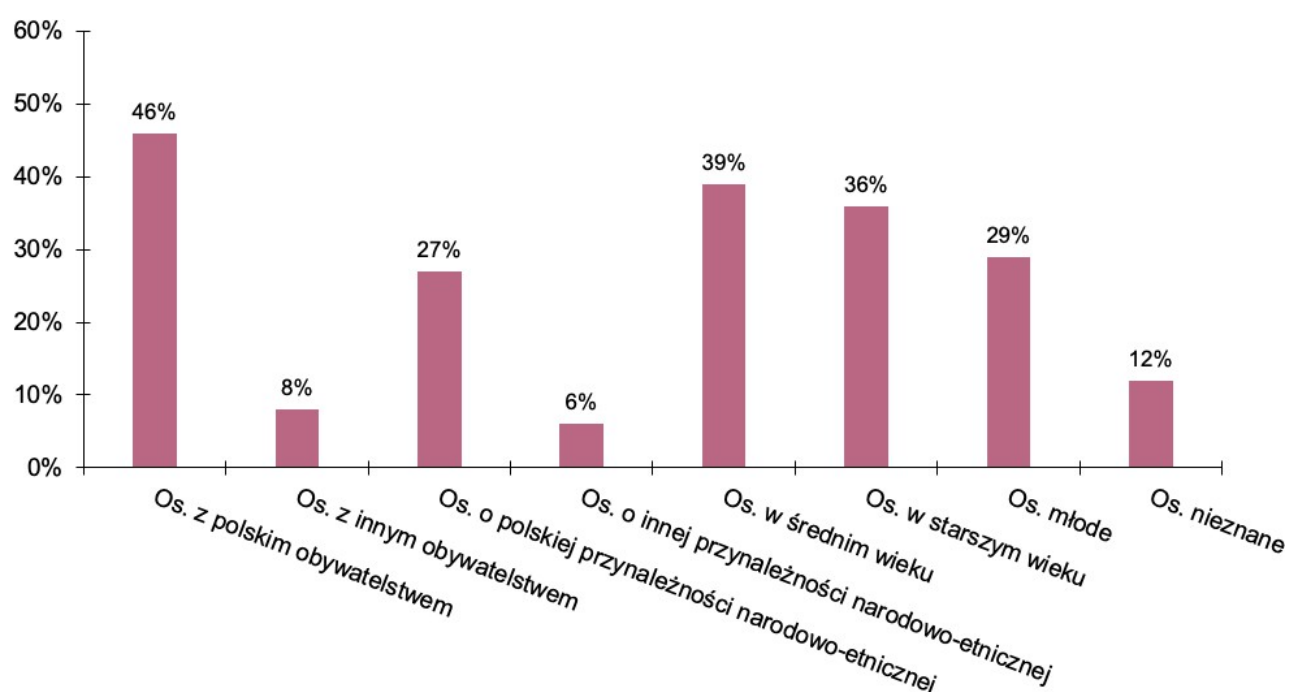
**Summary: The results of the 2024 survey show that men are still perceived as the most common perpetrators of unequal treatment. Women are still most often identified as victims. For the first time, non-binary and other gendered individuals were also included, who, according to respondents, experience unequal treatment, and are less often perceived as perpetrators. There remain slight differences in the perception of the gender of perpetrators among people working in administration, libraries and technical services, where men and women are identified as perpetrators with similar frequency. In view of the survey results, it is recommended that educational activities in the field of equal treatment, with particular emphasis on gender and identity diversity.**

## Other characteristics of perpetrators and experiencing unequal treatment

In the study, we also asked participants to identify characteristics other than gender of people who perpetrate and experience unequal treatment (Figures 6–13). We also analysed differences in responses between groups separated by gender.

**Figure 6**

*Who perpetrates unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses*



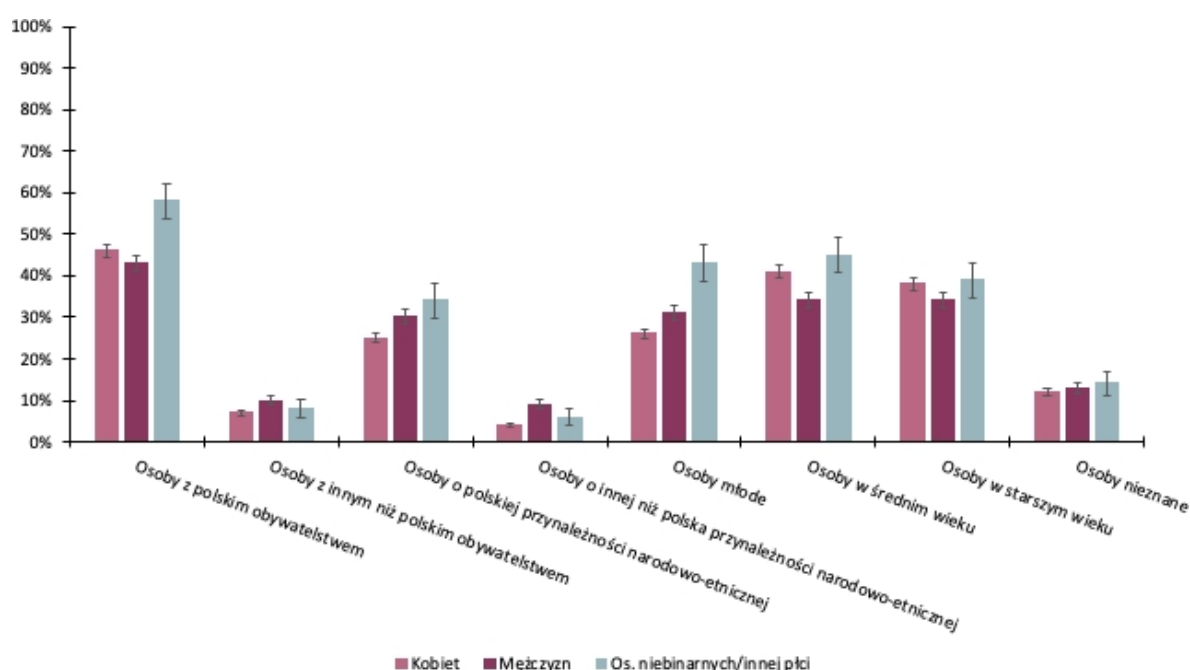
*Note:* The percentages add up to more than 100% because it was possible to select more than one answer at a time.

The group most frequently indicated as perpetrators of unequal treatment were people with Polish citizenship (46%), and the least frequently were people with other citizenship (8%) and other national and ethnic affiliations (6%, Figure 6). It can be observed that people from different gender groups emphasise different dimensions of potential inequality: non-binary people and

women draw attention to issues of age and related limitations, while men focus on citizenship and national-ethnic affiliation (Figure 7). This indicates that the perception of inequality is not uniform, but is conditioned by gender and personal social experience, which is important when designing equality measures.

**Figure 7**

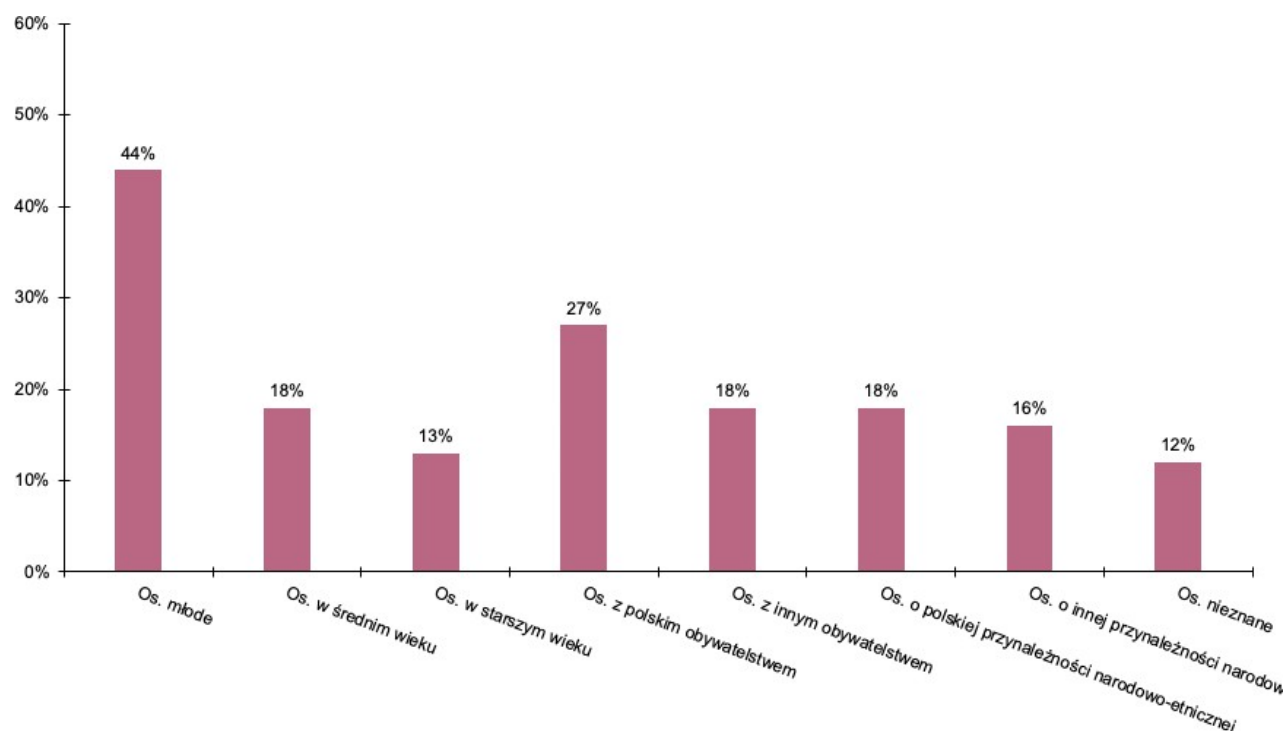
*Who is responsible for unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses by gender of participants*



The group most frequently indicated as experiencing unequal treatment were young people (44%), and the least frequently were older people (13%) and unknown persons (12%, Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

*Who experiences unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw – frequency of responses*

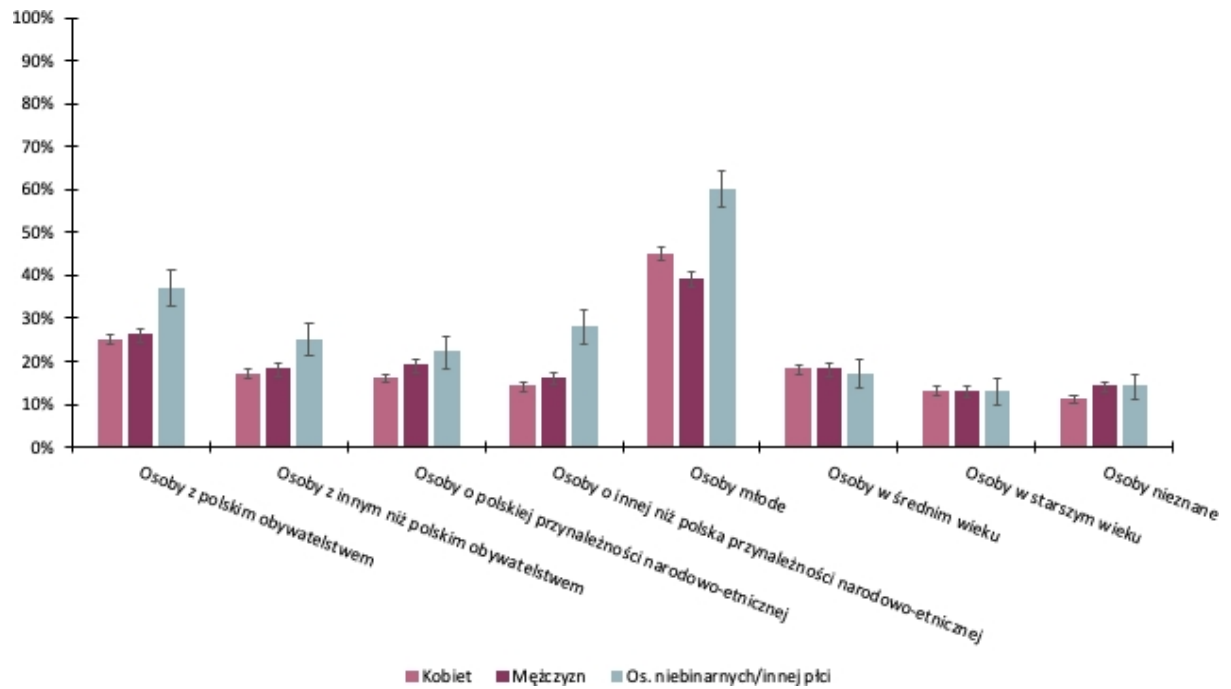


*Note:* The percentages add up to more than 100% because it was possible to select more than one answer at a time.

The results indicate that non-binary/other gender persons more often than women and men perceived unequal treatment as affecting both Polish citizens and foreigners, people of non-Polish nationality and ethnicity, and young people (Figure 9). This may suggest that their perspective is more comprehensive and encompasses many dimensions of potential discrimination – related to legal status, national and ethnic origin, and age. Women, on the other hand, were more likely than men to indicate young people, which may reflect greater sensitivity to inequalities resulting from position in the age hierarchy and the associated limitations. Men, on the other hand, were more likely than women to point to people of Polish national and ethnic origin and unknown persons, which can be interpreted as a tendency to focus on majority categories and those outside their own group.

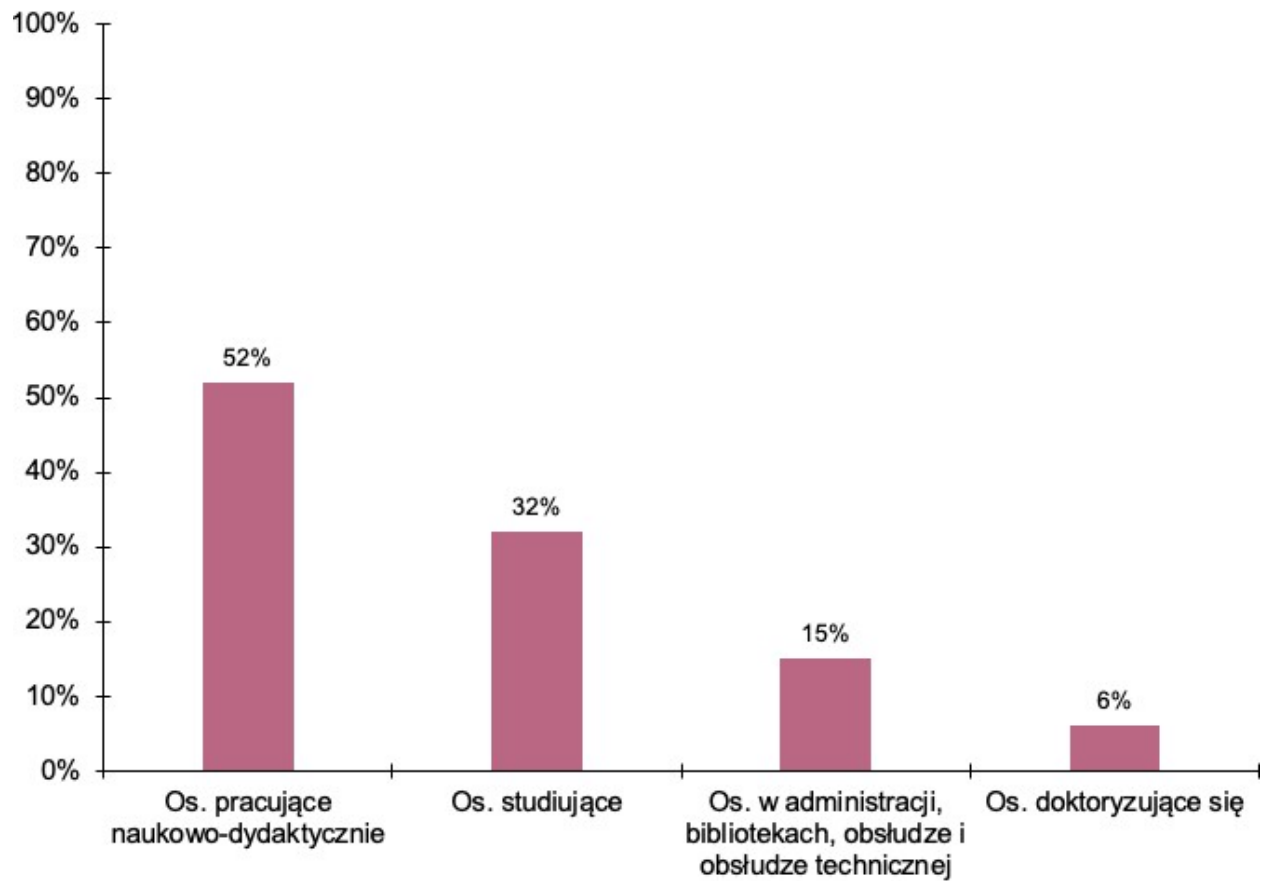
**Figure 9**

*Who experiences unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses by gender of participants*



**Figure 10**

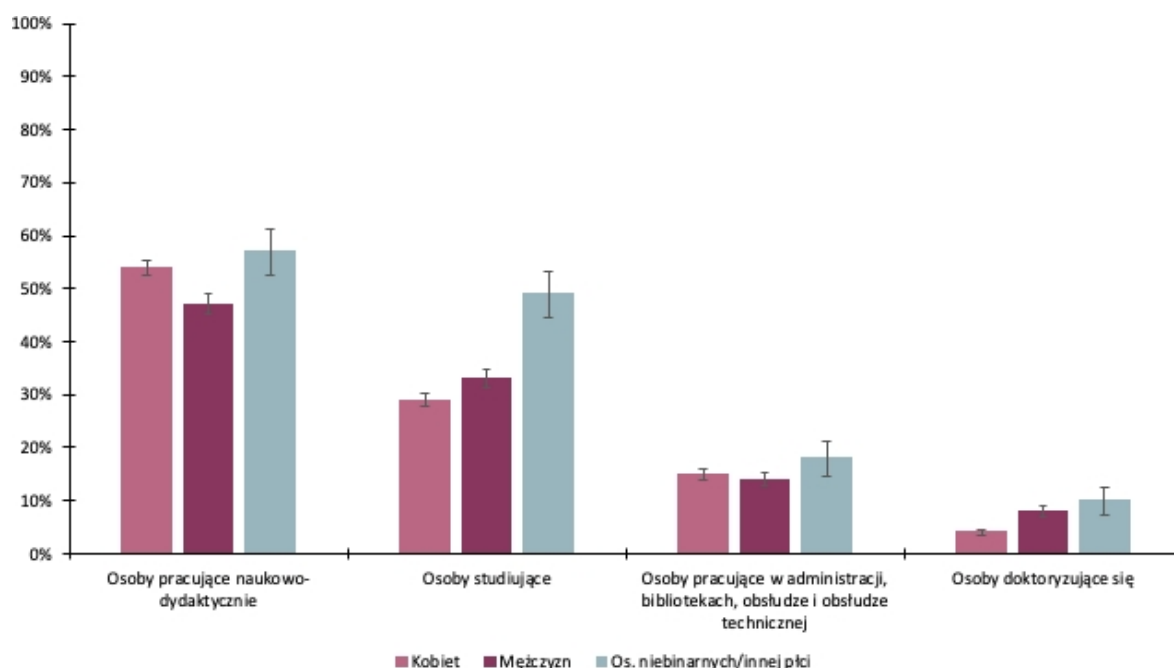
*Which groups are responsible for unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses*



Among working and studying groups, doctoral students were the least frequently indicated group both as perpetrators (6%) and victims (13%).

**Figure 11**

*Which groups are responsible for unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses by gender of participants*



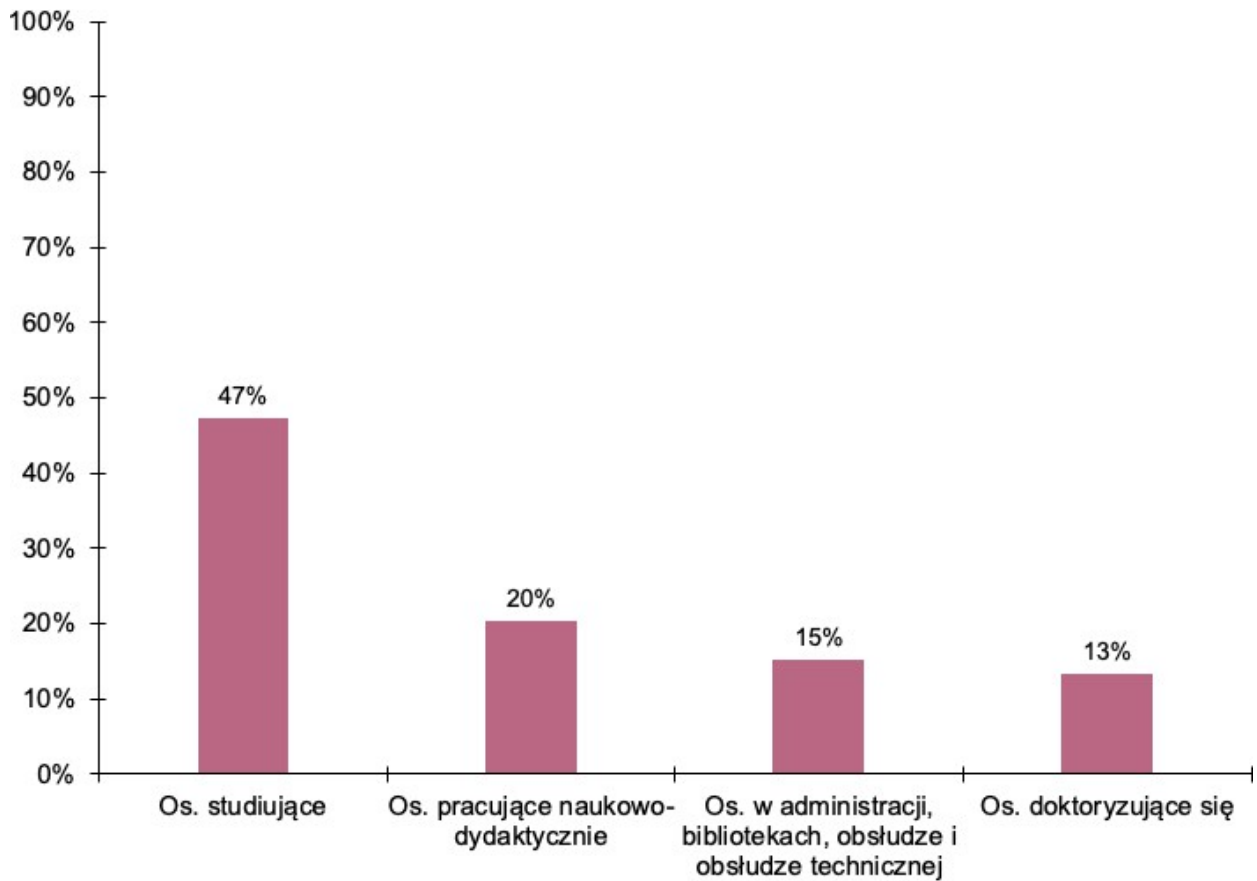
The analysis indicates that the respondents did not differ significantly in terms of gender in identifying the perpetrators of unequal treatment (Figure 11). Women were more likely than men to perceive the perpetrators as being among those working in research and teaching, while men were more likely than women to identify students and doctoral students.

These results suggest a subtle difference in the perception of the sources of inequality – women more often emphasise the role of academic staff, while men, who statistically more often play the role of perpetrators, more often shift this responsibility to students and doctoral students. It is worth noting, however, that the group of non-binary/other gender individuals was relatively small, and the results obtained in their case were characterised by greater variability, which limits the possibility of unambiguous interpretation.



**Figure 12**

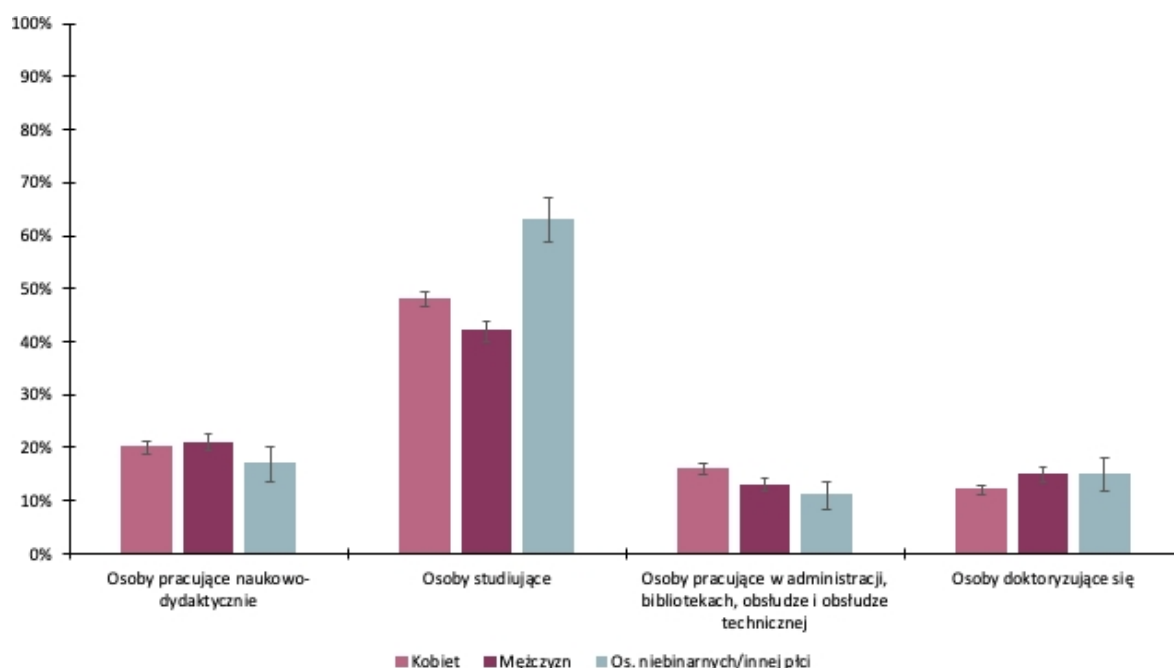
*Which groups experience unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses*



Women were more likely than men to indicate that students experience unequal treatment (Figure 13). This may indicate that women are more sensitive to the situation of people lower down in the academic hierarchy, who are therefore more vulnerable to dependence on teaching staff and institutional assessment mechanisms. However, the difference was not significant, which suggests that there are differences in the perception of inequality rather than clearly divergent views of the situation.

**Figure 13**

*Which groups experience unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw? Frequency of responses by gender*

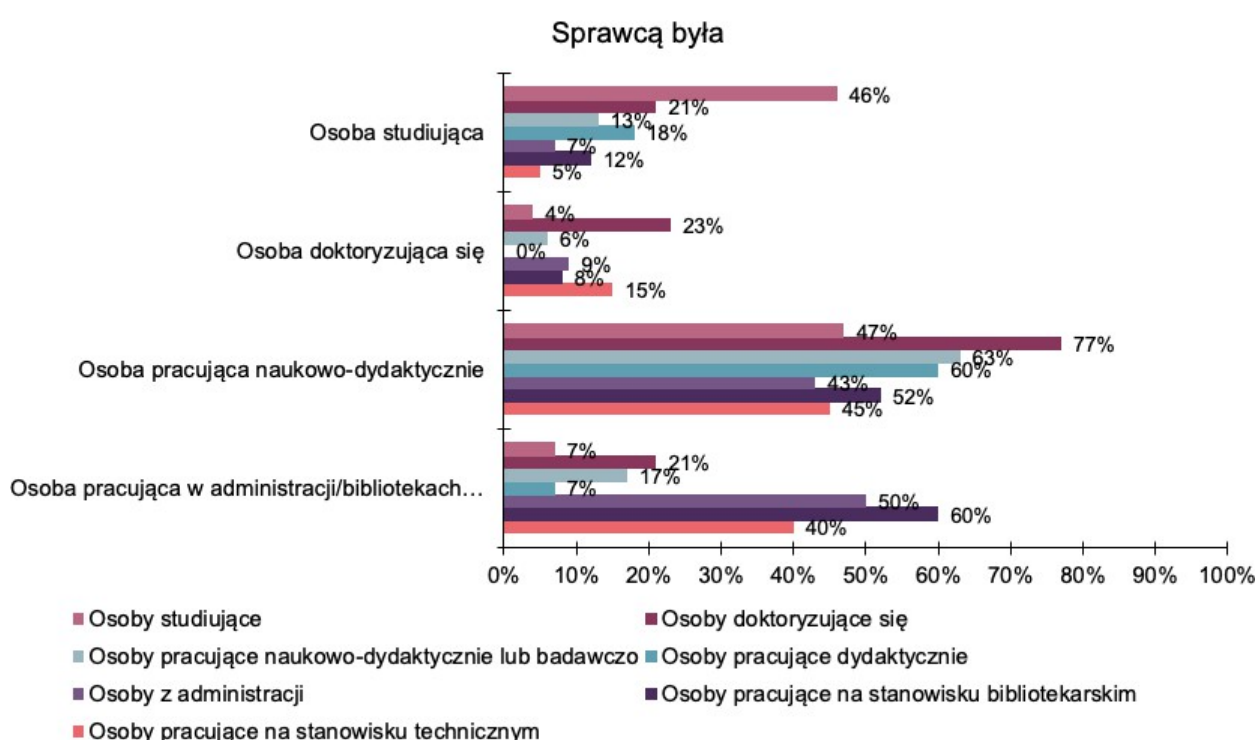


An analysis of the respondents' answers made it possible to identify how different professional groups in the academic community perceive the perpetrators of unequal treatment (Figure 14). The answers of individual professional and academic groups showed similar patterns in identifying the perpetrators of unequal treatment. People working in technical positions, in libraries or administration, as well as teaching and research staff, most often identified perpetrators within their own group and among research and teaching staff. Students and doctoral students were identified less frequently. Doctoral students particularly often pointed to researchers (77%), which may reflect their direct experiences in the academic environment, and also, to a lesser extent, to their own group, students and the administration. In turn, students perceived academic staff (47%) and their own group (46%) as perpetrators in almost equal measure.

In summary, despite some differences between categories, a clear pattern emerges from the responses: individual groups often attribute responsibility for unequal treatment to others, but at the same time they also recognise perpetrators among their own ranks. This suggests that the experience of inequality is not located solely in external groups, but is also recognised as a problem within one's own environment.

**Figure 14**

*Perpetrators of unequal treatment – responses from individual groups of employees and students*

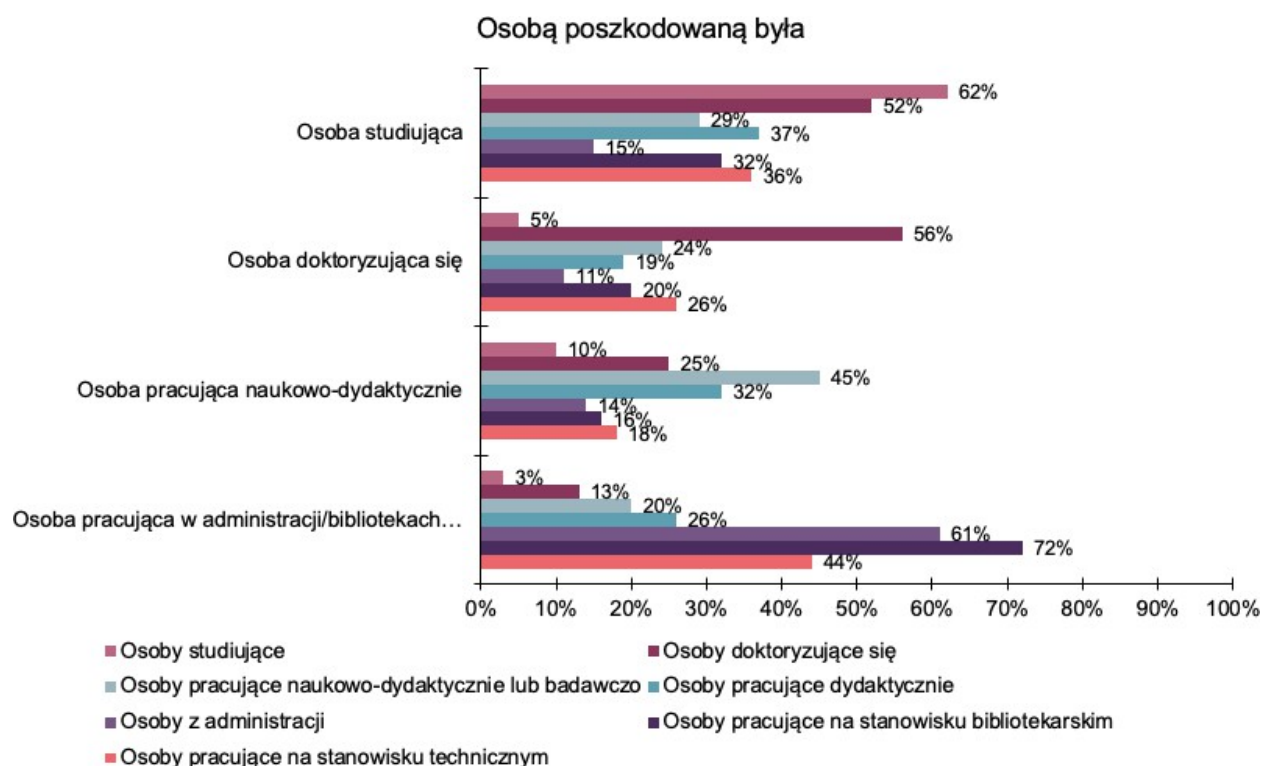


An analysis of responses concerning the perception of people experiencing unequal treatment in various professional groups in the academic environment revealed that each group most often perceives itself as the most disadvantaged (Figure 15). Those working in technical positions most often identified their own group as disadvantaged (44%), followed by students (36%). Doctoral students (26%) and researchers (18%) were less often identified as experiencing unequal treatment

treatment. Library employees also most often indicated their own group (72%) as disadvantaged, but also noted unequal treatment of students (32%). Research and teaching staff (16%) and doctoral students (20%) were identified less frequently. Among those working in administration, the most frequently identified disadvantaged group was their own (61%), followed much less frequently by students (15%), doctoral students (11%) and researchers (14%). Teaching staff considered students (37%) and themselves (32%) to be the most disadvantaged. Doctoral students (19%) and administrative staff (26%) were less frequently perceived as disadvantaged. Those working in research and teaching or research most often identified their own group as disadvantaged (45%), as well as students (29%). They were less likely to recognise the problems of doctoral students (24%) and administration staff (20%). Doctoral students most often identified themselves as experiencing unequal treatment (56%), as well as students (52%). They were much less likely to point to academic and teaching staff (25%) and administrative staff (13%). Students most often perceived themselves as the most disadvantaged group (62%), while they were less likely to perceive unequal treatment of academic and teaching staff (10%), doctoral students (5%) and administrative staff (3%). Perceiving themselves as the most disadvantaged may suggest a strong sense of injustice within each academic group. At the same time, these groups often identify their own category as perpetrators of unequal treatment, which may indicate internal tensions and conflicts.

**Figure 15**

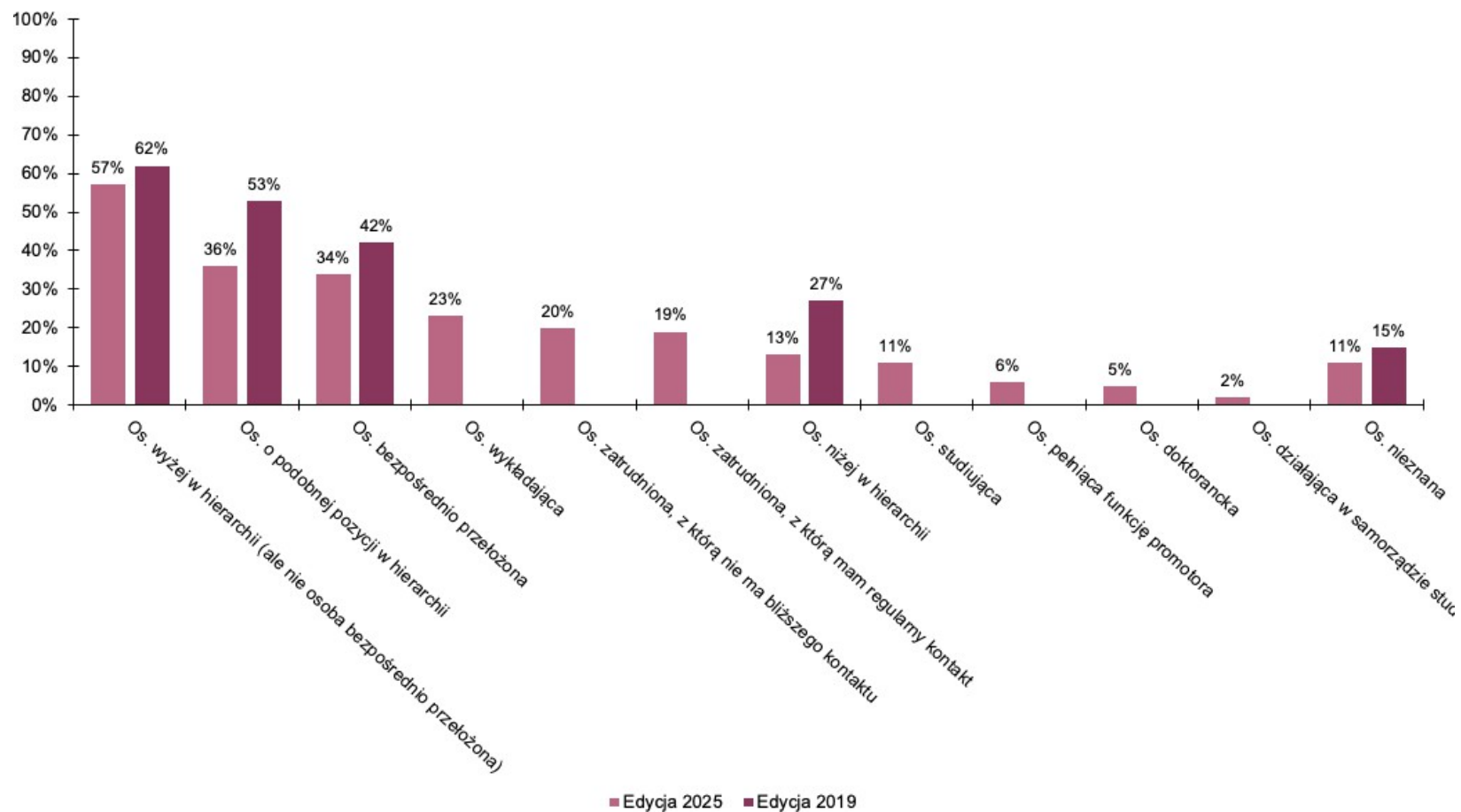
*Victims of unequal treatment – responses of individual groups of employees and students*



We also asked respondents who the perpetrator of unequal treatment was for the victim. We divided the answers into two groups: those from people working and those from people studying at the University of Warsaw. Among those working at the University of Warsaw (Figure 16), the largest number of respondents (57%) indicated persons higher up in the organisational hierarchy but not directly supervising them. This was also the most common response in the first edition in 2019 (62%). People with a similar position in the hierarchy were indicated by 36% of respondents (53% in 2019), while direct supervisors were identified as perpetrators by 34% of participants (42% in 2019). Lecturers were indicated as perpetrators by 23% of respondents.

**Figure 16**

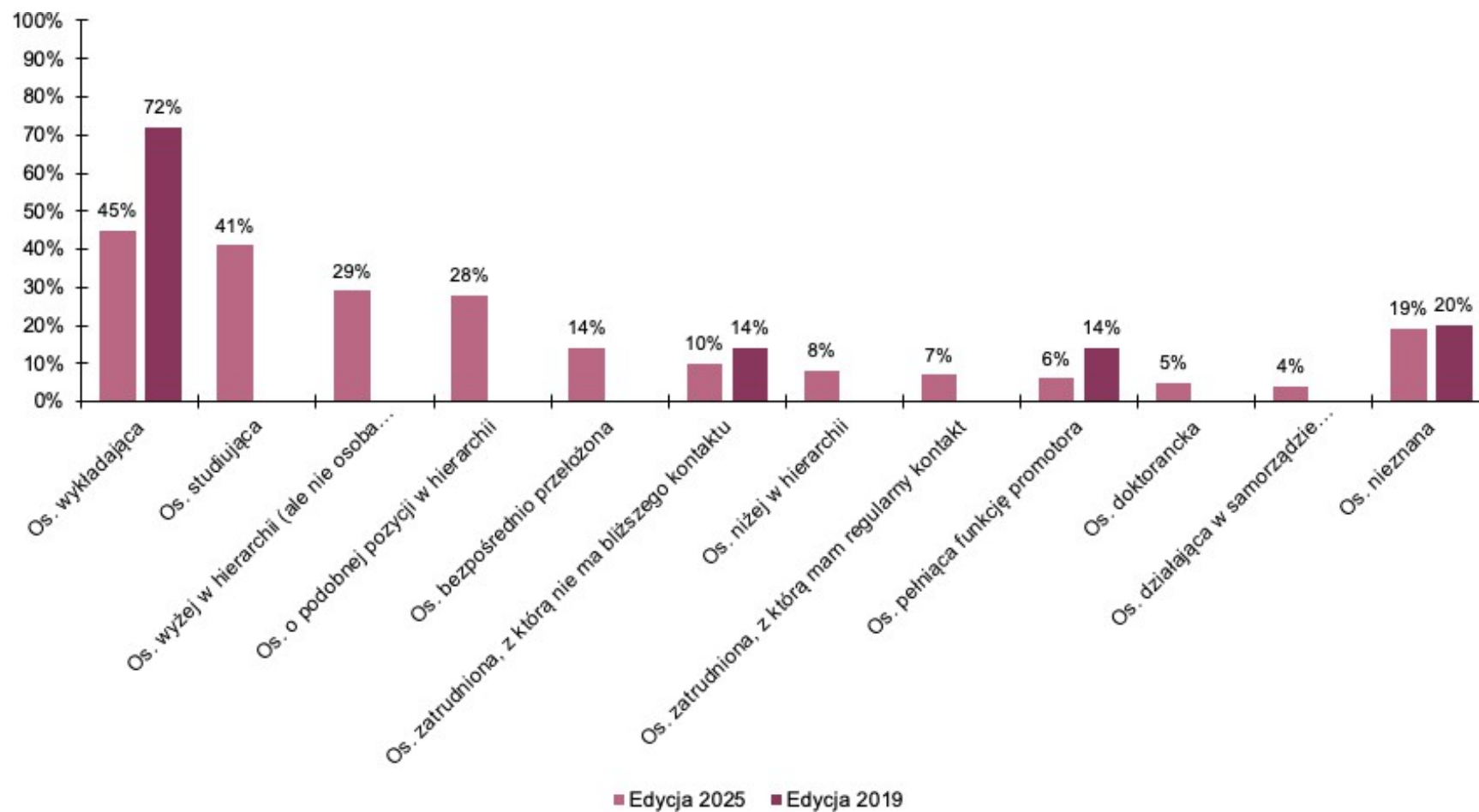
*Who was the perpetrator of unequal treatment for the victim? Frequency of responses from UW employees*



Students (Figure 17) most often identified lecturers as perpetrators (45%; 72% in 2019). Another group often identified as perpetrators were fellow students (41%). Persons higher up in the organisational hierarchy but not directly supervising the victim were identified as perpetrators by 29% of respondents. Persons with a similar position in the hierarchy were identified as perpetrators of unequal treatment by 28% of survey participants.

**Figure 17**

*Who was the perpetrator of unequal treatment for the victim? Frequency of responses from UW students*





**Summary: Analysis of the responses indicates that the perpetrators of unequal treatment are most often persons with Polish citizenship, often middle-aged or older, employed in scientific and research positions. In turn, those experiencing this phenomenon were indicated as were mostly students, who are characterised by their young age.**

**The results suggest that academic hierarchy and power relations are key factors influencing unequal treatment, but the problem also occurs within professional groups and in relations between students.**

**This means that counteracting this phenomenon should include both regulations at the level of superior-subordinate relations and integration activities in groups of equal status.**

## **The situational context of unequal treatment**

In the next part of the survey, we asked respondents about places where unequal treatment occurred (Figures 18-20). As different professional groups may have very different experiences in this regard, we analysed the responses separately for each group. Students and doctoral students most often indicated classes as the place where they experienced unequal treatment, which confirms the central role of classrooms in everyday academic life. In addition, doctoral students also indicated office spaces. The space in front of the faculty building, corridors and cafeterias were also frequently mentioned by both groups, which may indicate that incidents occur not only during formal classes, but also in informal interactions.

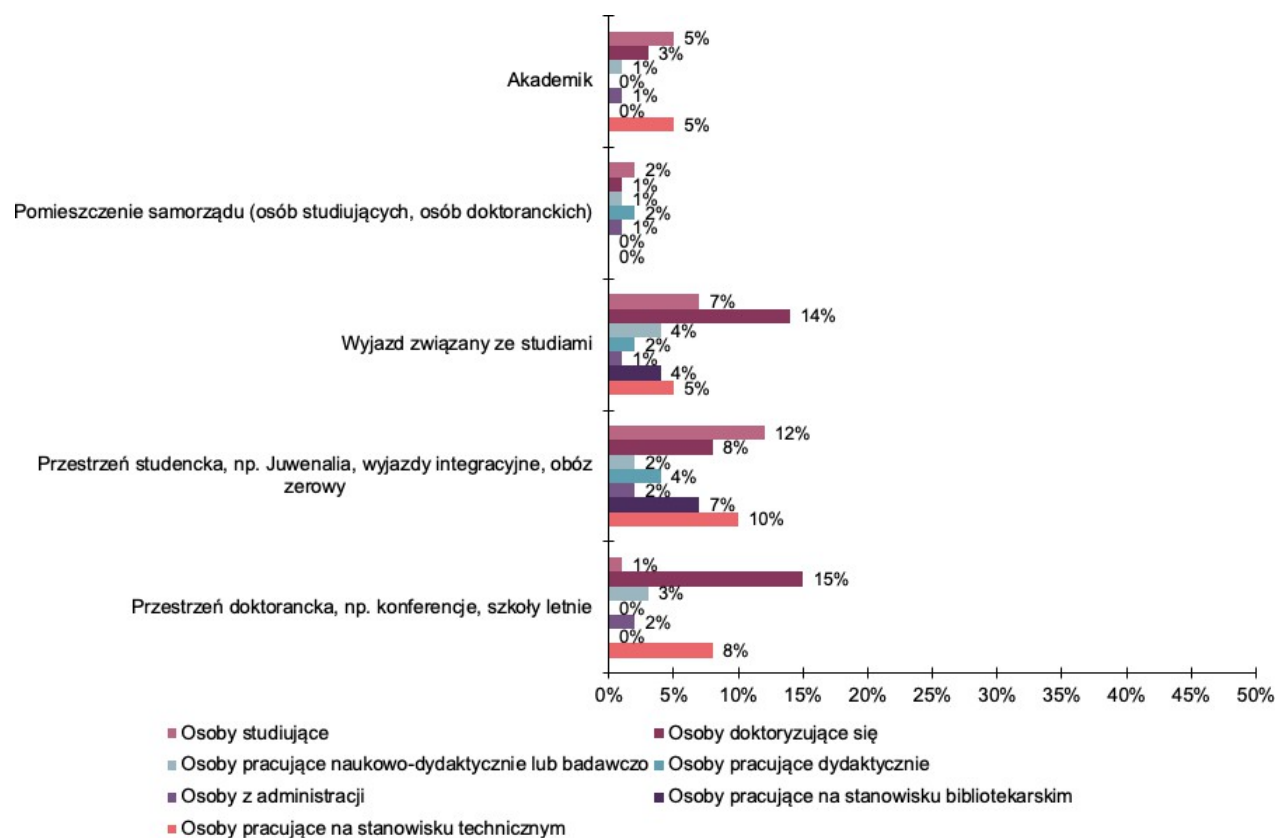
Among those working in teaching, research and academic positions, the locations indicated were more diverse: corridors, cafeterias, staff rooms and classes.

A similar pattern emerged among teaching staff, who, in addition to staff rooms and corridors, also indicated academic office hours as situations fraught with the risk of inequality. Those employed in administration and libraries most often indicated staff rooms as a space where they experienced unequal treatment. Finally, technical staff also most often indicated staff rooms, followed by corridors and cafeterias.

In summary, all groups tend to most often indicate places that are central to their daily activities – classrooms for students and doctoral students, libraries and offices for librarians and administrators, and offices for technical and teaching staff. This shows that unequal treatment is perceived not as an incidental phenomenon, but as something potentially inherent in everyday work and study spaces.

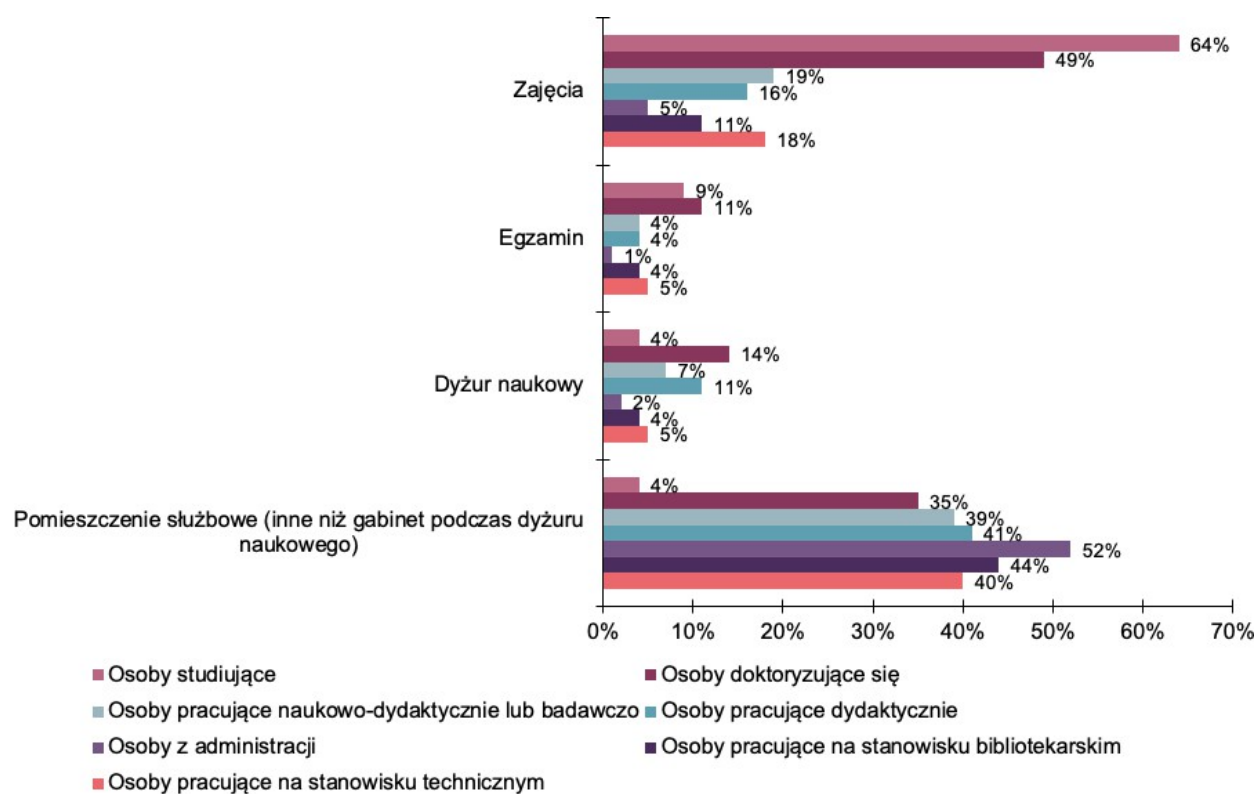
**Figure 18**

*Where/in what situation did the unequal treatment occur? Frequency of responses from individual professional groups regarding student and doctoral spaces*



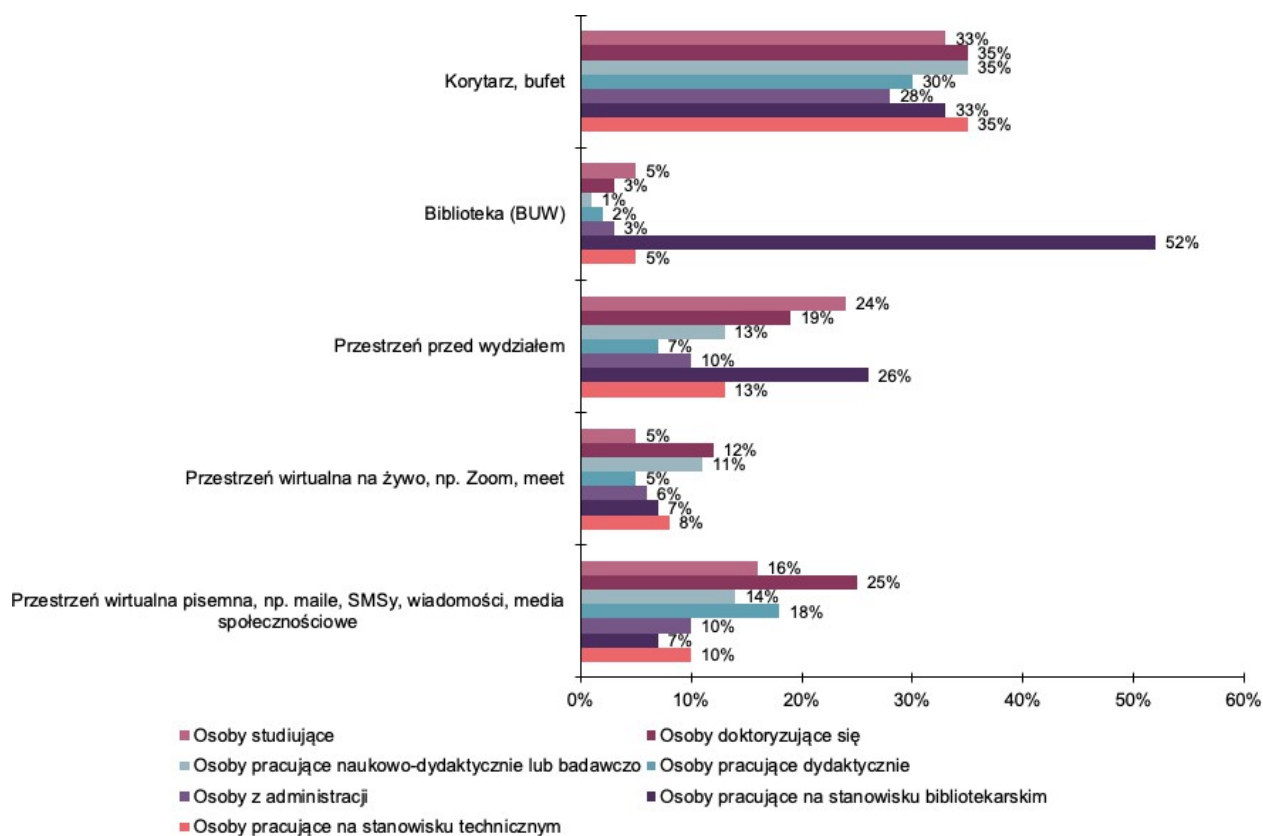
**Figure 19**

*Where/in what situation did the unequal treatment occur? Frequency of responses from individual professional groups regarding teaching and research spaces*



**Figure 20**

*Where/in what situation did the unequal treatment occur? Frequency of responses from individual professional groups regarding common areas*



**Summary:** Based on the above results concerning the situational context of unequal treatment, it can be concluded that the places where unequal treatment occurs in the academic environment are strongly related to the daily activities of individual groups – students and doctoral students pointed to classrooms, librarians and administrative staff to the library and offices, and technical and teaching staff to staff rooms. This suggests that the experience of unequal treatment is not perceived as a single incident, but as an element inherent in the everyday work and study environment.

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# Responding to cases of unequal treatment

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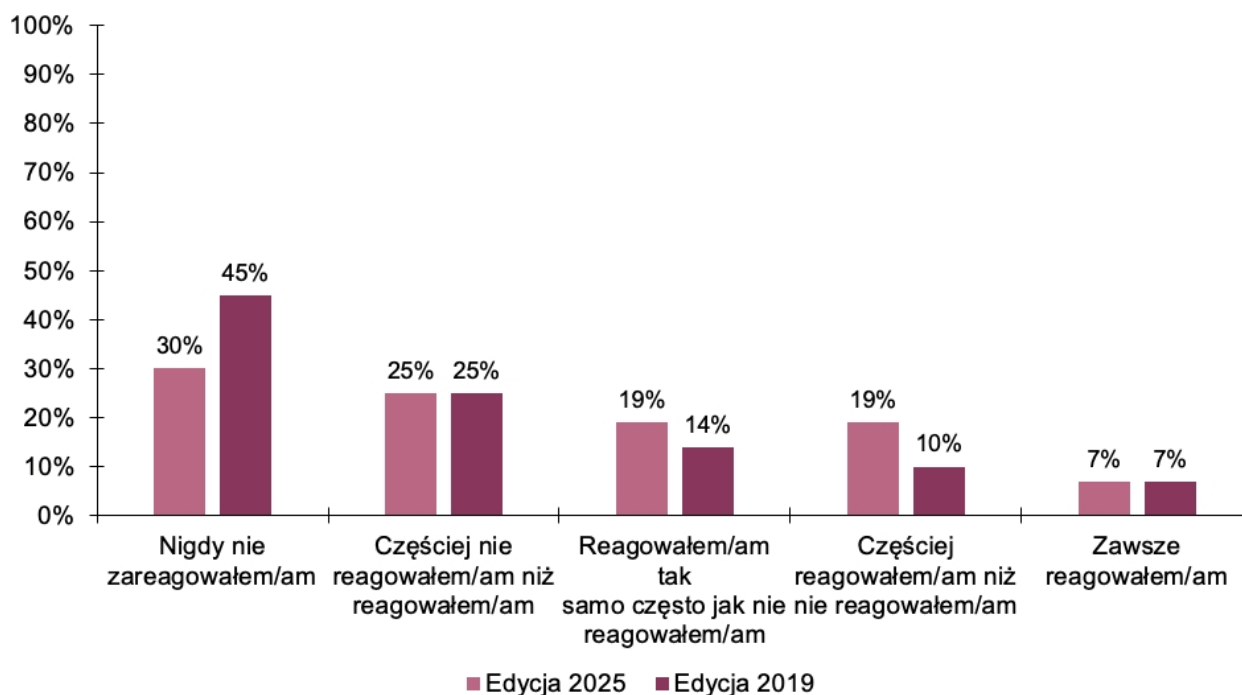
In this section of the report, we will focus on analysing the reactions of people working and studying at the University of Warsaw to situations of unequal treatment. Participants in the study were asked questions about the frequency of their responses to such situations, the types of actions taken, and the reasons for not responding. The analysis takes into account both the overall frequency of responses and additional analyses broken down into specific groups associated with the University of Warsaw. The aim was to understand how different groups react to situations of inequality and what factors may be associated with a lack of reaction. Questions about reactions to unequal treatment included both direct reactions and those that could be observed by other members of the university community.

## Frequency of responses to unequal treatment

Questions about the frequency of responses to acts of unequal treatment were asked to respondents who reported experiencing at least one such situation ( $N = 2111$ ). At the beginning, the respondents were asked to recall situations of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw that they had witnessed or experienced themselves. Respondents were then asked to answer questions about the frequency of their reactions to these behaviours using the following responses: "I never reacted", "I reacted less often than I did not react", "I reacted as often as I did not react", "I reacted more often than I did not react" and "I always reacted". We also compare the answers to those from the previous edition, bearing in mind, however, that in the current edition the number and percentage of people studying at the University of Warsaw is smaller.

**Figure 21**

*Frequency of responding to unequal treatment – response frequencies*



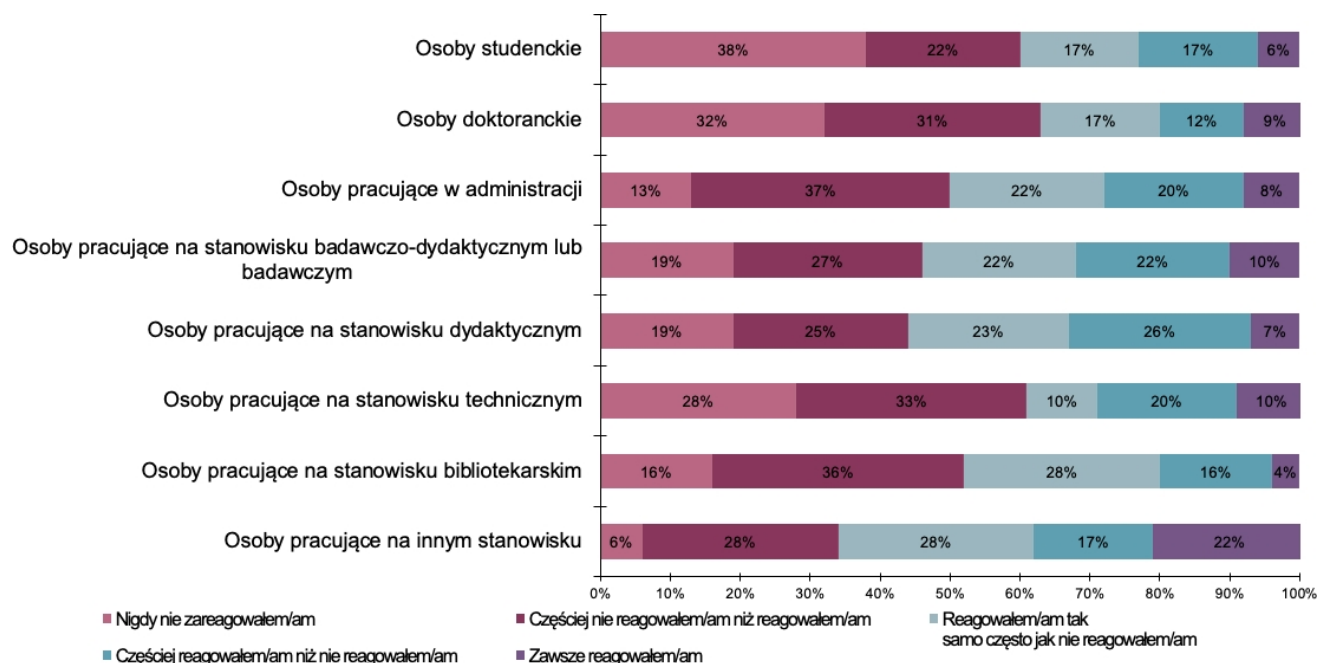
Nearly one-third (30%; 45% in 2019) of respondents declared that they had never attempted to counteract situations of unequal treatment (Figure 21). A quarter, or 25% (the same as in 2019), were more likely to remain passive than to take any action. The percentage of people who reacted as often as they did not react to such situations was 19% (14% in 2019). The same percentage of people reacted more often than remained passive (10% in 2019). Only 7% of respondents (the same as in 2019) indicated that they always intervened in situations of unequal treatment.

An additional analysis examined the frequency of responding to situations of unequal treatment among various professional groups associated with the University of Warsaw. The analysis covered students, doctoral students, people working in administrative positions, people working in research and teaching or research positions, people working in teaching positions, people working in technical positions, people

working in library positions, and persons working in other positions (Figure 21).

**Figure 22**

*Frequency of responses to unequal treatment – frequency of responses by professional group*



The least frequent responses to acts of unequal treatment (answer: never) were given by students (38%) and doctoral students (32%). In third place were persons working in technical positions (28%). Among persons working in research and teaching positions, as well as among persons working in teaching positions, 19% never reacted to this type of behaviour. In the group of people working in administrative positions, this percentage was 13%, while among people working in technical positions, it was as high as 28%. In addition, 16% of those working in library positions and only 6% of those working in positions other than those mentioned above declared that they did not react to acts of unequal treatment. It should be noted, however, that the number of observations in each professional group included in the analyses varied significantly. For example, in the group of persons



only 18 people working in other positions, while among students – 1,169 people.

The most frequent response to unequal treatment was declared by people working in other positions – almost 39% of this (as mentioned, small) group always or often intervened. Next in line were people in research and teaching positions and research positions (32% in total, including those who always or often intervened) and people working in teaching positions (33%). Among students, almost a quarter (23%) of respondents indicated that they always or often reacted to such acts, while among doctoral students it was slightly over 20%. These were the groups which, together with those working in library positions (20%), were least likely to report always or often reacting to situations of unequal treatment. In addition, almost one-third (28%) of those working in administrative positions declared that they always or often reacted, while among those working in technical positions, the percentage was 30%. The above results among doctoral students and students can be explained in the context of several factors, such as lower average age, lower status and perceived prestige in the university hierarchy compared to other professional groups.

In 2024, the percentage of people who never react to unequal treatment decreased in all professional groups compared to 2019 (students: from 48% to 38%; doctoral students: from 43% to 32%; research and teaching staff: from 26% to 19%). The biggest change was among students and doctoral students, who reported an increase in the frequency of responses "I reacted more often than I did not react" and "always" (students: from 16% to 23%; doctoral students: from 17% to 21%). The results indicate a general shift from passivity towards more frequent, albeit still moderate, responses to unequal treatment.

**Summary:** The results of this section show that nearly one-third of respondents declared that they did not react to acts of unequal treatment, and only 7% always intervened. Although a significant proportion of respondents remain passive in the face of acts of unequal treatment, there has been a shift towards more frequent responses compared to 2019. Students and doctoral students proved to be the most passive, which may be linked to their lower status and position in the university hierarchy, while those employed in academic and teaching positions were most likely to respond. The results suggest that further strengthening of the culture of responding to unequal treatment is needed, especially by building a sense of agency among students and doctoral candidates, as well as supporting all groups in developing the skills and courage to intervene. This may include training in responding to unequal treatment, promoting good intervention practices, and developing easy, quick and non-threatening systemic forms of support that facilitate response.

### **Types of responses to unequal treatment**

Later in the survey, respondents who declared that they had made at least one attempt to counteract situations of unequal treatment were asked to indicate the type of response they had taken. The answers included the following categories:

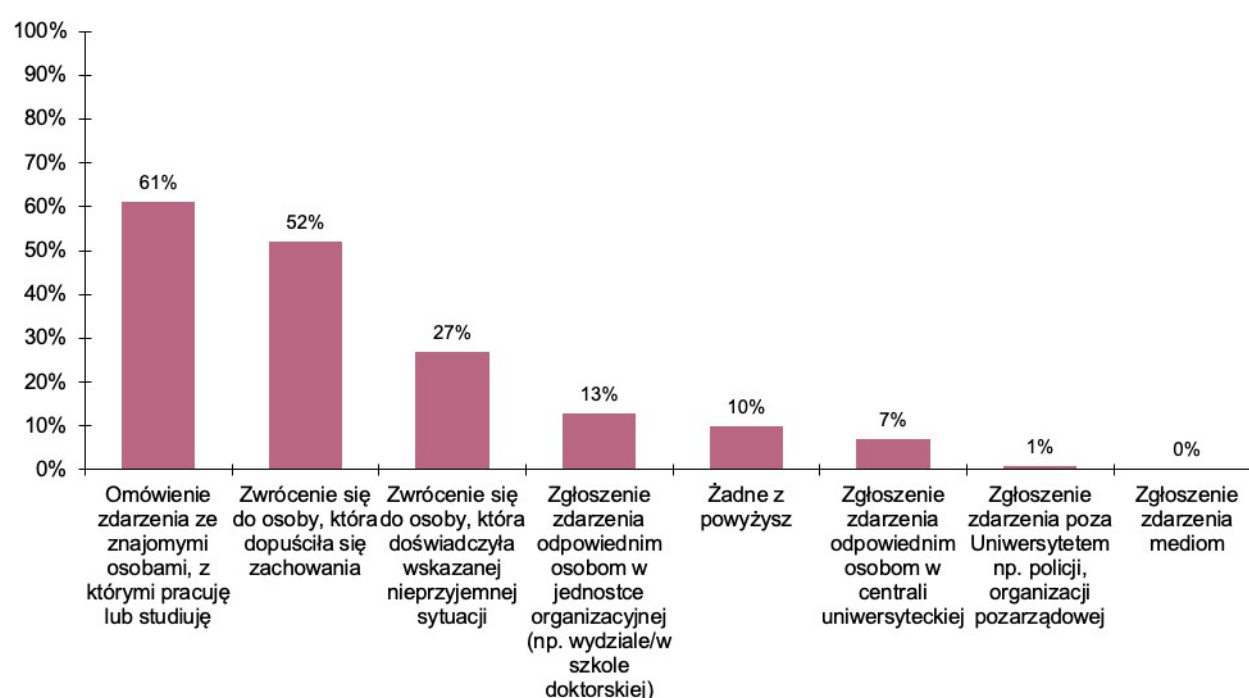
1. At the time of the incident – addressing the person who committed the act
2. At the time of the incident – addressing the person who experienced the unpleasant situation
3. Later – discussing the incident with friends, colleagues or fellow students
4. Later – report the incident to the appropriate persons at the university headquarters.
5. Then – report the incident to the appropriate persons in the organisational unit (e.g. faculty/doctoral school).

6. Then – report the incident outside the University, e.g. to the police or a non-governmental organisation.
7. Then – report the incident to the media.
8. None of the above

Respondents could select more than one answer.

**Figure 23**

*Ways of responding to unequal treatment – frequency of responses*



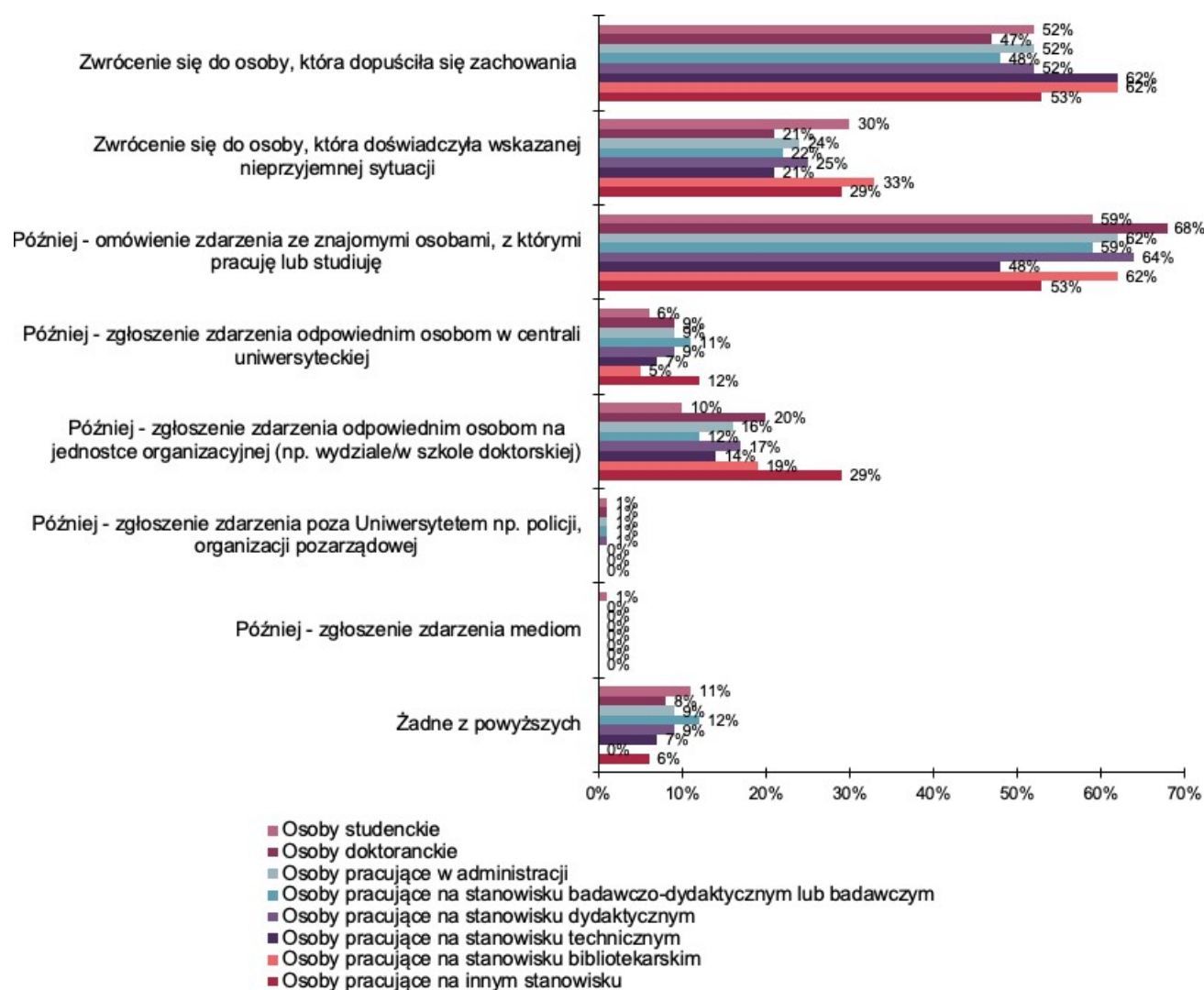
The most common response was to discuss the incident with friends at work or university (61%). The second most common response, indicated by over 50% of respondents, was to confront the person who committed the act at the time of the incident. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents declared that they would approach the person who experienced the unpleasant situation at the time of the incident. Very rarely did respondents react by reporting the incident outside the University, e.g. to the police, a non-governmental organisation or the media (less than 1%). Only 7% of respondents indicated that they had reported the situation.

unequal treatment to the appropriate persons at the University of Warsaw, while 13% reported the incidents to the appropriate persons in their organisational unit (e.g. faculty/doctoral school). The results suggest that the University of Warsaw authorities may find it difficult to assess the scale of unequal treatment, as these situations are still rarely reported to the appropriate persons at the university.

An additional analysis of attempts to respond to cases of unequal treatment in different professional groups at the University of Warsaw shows, as already discussed in the general results, that most people rarely report such situations to the relevant university institutions, both at the central and faculty levels (Figure 24). Most often, such reports came from (a few) people working in other positions – 29% of them indicated that they reported the incident to the appropriate persons in their organisational unit, and 12% to persons at the university headquarters. As for the most common response, i.e. discussing the incident with friends, there were only minor differences between the groups. In addition, approximately 50% of respondents in each professional group indicated that they responded by addressing the person who committed the behaviour.

**Figure 24**

*Ways of responding to unequal treatment – frequency of responses by professional group*



**Summary: The most common response of people who tried to counteract unequal treatment was to discuss the incident with friends, people they study or work with, while such situations were rarely reported the relevant university institutions or outside the university. Such a predominance of informal responses suggests that the respondents may have limited trust in institutional procedures. It is therefore worth developing measures that will facilitate reporting at the university level, increase the visibility and accessibility of formal channels, and build confidence that taking such a step can bring about real change.**

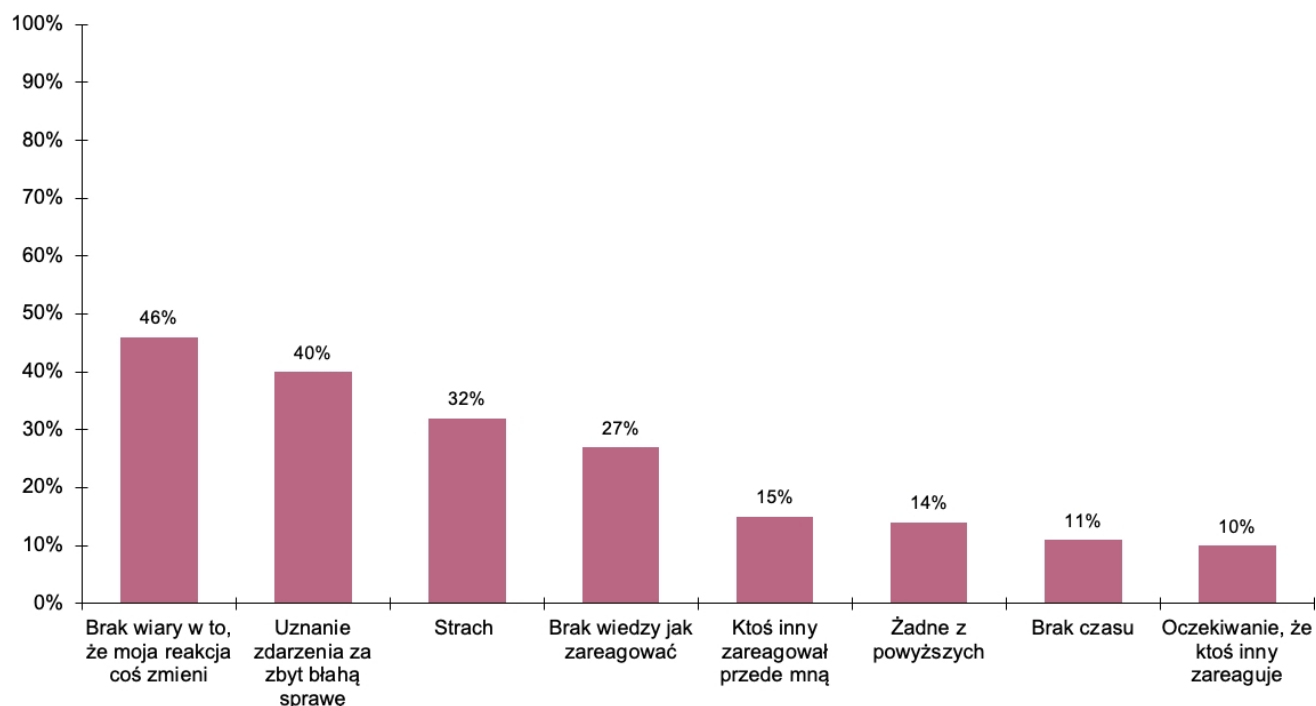
## **Reasons for not responding to unequal treatment**

Respondents who declared that they did not react to cases of unequal treatment were asked questions about the reasons for not attempting to counteract these situations.

Respondents could select more than one of the following answers: fear; considering the incident too trivial; lack of belief that my reaction would change anything; lack of knowledge on how to react; someone else reacted before me; expectation that someone else would react; lack of time; none of the above.

**Figure 25**

*Reasons for not reacting to unequal treatment – frequency of responses*



Almost half (46%) of respondents declared that they did not believe that their reaction would change anything. 40% of respondents considered the incident to be too trivial, and almost one third (32%) cited fear as the reason for not reacting to situations of unequal treatment. More than a quarter (27%) of respondents did not know how to react, and almost 15% indicated that someone else had already reacted, or gave another answer (14%). About 10% of respondents declared that they did not have time or expected someone else to react.

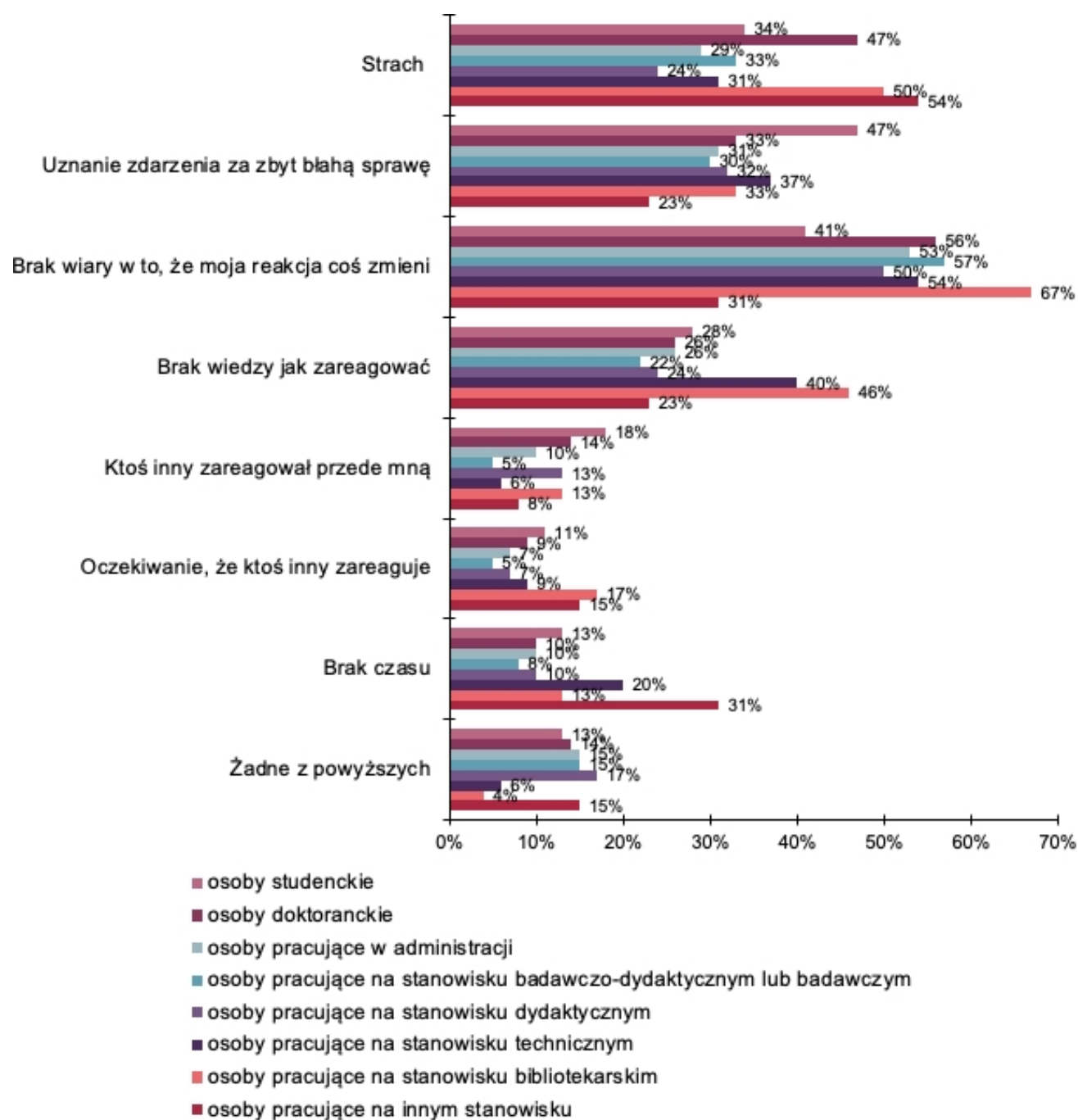
To improve the situation, it is worth considering measures to increase the sense of agency and responsibility in the face of unequal treatment. In this context, it may be important to further develop training and educational programmes that will help people working and studying at the University of Warsaw to acquire the skills to respond effectively in such situations. In addition, it is suggested that the status of persons who are victims or witnesses of unequal treatment be taken into account. Persons with lower status in the university hierarchy should feel safe reporting such incidents.

situations and be encouraged by the University authorities to report them. The University should actively respond to reports of unequal treatment in order to prevent the reporting individuals from feeling isolated and convinced that the matter is too trivial to take action or that reporting it will not bring about any change. It is important that the university authorities provide support aimed not only at resolving the specific situation, but also at strengthening the sense of agency and the belief that every report matters and can lead to real change in the functioning of the academic community. The next step could be to develop activities to promote a culture of inclusion, tolerance and respect in the academic environment, raising awareness of inequalities and ways to combat them. Such activities could contribute to creating a more open, fair and supportive environment at the University.



**Figure 26**

*Reasons for not responding to unequal treatment – frequency of responses by individual groups*



An additional analysis broken down by group showed that the most common response among almost all groups, as was the case in the overall results, was a lack of belief that responding to situations of unequal treatment would change anything. In first place here were people working in library positions - as many as 67% of respondents and

respondents from this group indicated this answer. More than half of the respondents among doctoral students, working in administrative, research, teaching and technical positions indicated a lack of belief in the effectiveness of a response as the reason for not attempting to counteract such behaviour. Among students, this figure was 41%, while among people in other positions, it was 31%. Fear was also a common reason for attempting to respond. This answer was selected by half of the respondents in library positions and 54% of people in other positions.

This response was least frequently given by people working in teaching positions (24%). It is interesting to note that among students, fear or the feeling that it would not change much were relatively less common reasons for not reacting than in other groups. Either this young group has more hope, faith and courage, or perhaps they encounter milder or more incidental manifestations of unequal treatment. The latter could be suggested by the high frequency of responses in this group declaring that the incident was trivial.

One of the least common responses was the expectation that someone else would react. This was most often declared by people in library positions (17%) and people in other positions (15%). This reason was least often given by people working in research (5%), teaching (7%) and administrative (7%) positions. Furthermore, among those working in other positions or teaching positions, approximately 15% of respondents indicated another reason for not responding to acts of unequal treatment, suggesting a need to further explore reasons that were not included in this study. This may include the use of qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain a more accurate understanding of the motivations and barriers faced by individuals in such situations. This would allow for better tailoring of preventive and intervention measures to the actual needs of the university community.

**Summary: Respondents who did not react to unequal treatment most often cited a lack of belief in the effectiveness of the reaction, fear, or considering the situation too trivial. This picture suggests a need to strengthen the sense of agency and responsibility within the UW community through training, education and clear response procedures. It is also important to provide real support to those who report incidents and to ensure that the university's actions have visible effects in order to counteract feelings of powerlessness. The results suggest a need to further explore the reasons for the lack of response and to implement measures to support a sense of agency in such situations.**

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## Supporting institutions

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In the final part of the survey, we asked about sources of support and ways of dealing with discrimination and undesirable behaviour. These questions were only asked to people who had previously indicated that they had experienced discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or other characteristics in the last four years. This was about one-third of the respondents (N = 1,181).

The first question in this block was whether any of the listed persons or institutions provided support to the respondent in experiencing discrimination and undesirable behaviour related to work or studies at the University of Warsaw. More than one answer could be selected.

Fortunately, less than 20% of respondents reported a lack of support in difficult situations (Figure 27). On the other hand, this is one in five people, and it would be good if there were even fewer such people. By far the most common answers to the question of who provides support were "Close friends and family" and "People from the university with whom you socialise". Two-thirds of respondents received support from people close to them. The two above answers also often appeared together – respondents often declared that they received

both support from loved ones and from friends and colleagues at university. Nearly 20% of respondents received external support from people outside the University of Warsaw who specialise in psychotherapy or psychiatry. Again, it is difficult to interpret this result as high or low. It can also be seen as worrying, because as many as 20% of people who experience difficult situations (7% of the entire sample) have to seek therapeutic help, but also as comforting (such people seek help, are not ashamed of it and do not remain passive).

As far as institutional assistance at the University of Warsaw is concerned, it most often came from the authorities of the respective faculty (7%), the Psychological Assistance Centre (5%), the Office for Persons with Disabilities (4%) and the academic ombudswoman (4%). Other institutions (equality officer at the faculty/doctoral school, equality team and chief equality specialist, coordinator and rector's committee for counteracting discrimination) were rarely mentioned. Other persons or institutions that could be freely entered, which were also rarely mentioned, mainly included the categories of persons mentioned above, but named in different words (e.g. institute director, supervisor, colleagues, ombudsman), but also very rarely other persons, such as lawyers, or institutions, such as the student council.

**Figure 27**

*Sources of support in experiences of discrimination and undesirable behaviour – frequency of responses*



*Note:* The percentages add up to more than 100% because it was possible to select more than one answer at a time.

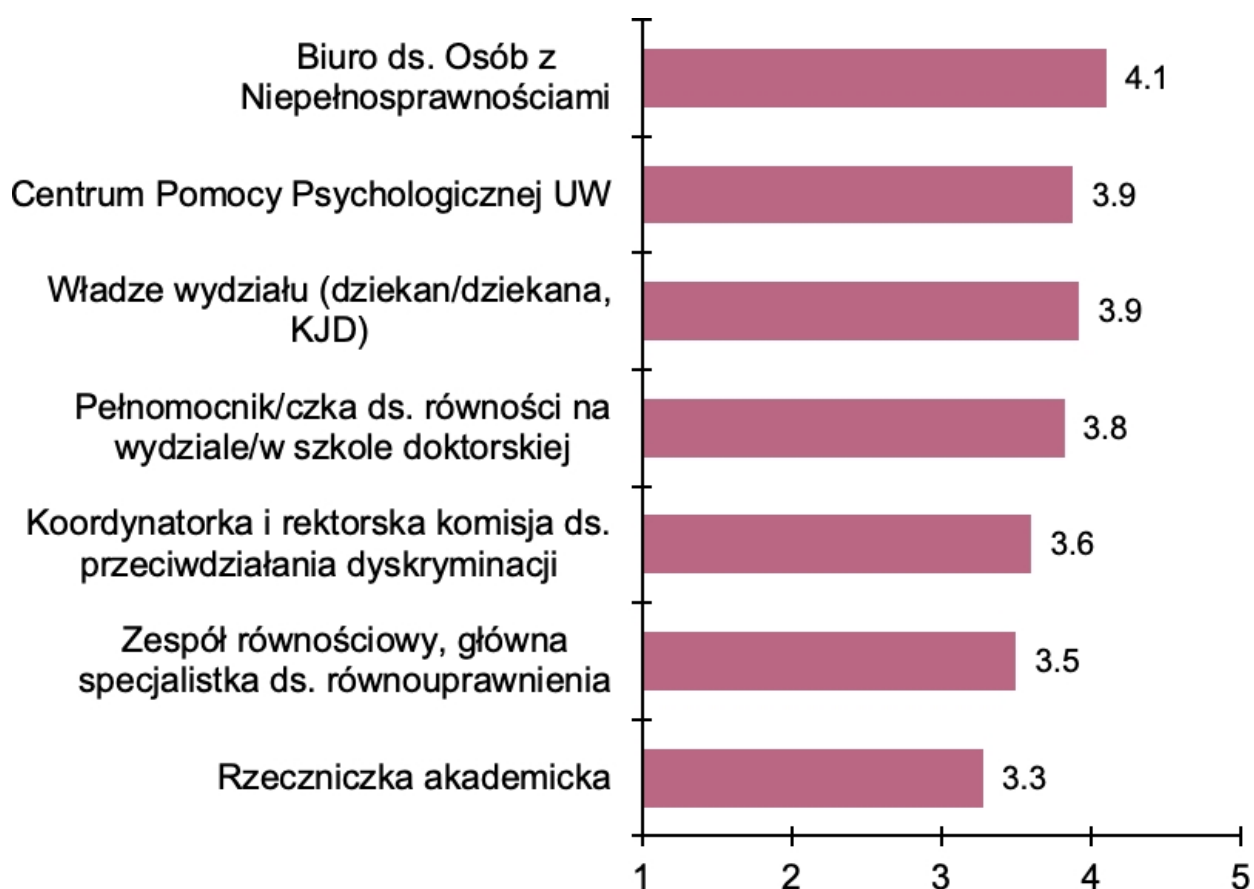
Those who indicated support from institutions, and not just friends or colleagues and were asked to what extent they were satisfied with the support provided by these institutions. They responded on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant "to a very small extent" and 5 meant "to a very large extent". Here, the number of responses was lower (from 10 for "coordinator and rector's committee for counteracting discrimination" to 87 for "faculty authorities"). To interpret the results, we calculated the average satisfaction (Figure 28). Due to the small sample size for some categories, the results should be interpreted with caution.

Overall, satisfaction was between moderate and high. The Office for Persons with Disabilities, the Psychological Support Centre and the authorities of the respective faculty were rated the highest.

The lowest, but still above the middle of the scale, was the academic spokesperson.

**Figure 28**

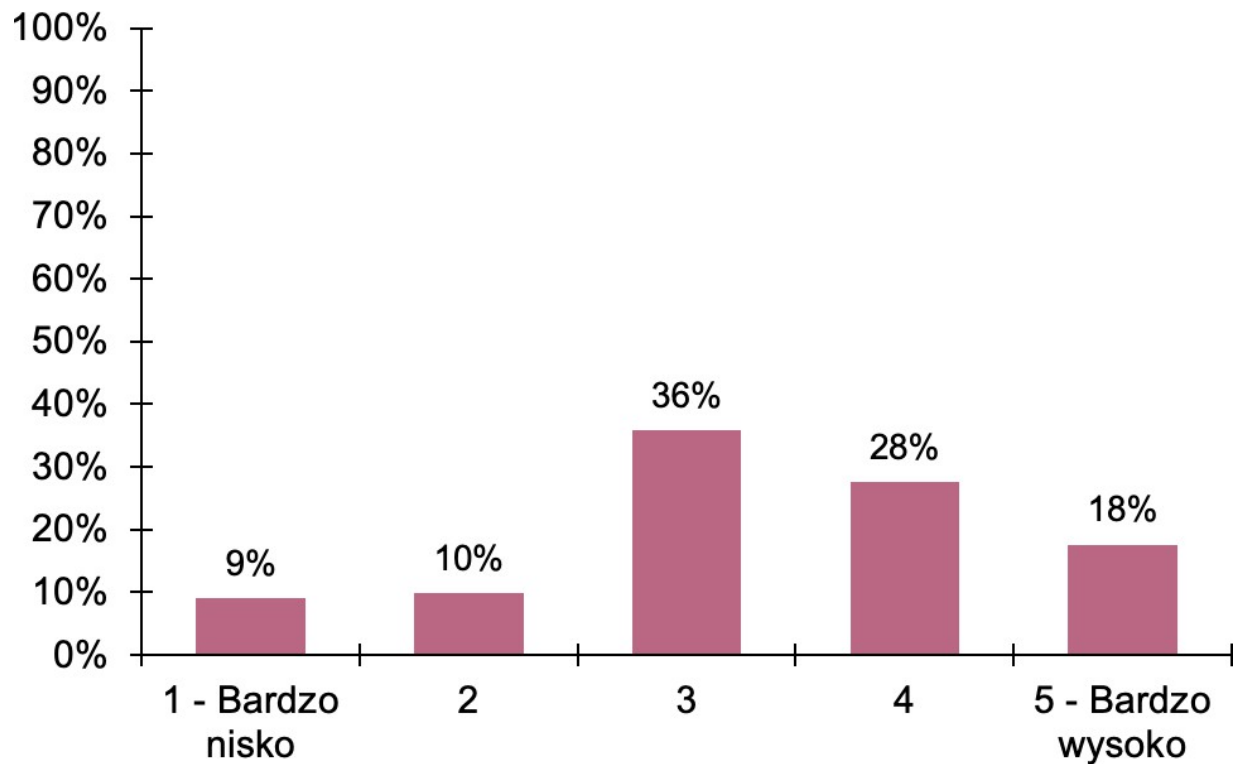
*Average satisfaction with the support provided by various institutions and individuals*



Finally, all respondents (again, over 3,000) were asked how they assessed the university's support in cases of discrimination and how they felt at the University of Warsaw. They responded on scales ranging from 1 – “very low” to 5 – “very high” and from 1 – “I definitely do not feel at home” to 5 – “I definitely feel at home”. Most people (36%) rate the university's support as average, but significantly more people rate it as high and very high (45% in total) than very low and low (19% in total, Figure 29).

**Figure 29**

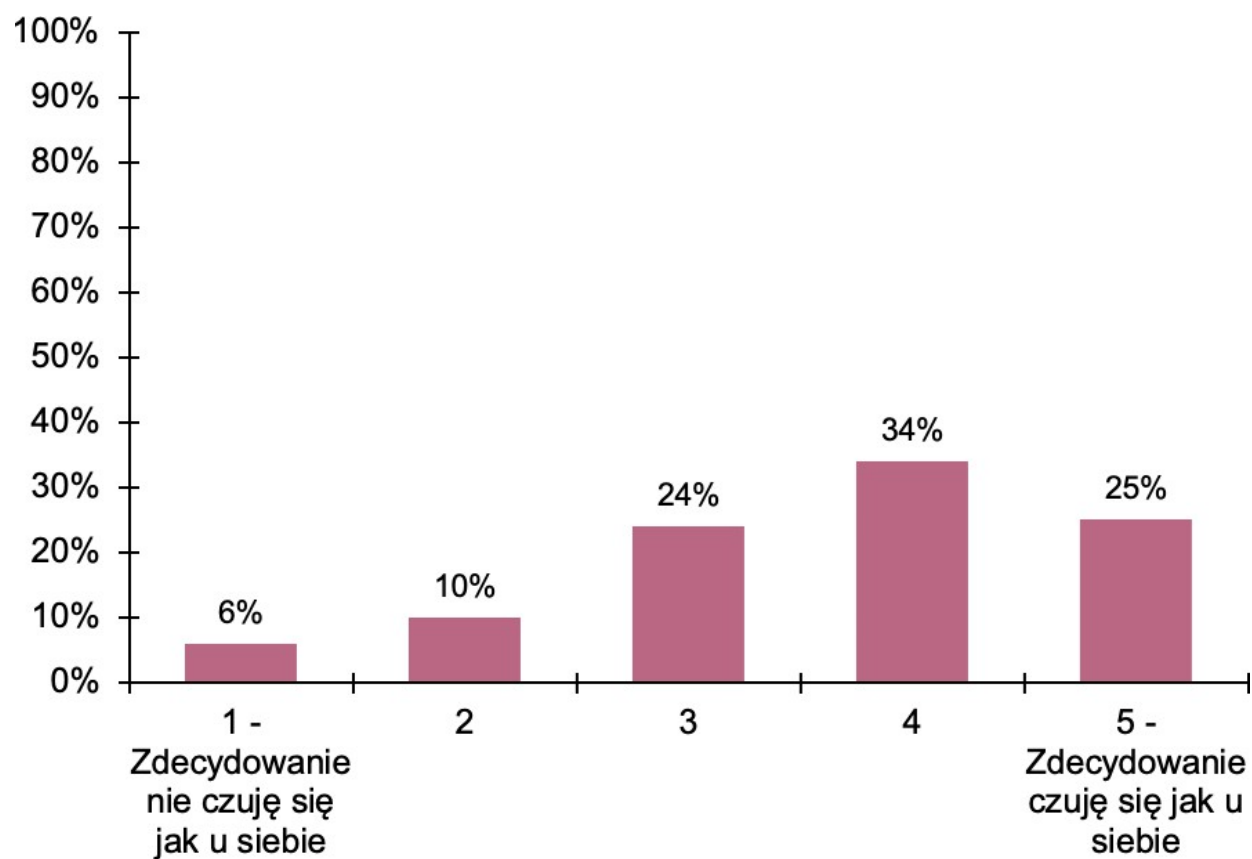
*Assessment of university support in the experience of discrimination – frequency of responses*



The respondents feel comfortable at the University of Warsaw (Figure 30). The responses “at home” (34%) and “definitely at home” (25%) add up to almost 60%. Only 16% of respondents feel more or less uncomfortable at the University of Warsaw.

**Figure 30**

*How respondents feel at the University of Warsaw – response rates*





**Summary: When it comes to support institutions and other sources of support in situations of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw, most respondents indicated that they receive help primarily from relatives and friends at the university. Institutional forms of assistance at the University of Warsaw were used relatively less frequently, with the Office for Persons with Disabilities, the Psychological Assistance Centre and the faculty authorities receiving the highest ratings. About one-fifth of respondents did not seek any help, which may potentially indicate the existence of a group particularly vulnerable to feelings of isolation. At the same time, nearly 20% of respondents indicated that they used psychological support outside the university. Despite these difficulties, most respondents declared that they felt comfortable and at home at the University of Warsaw, which is an important institutional resource. Combining these results with those from previous sections, it appears that many people are unaware of institutional forms of assistance at the University of Warsaw, do not believe in them, or are afraid to use them. It is worth further developing and strengthen institutional activities in order to increase the sense of security and agency of people experiencing unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw.**

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## Unequal treatment and well-being

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As part of the study, participants were asked to complete several questionnaires measuring their mental wellbeing. Four of these measures were also used in a study conducted at the University of Warsaw in 2019. These were the following scales:

- life satisfaction scale (SWLS, *Satisfaction With Life Scale*, scale reliability 0.88)
- abbreviated scale of general mental well-being, based on the GHQ (*General Health Questionnaire*); respondents answered questions about how often they had experienced problems such as anxiety, insomnia,

exhaustion, and depression in the past year (scale range from 1 – not at all to 4 – very often, scale reliability 0.78)

- stress related to work/studies at the University of Warsaw: *How much stress do you feel due to your studies/work?* (scale range 1–7)
- overall subjective health: *How would you rate your overall health?* (scale range 1–7)

This section of the report presents statistics summarising the level of mental well-being among people working and studying at the University of Warsaw. It will examine whether there are differences in the level of mental well-being between genders and between groups with different statuses (i.e. students, doctoral students, or people working at the University of Warsaw). In addition, it will examine whether these differences have changed (decreased or increased) compared to the survey conducted in 2019.

The current edition of the survey also includes questions about feelings of loneliness and the proportion of remote (vs. face-to-face) contact with other people at the University of Warsaw. This topic arose in response to the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the isolation it enforced. On the one hand, feelings of loneliness and isolation can significantly determine one's level of mental well-being. On the other hand, loneliness is an aspect in which gender inequality may manifest itself (e.g. by creating conditions that force employees of a certain gender to work remotely more or less frequently). Therefore, this issue will be analysed in this section of the report.

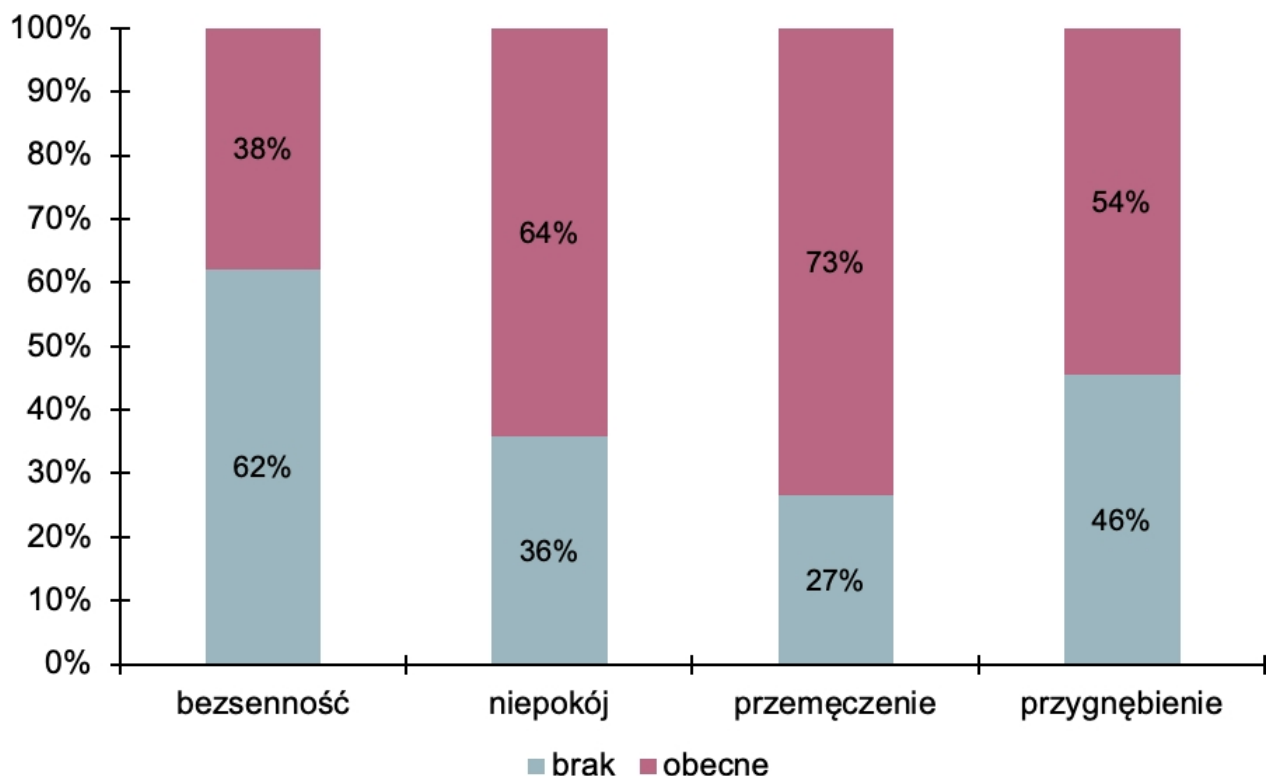
The last part of this section will present the links between experiences of unequal treatment and mental wellbeing. Not only will the role of personal experiences be examined, but also the awareness of unequal treatment in creating an atmosphere that is conducive (or not) to mental wellbeing.

## Summary of mental wellbeing measures

First, the general distributions of variables related to mental well-being were examined. Nearly three-quarters of the study participants complained of chronic fatigue, and two-thirds complained of chronic anxiety (Figure 31). More than half reported chronic levels of depression, and more than a third reported insomnia. As these four symptoms were significantly and strongly positively correlated, an average measure of negative psychological symptoms was used in further analyses.

**Figure 31**

*Frequency of significant severity of negative psychological symptoms among study participants*

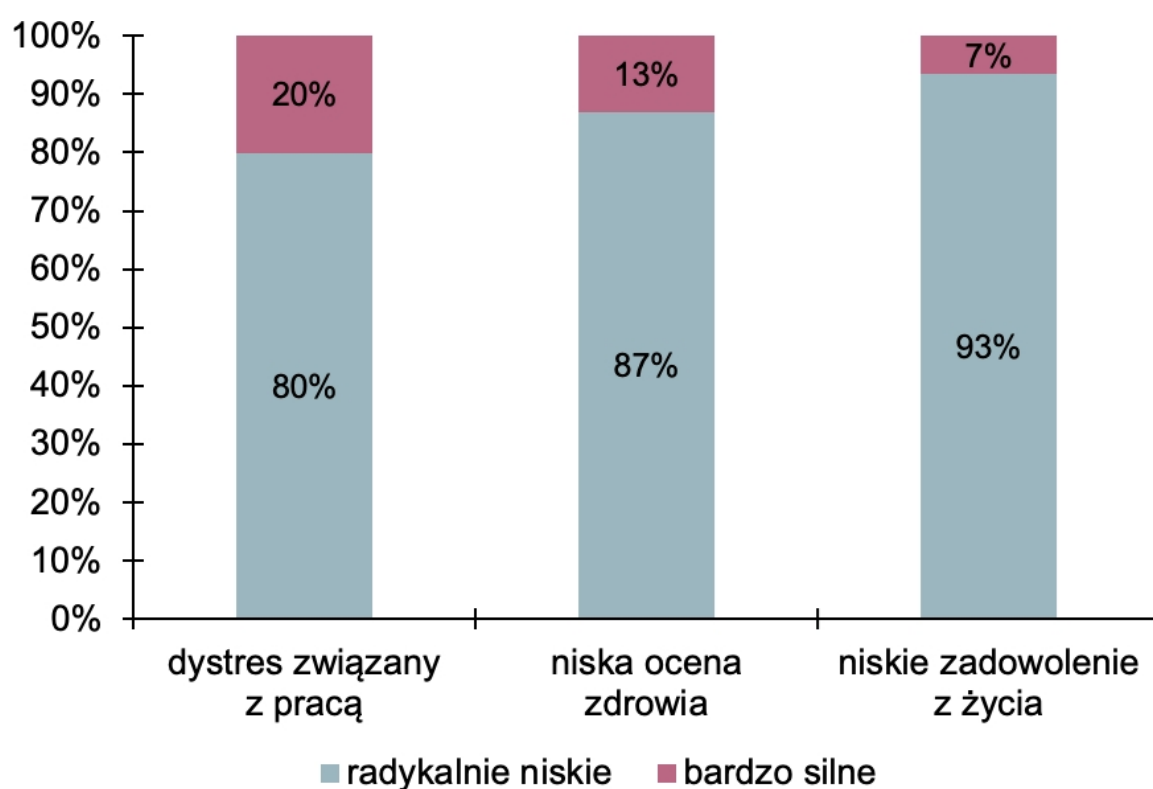


As shown in Figure 32, 20 per cent of respondents reported extremely high levels of work/study-related distress

(responses 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7), i.e. a level of tension that was perceived as unbearable and hindering work or studies. Of all those who completed the survey, 13 per cent rated their health as extremely poor, and 7 per cent indicated that they felt extremely low levels of life satisfaction (2 or less on a scale of 1 to 7).

**Figure 32**

*Frequency of very high distress, very low life satisfaction and very low subjective health assessment among study participants*



All of the variables mentioned correlated strongly and significantly with each other. Therefore, in further analyses, it was assumed that they would be treated jointly as indicators of various aspects of mental well-being.

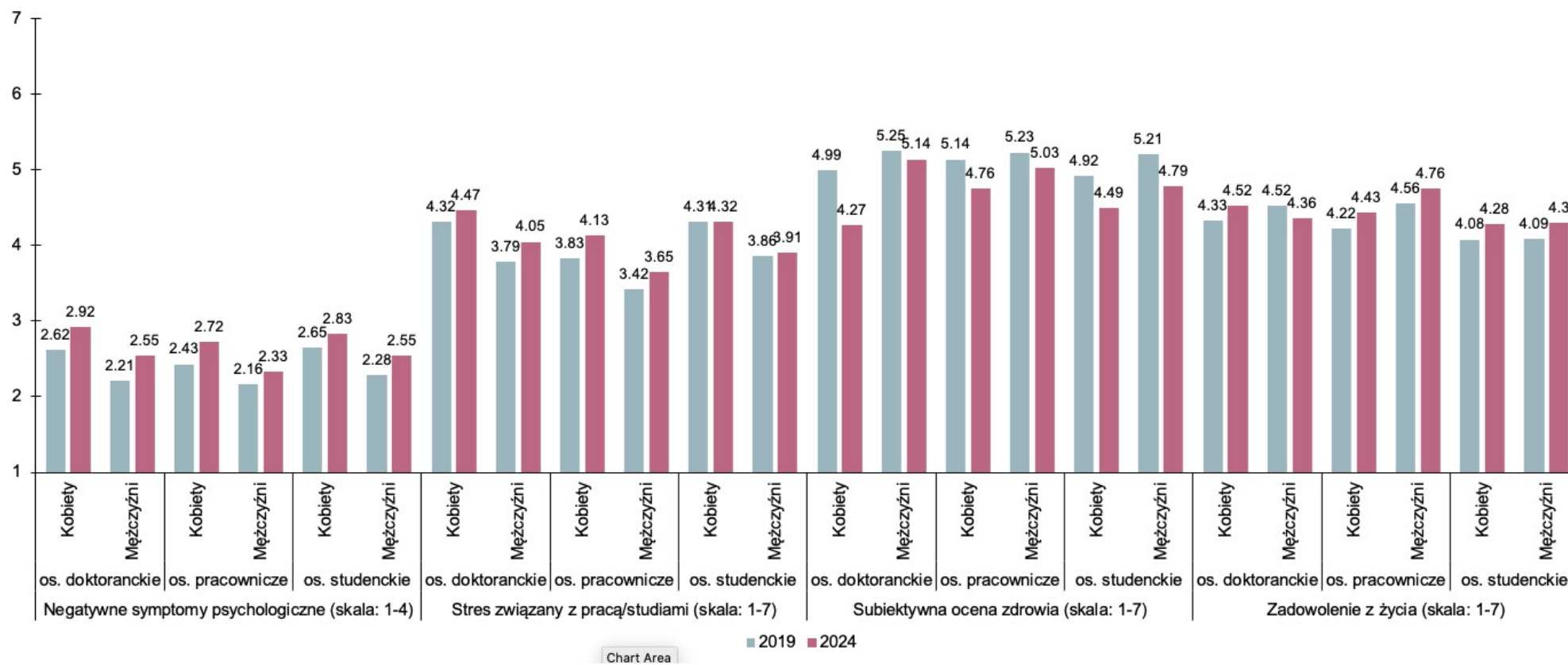
**Summary: The results show a high percentage of long-term psychological difficulties and distress related to work or studies. This indicates a serious burden on the well-being of people associated with the University of Warsaw. In addition, these symptoms co-occur strongly and can be treated as general indicators of mental well-being.**

## **Mental wellbeing and gender**

Four indicators of well-being (severity of negative psychological symptoms, level of work/study-related stress, subjective assessment of one's own health, and life satisfaction) were analysed using multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) with the year of the survey (2019 vs. 2024), gender (men vs. women), and status (doctoral students vs. employees vs. students) as between-person factors. Figure 33 shows the estimated marginal means.

**Figure 33**

*Estimated marginal means of mental well-being measures among women and men of different status in the 2019 and 2024 surveys*



The analysis revealed significant differences in the level of the analysed variables between the editions of the study (regardless of gender and status),  $F(4, 7236) = 97.32$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\lambda_{Wilks} = 0.95$ . Interestingly, although the overall level of life satisfaction was higher in the 2024 study than in the 2019 study,  $F(1, 7239) = 30.66$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , in the latest study, participants reported significantly stronger negative psychological symptoms,  $F(1, 7239) = 146.64$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , higher levels of work/study-related stress,  $F(1, 7239) = 3.06$ ;  $p = 0.047$ , and rated their health worse compared to the previous study,  $F(1, 7239) = 99.13$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . It is worth noting that in the current study, there were fewer students than in 2019 and more people working at the University of Warsaw. This result may therefore potentially be due in part to changes over time and in part to differences in the composition of the samples.

The analysis also showed that regardless of the year of the study and status, women (compared to men) were less satisfied with their lives,  $F(1, 7239) = 3.63$ ;  $p = 0.027$ , reported more negative psychological symptoms,  $F(1, 7239) = 163.24$ ;  $p = 0.047$ , higher levels of work/study-related stress,  $F(1, 7239) = 66.42$ ;  $p = 0.047$ , and rated their health worse,  $F(1, 7239) = 55.41$ ;  $p = 0.047$ . This gender disparity in well-being indicators,  $F(4, 7236) = 91.32$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\lambda_{Wilks} = 0.95$ , did not differ significantly between editions of the study or in the entire sample,  $F(4, 7236) = 1.04$ ;  $p = 0.386$ ;  $\lambda_{Wilks} = 0.99$ , nor in subgroups selected on the basis of status,  $F(8, 14472) = 1.91$ ;  $p = 0.055$ ;  $\lambda_{Wilks} = 0.99$ .

Regardless of the edition of the study, it was noted that in terms of overall life satisfaction, differences between women and men do not appear in student and doctoral groups, but are significant in the employee group. In other words, for life satisfaction, the interaction between gender and status proved to be statistically significant,  $F(2, 7239) = 7.51$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . In this employee group, women were less satisfied with life than men,  $t(7239) = 4.58$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

The analysis showed that regardless of the year of the study and gender, students had lower life satisfaction than doctoral students and employees (no significant difference was found between the latter two groups),  $F(2, 7239) = 48.39$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . Employees reported lower severity of negative psychological symptoms,  $F(2, 7239) = 28.42$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , and lower levels of work/study-related stress than doctoral students and students (no significant difference was found between the latter two groups),  $F(2, 7239) = 55.85$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . The analysis also showed that students rated their health significantly worse than employees (the level of subjective assessment of one's own health among doctoral students did not differ significantly from that of students and employees),  $F(2, 7239) = 10.21$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

It was also noted that, regardless of gender, differences in the level of work/study-related stress between groups of different status significantly decreased in 2024 compared to 2019,  $F(2, 7239) = 4.03$ ;  $p = 0.018$ . Nevertheless, differences in stress levels between groups with different statuses in 2024 remained significant,  $F(2, 7239) = 3.53$ ;  $p = 0.029$ .

Returning to caution in interpreting comparisons between the first and second editions of the study. It seems that the increase in negative indicators since the previous study is not a matter of sample composition. It cannot be said, as would be intuitive, that working people and middle-aged rather than young people may have higher life satisfaction, while at the same time experiencing more stress and poorer health. The above analyses suggest that the opposite is true, and so the worrying declines in recent years appear to be a real result, not an artefact of the sample.



**Summary: Women at the University of Warsaw have lower levels of mental well-being compared to men. This disparity has remained virtually unchanged compared to the 2019 survey. In the latest edition of the study, compared to the 2019 study, the intensity of work/study-related stress has increased significantly. Similar increases were observed for variables that may result from distress: negative psychological symptoms and low subjective assessment of one's own health. Somewhat paradoxical in this context may seem the results indicating that the overall level of satisfaction was higher in 2024 than in 2019.**

**However, it should be noted that when assessing their overall life satisfaction, the participants in the study may have taken into account a number of other factors unrelated to work. They may therefore have reported higher life satisfaction despite feeling worse than those who took part in the 2019 survey at the University of Warsaw. The analysis also showed that the level of mental well-being at the University of Warsaw seems to be strongly related to status. For all the variables analysed, students scored lower than other groups at the University of Warsaw.**

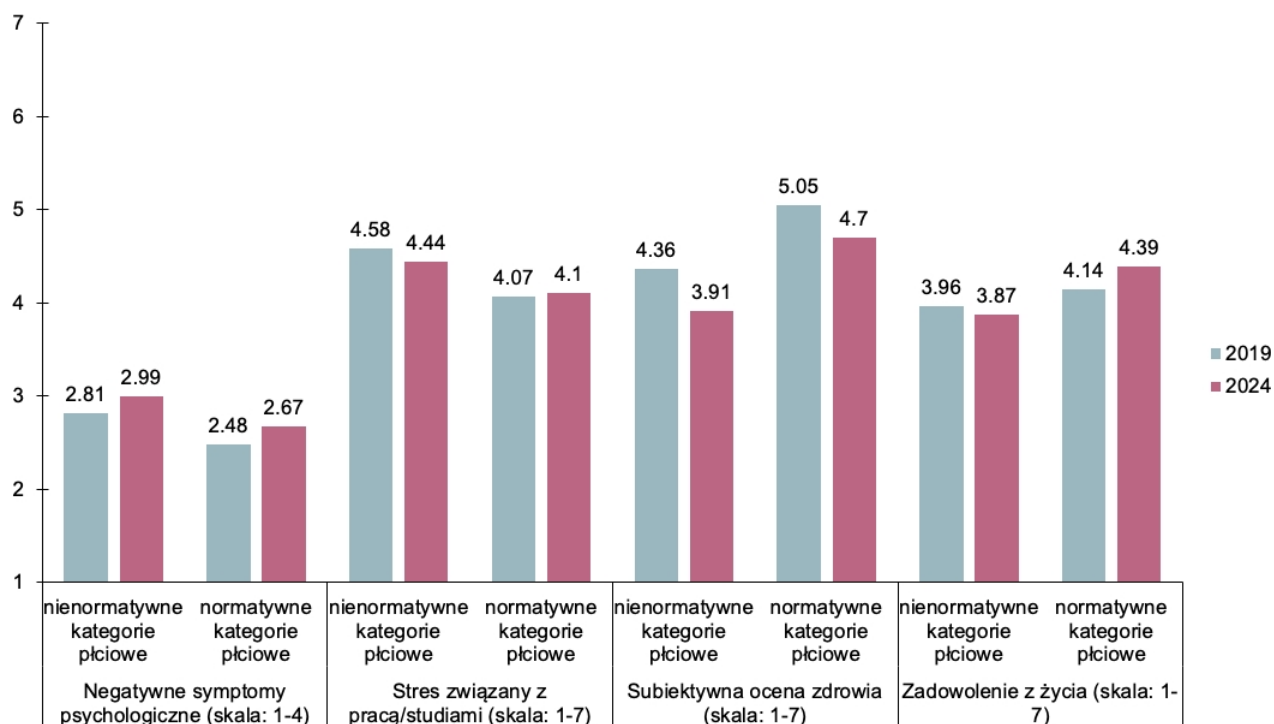
## **The differences between people with non-normative and normative gender categories**

A separate analysis was conducted for people who indicated the category "Non-binary person", "Other" or "Other (what ...)" in the question about gender (in 2019, n = 125; in 2024, n = 187). Due to the large disparities between this group and the groups of women and men, as well as the significant disparities between people with normative versus non-normative gender categories among students, doctoral students and employees, a simplified analysis scheme was decided upon. Differences in the level of well-being between

people with non-normative and normative gender categories in both editions of the study. Figure 34 shows the estimated marginal means.

**Figure 34**

*Estimated mean marginal measures of mental well-being among people with normative and non-normative gender categories in studies from 2019 and 2024*



MANOVA analysis showed that, regardless of the study edition, individuals with non-normative gender categories had lower levels of life satisfaction,  $F(1, 7540) = 22.30$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , greater intensity of negative psychological symptoms,  $F(1, 7540) = 34.18$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , higher levels of work/study-related stress,  $F(1, 7540) = 11.67$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , and lower subjective health ratings,  $F(1, 7540) = 48.61$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . In both editions of the study (2019 and 2024), this disparity was at a similar level,  $F(4, 7537) = 0.82$ ;  $p = 0.511$ ;  $\lambda_{Wilks} = 0.99$ .

**Summary: People with non-normative gender categories consistently experienced lower mental well-being than people with normative categories in both 2024 and 2019. The overall wellbeing of everyone has declined in recent years, which means that the wellbeing of gender non-conforming individuals has fallen to an even lower level. This points to the need to develop activities that support this group, including through visible inclusion strategies and access to dedicated forms of psychological support.**

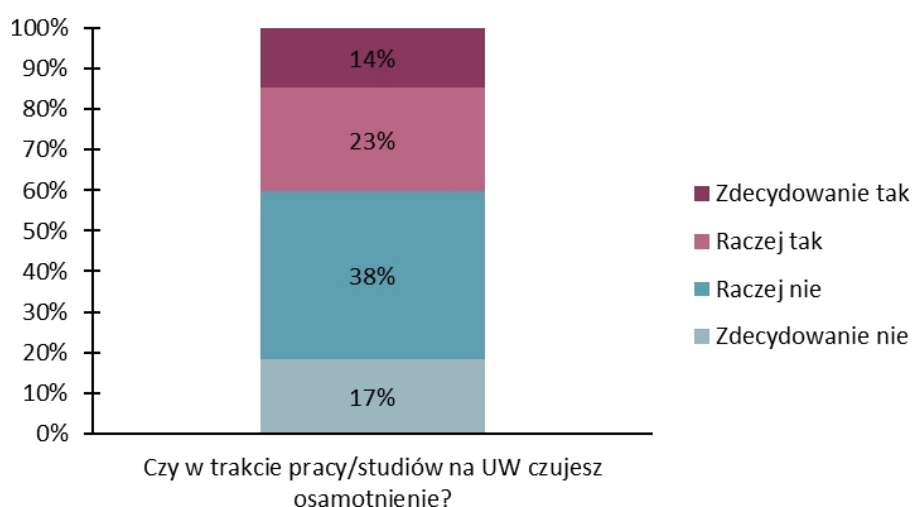
## Level of loneliness and mental wellbeing indicators

### mental well-being

One of the factors related to mental wellbeing, and also a source of its low level, may be the perceived feeling of loneliness. As shown in Figure 35, more than one third of the respondents declared that they feel lonely while working/studying at the University of Warsaw. A formal statistical analysis showed that similar levels of loneliness were observed for all genders.

**Figure 35**

*Declared feelings of loneliness among survey participants*



Feelings of loneliness may have intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic, when various restrictions and measures were introduced to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, including remote working, the abandonment of face-to-face meetings or a significant reduction in their frequency. Despite the end of the pandemic, some of these measures are still in place. As shown in Figure 36, the majority of survey participants (almost two-thirds) stated that their remote contacts accounted for no more than 25 per cent of all their contacts with people from the University of Warsaw. A quarter of respondents indicated that remote contacts accounted for between 26 and 50 per cent of all contacts. No more than 15 per cent of respondents declared that more than 50 per cent of their contacts with other people took place remotely.

**Figure 36**

*Declared percentage of remote work among survey participants*

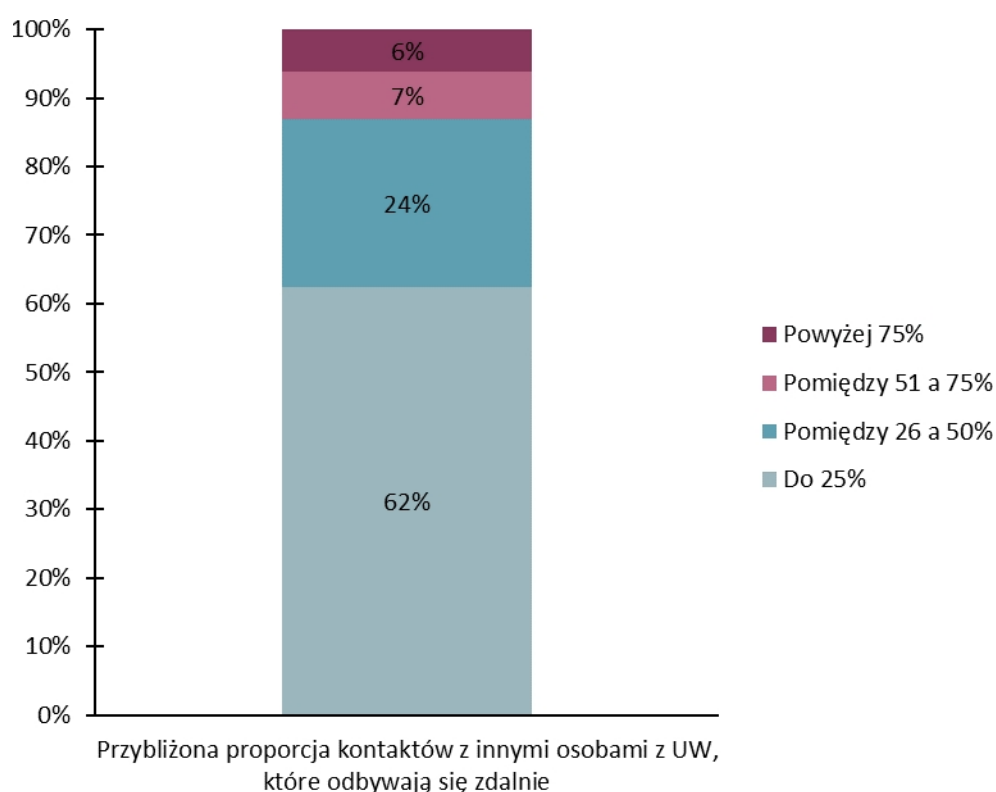
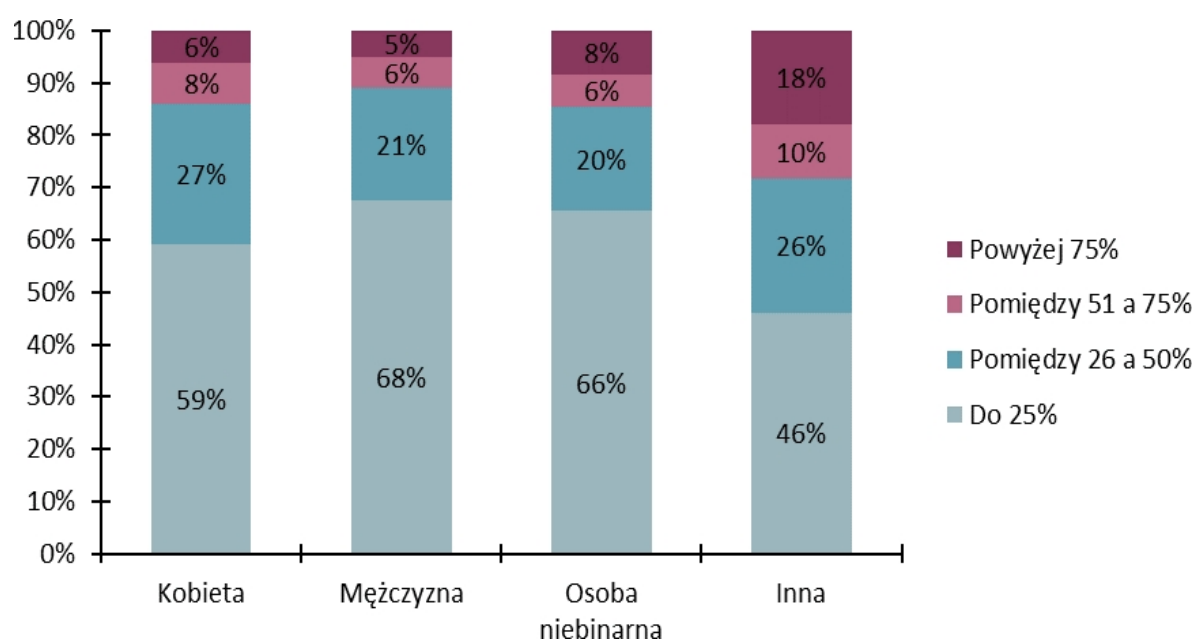


Figure 37 shows the percentage of remote contacts broken down by gender of the survey participant. Formal analyses showed that men declared significantly fewer remote contacts than women and persons who selected the option "Other (specify...)" for gender,  $F(3, 3175) = 7.88$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

**Figure 37**

*Declared percentage of remote work broken down by gender categories*



Differences in the number of remote contacts may result not only from structural factors, but also from personal preferences for remote or face-to-face contacts. As shown in Figure 38, two-thirds of the study participants declared that they preferred face-to-face meetings to remote ones as a form of contact with other people. A quarter declared no preference for either form. Less than 10 per cent of respondents declared a preference for remote meetings.

**Figure 38**

*Preference for remote work among survey participants*

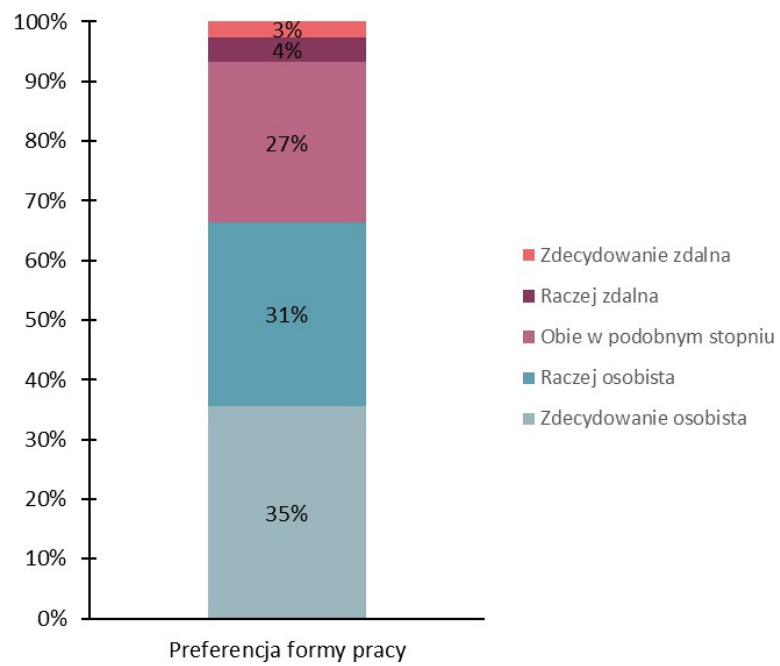
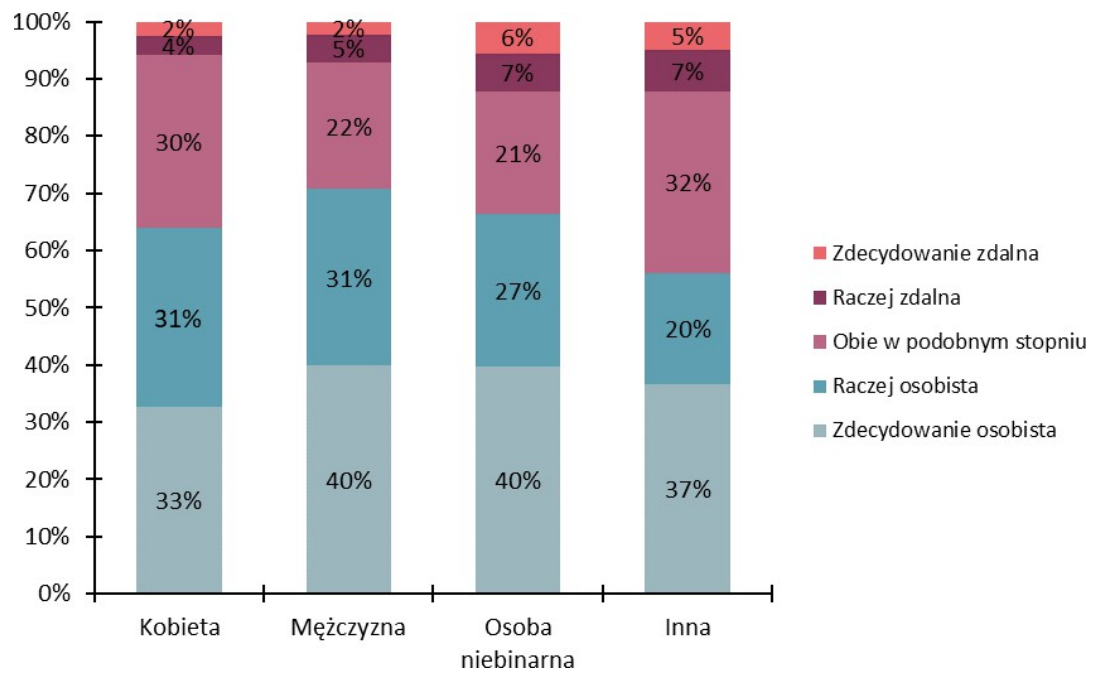


Figure 39 shows preferences for meeting formats broken down by gender.

A formal analysis showed that women significantly prefer remote meetings to face-to-face meetings more than men,  $t(3181) = 3.33$ ,  $p = 0.005$ .

**Figure 39**

*Preference for remote work broken down by gender*



**Summary:** Although working or studying at the University of Warsaw in most cases involves a number of opportunities to meet people, as many as one third of the participants in this study declared that they feel lonely at the university. Loneliness seems to be a problem that affects all genders equally. Excessive use of remote work may be related to feelings of loneliness. This study suggests that remote work is sometimes overused at the University of Warsaw. For about 40 per cent of people, remote contacts account for more than 25 per cent of all interactions within the University of Warsaw. At the same time, two-thirds of respondents stated that they prefer face-to-face contact. Men reported more frequent face-to-face contact than women and people of other gender identities. At the same time, women reported a greater preference for remote meetings than men. It remains to be discussed is whether the difference in the form of contact is the result of preference (and if so, what is the reason for this preference), or whether the preference is shaped by the status quo (according to the principle of "if you don't have what you like, you like what you have") or necessity (e.g. care commitments). The recommendation resulting from these data is to limit the excessive use of remote working and to actively support opportunities for face-to-face meetings and relationship building, especially taking into account the needs of people who may choose remote work more often for structural or care reasons.

## **Loneliness and remote working versus mental wellbeing**

Correlation analyses (see Figure 40) showed that loneliness is a significant correlate of poorer mental wellbeing. In other words, individuals reporting high levels of loneliness at the University of Warsaw were characterised by lower life satisfaction, greater intensity of negative psychological symptoms, higher

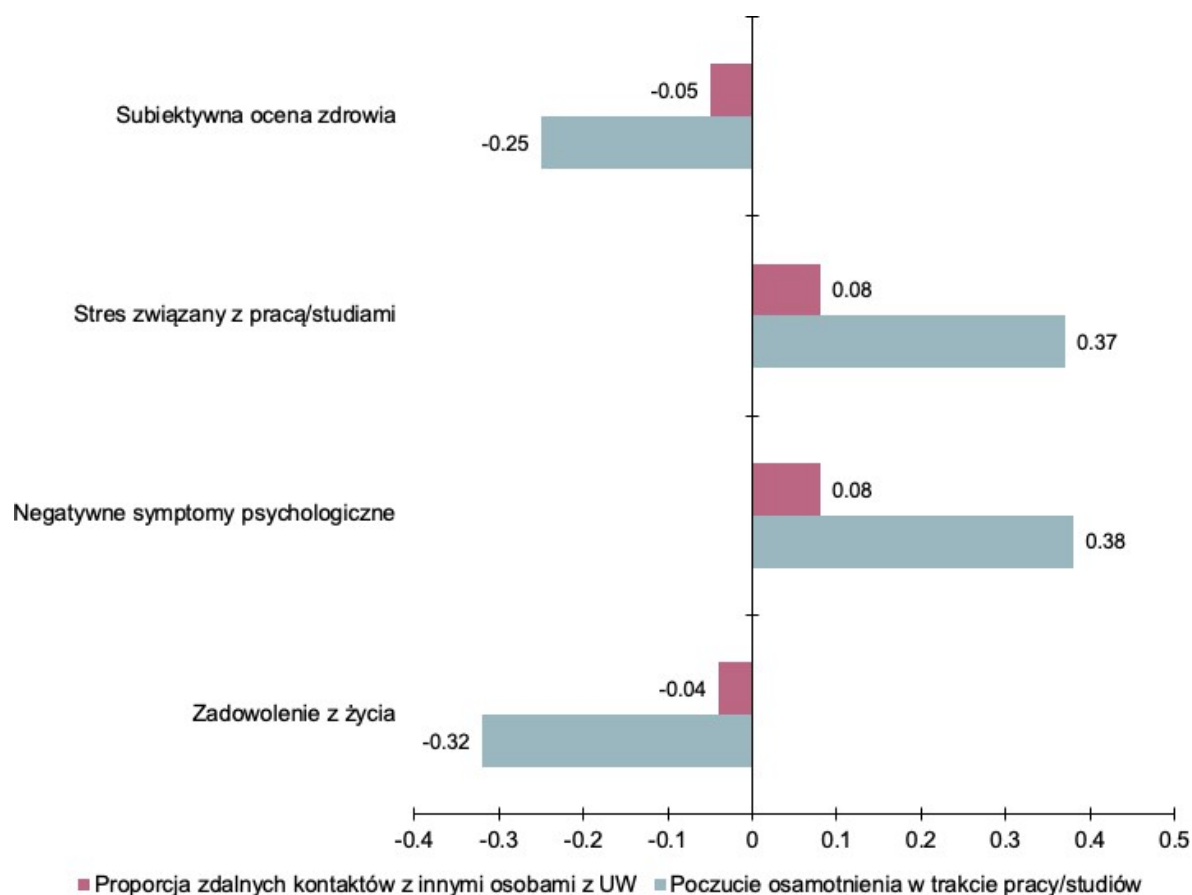


stress related to work or studies at the University of Warsaw, and a lower subjective assessment of health. Similar correlations were observed for women, men, non-binary individuals, and individuals with other gender identities.

For the entire sample, significant correlations were also observed between the proportion of remote work and measures of well-being. A higher proportion of remote contact with people from the University of Warsaw was associated with lower life satisfaction, greater intensity of negative psychological symptoms, higher levels of stress related to work or studies at the University of Warsaw, and a lower subjective assessment of health.

**Figure 40**

*Correlations between feelings of loneliness and frequency of remote work with measures of mental wellbeing*



As shown in Figure 40, the relationships between remote work and well-being measures were significantly weaker than the relationships between loneliness and well-being measures. It is possible that this weaker relationship is due to different preferences for remote versus in-person work. To test this hypothesis, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted, in which measures of well-being were used as explanatory variables, and the percentage of remote work, preference for this type of work, and the interaction between these two variables were used as predictors.

It was noted that preference for remote work is a significant moderator of the effect of the percentage of this type of work in models predicting the severity of negative psychological symptoms,  $b = -0.11$ ;  $SE = 0.04$ ;  $p = 0.015$ , and the level of stress related to work/studies at the University of Warsaw,  $b = -0.36$ ;  $SE = 0.09$ ;  $p < 0.001$ . It was noted that the percentage of remote work is not significantly related to the explanatory variables in people who strongly prefer this type of work or for whom both forms of contact are acceptable.

At the same time, in individuals who strongly prefer face-to-face contact, the percentage of remote work was associated with a significantly higher level of negative psychological symptoms,  $b = 0.33$ ;  $SE = 0.08$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , and a higher level of stress,  $b = 0.79$ ;  $SE = 0.17$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

A similar regression analysis was performed with the level of perceived loneliness as the explanatory variable. In this case, a significant interaction was also observed,  $b = -0.18$ ;  $SE = 0.06$ ;  $p = 0.004$ . Among individuals who strongly preferred face-to-face contact, a higher percentage of remote work was associated with a greater sense of loneliness,  $b = 0.32$ ;  $SE = 0.11$ ;  $p = 0.004$ . Interestingly, among those who preferred remote work, a higher percentage of this type of contact was associated with a significantly lower sense of loneliness,  $b = -0.41$ ;  $SE = 0.18$ ;  $p = 0.0249$ .

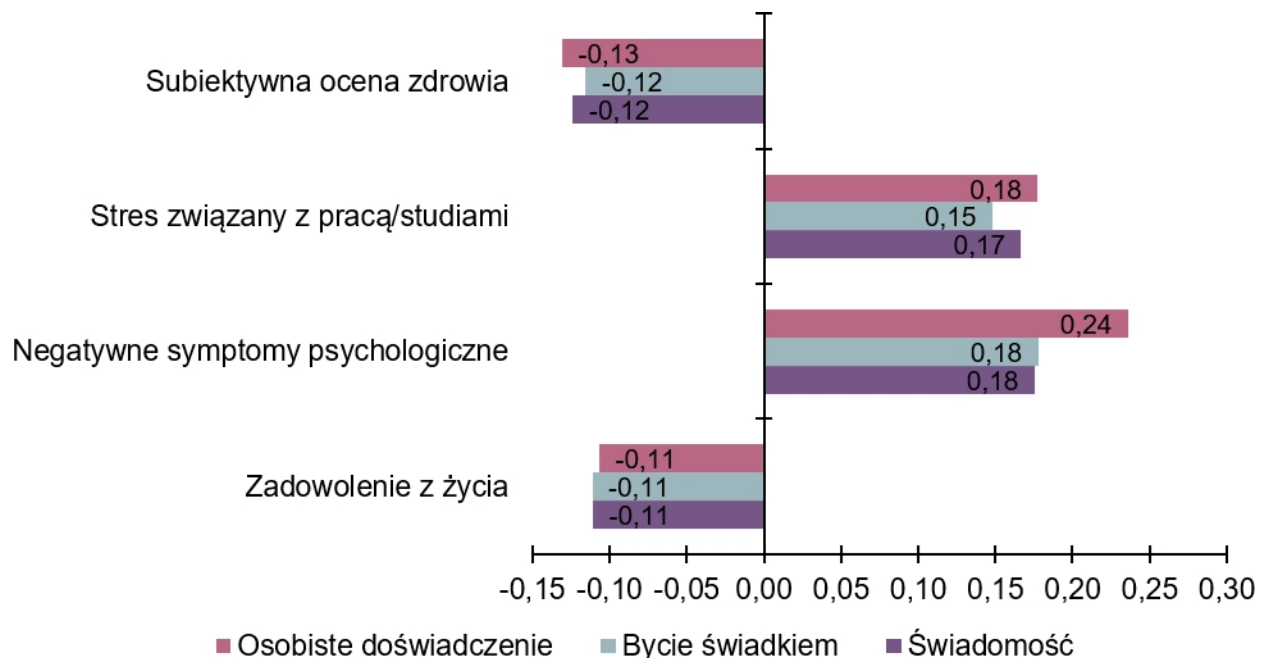
**Summary: In this study, loneliness was found to be a strong predictor of poorer mental well-being among people working or studying at the University of Warsaw. A relationship was also observed between frequent remote work and poorer mental well-being indicators. This relationship was particularly characteristic of individuals who, despite their aversion to remote work, hold most of their meetings with other University of Warsaw staff and students online. Based on these results, it is worth limiting excessive isolation associated with online work and create conditions conducive to direct contact and integration. Particular attention should be paid to people who, despite their preference for stationary work, are forced to use remote work more often for organisational or personal reasons.**

## **Experiencing gender inequality and mental wellbeing**

In order to examine the relationship between experiencing gender inequality and mental well-being, three aggregate indicators were created to reflect the level of: 1) personal experience of inequality; 2) witnessing inequality; 3) awareness that inequality occurs. Each indicator was created by counting the number of responses indicating various manifestations of unequal treatment. Each measure could take values from 0 to 15.

**Figure 41**

*Correlations between experiencing unequal treatment based on gender and measures of psychological well-being*



*Note:* The length of the bar is proportional to the size of the Pearson correlation. All correlations are significant with  $p < 0.05$ .

Correlation analyses (Figure 41) across the entire sample showed that regardless of whether we are talking about personal experience, witnessing, or mere awareness of unequal treatment, the relationships with measures of mental well-being are similar. All these measures correlated significantly and negatively with life satisfaction and subjective assessment of one's own health. At the same time, all measures correlated significantly and positively with the level of stress experienced during work/studies at the University of Warsaw, as well as with the severity of negative psychological symptoms. Personal experience of unequal treatment correlated with all measures of well-being slightly more strongly than witnessing or simply being aware of unequal treatment in the department or unit. However, these differences in the strength of the correlation were not large.

Importantly, similarly strong relationships between experiencing unequal treatment and measures of mental well-being were observed for both women and men. For non-binary individuals and those who selected "Other", the relationships between experiencing unequal treatment had a similar direction. Probably only due to the smaller size of these subgroups, in most cases these relationships proved to be statistically insignificant.

**Summary: Regardless of whether the respondents themselves experienced unequal treatment themselves or had only witnessed it, the feeling that their workplace or place of study was violating equality standards was associated with poorer mental well-being. Unfortunately, a cross-sectional correlational study does not allow us to determine the direction of causality. In other words, the data collected does not allow us to determine with certainty whether awareness of unequal treatment contributes to a decline in mental well-being. There are several other possible explanations for this correlation, which should probably be verified in future studies.**

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## Analysis of responses to open-ended questions: comparison of 2019 and 2024

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The final analysis was based on qualitative data from open-ended questions included in two editions of the survey from 2019 and 2024. The design of both research tools differed in terms of closed questions and the layout of the questionnaire, and similarly in terms of the wording and number of open-ended questions. However, in both editions of the survey, the common purpose of including open-ended questions was to allow respondents to independently

express their opinions on the topics covered in the survey or add something that was not included in the closed questions. First and foremost, we asked them to describe their experiences of discrimination at the University of Warsaw (in 2019 and 2024), but also to indicate shortcomings in the University's anti-discrimination policy (in 2024). Preliminary exploration of the data revealed that the themes emerging from the respondents' statements were largely consistent in both editions of the study, which allowed for a collective analysis and comparison of the responses from both editions.

## Respondents

As a reminder, 3,228 people took part in the 2024 survey, while 10,907 people took part in the first edition of the survey in 2019. This means that the sample size in 2019 was more than three times larger than in 2024. What is particularly important for this report is the different distribution of groups of people in the two surveys. In both editions, the largest group was students, but in 2024 they accounted for 58% of the total sample, and in 2019 - 84%. The next largest group were people employed at the University of Warsaw, and in 2024 this was proportionally higher, at 37%, compared to 15% in 2019. Among doctoral students, the differences between the two editions were small (7% in 2024 and 5% in 2019). Some people selected more than one category of affiliation, and the above percentages may add up to more than 100%.

## Procedure

The analysis of the content of the statements was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, we familiarised ourselves with the data. In the second stage, we used the Google NotebookLM tool (<https://notebooklm.google/>), based on artificial intelligence, to extract the most frequently occurring topics from the data. In the third stage, we checked and refined the structure of the topics obtained, giving them an interpretative context by referring to specific examples. This approach allowed us to capture both the general trends and changes between the two studies, as well as the significant details that differed between them.

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## Common theme: Experiences of discrimination

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In both editions of the study, respondents were able to describe their experiences of discrimination in their own words. It should be noted that relatively few of them took advantage of this opportunity (on average, we received about 200 responses to each question in both surveys). It is therefore worth remembering that we are not discussing the results of our research samples as a whole, but only those from people who were particularly motivated to share their stories. Thanks to them, we were able to gain a deeper insight into specific forms of unequal treatment in the academic environment and enrich the items included in the closed questions with more personal examples.

### Gender

One of the most frequently discussed topics was gender discrimination.

In both editions analysed, respondents described behaviours towards women that they perceived as sexist. These responses partly overlapped with those contained in the closed questions, and sometimes new ones appeared. These were the following categories of responses:

- comments about appearance and suggestions that women gain professional advantage solely because of their attractive appearance;
- jokes, especially about women's intelligence or their "uselessness" in various areas of life;
- ridiculing feminine forms;
- references to stereotypical gender roles - suggesting that women are not suited to science, physical labour, field work or management positions, and even statements that the "natural" place for women

is the home, where they should be cooking, embroidering or raising children, rather than engaging in public or political life;

- questioning women's intellectual abilities – suggesting that they have difficulty with maths, are less scientifically capable or cope less well in stressful situations, and disregarding their comments in class and meetings;
- comments with clear sexual undertones that create an atmosphere of objectification.

## **Gender identity and sexual orientation**

Respondents cited examples of homophobia, transphobia and general intolerance towards people with non-heteronormative sexual orientation or gender identity. Homophobic and transphobic jokes and comments were reported, including the use of offensive terms such as "faggots" and comparing homosexuals to "a herd of animals". There were statements questioning the validity of LGBT+ rights, suggesting that being bisexual is a disease, and mocking asexuality. Such statements create an atmosphere of exclusion and undermine the sense of security of non-heteronormative people in the academic environment.

## **Origin, nationality and accent**

In both 2019 and 2024, there were reports from foreign students and employees of inferior treatment, comments about their accents, and xenophobic or racist remarks, including the use of outdated and pejorative words such as "nigger". Manifestations of prejudice took place, among others, in the academic context, in student halls of residence, as well as in contacts with the administration or technical staff. The respondents reported situations in which people from other countries – especially Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, India and Pakistan – were excluded, treated negatively or ridiculed. For example, under the pretext of



their "exotic" names, students were called upon to answer questions. There were also comments questioning their right to participate in university life or referring to their allegedly lower competences. In addition, difficulties resulting from the language barrier were noticeable – non-native speakers of Polish were met with incomprehension, impatience or even contempt.

## **Power and hierarchy**

Respondents in both editions raised issues related to abuse of power and hierarchical problems. They pointed to cases of mobbing, favouritism, and a lack of transparent rules regarding promotions and remuneration. They described situations in which expressing critical opinions about the university authorities or the academic system led to negative consequences, such as ostracism, removal from projects or threats of dismissal. They also pointed to a lack of transparency in the processes of hiring, promotion, allocation of funds and places in student halls of residence – social connections or personal arrangements often proved to be decisive. Particularly disturbing were descriptions of public humiliation by superiors, including deans, unequal allocation of bonuses and allowances, and ignoring of employees' requests related to holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, project contracts or working hours.

Students also experienced unfair treatment – they pointed to lower grades for justified absences or a lack of appropriate study conditions due to their disabilities. They described a feeling of powerlessness in the face of structures, a lack of response from university authorities to reported problems, and even "sweeping issues under the carpet". There were also reports of the appropriation of research results from students and doctoral students, coercion to perform activities unrelated to academic duties (e.g. organising events), unfair assessment unrelated to actual competences, and the use of professional position to establish sexual relationships.

Experiences of psychological violence were also numerous and varied, including shouting, insults, ridicule, threats, accusations of dishonesty, coercion to sign documents or perform unwanted work. Many respondents described being disregarded, gossiped about, excluded from teams, and a widespread culture of "cronyism".

A special category was reports of sexist and paternalistic behaviour towards women – both students and employees. There were reports of the use of diminutive forms of address such as "darling", "sweetheart" and "sunshine", as well as addressing women by their first names or using the informal "you" without their consent, which was perceived as unprofessional, infantilising or violating boundaries. This often took the form of a condescending tone – treating adult female students like teenagers. Another disturbing aspect concerned the violation of physical boundaries. The reports included examples of unwanted physical contact, touching, patting, grabbing the shoulder or hand, stroking the hair, and even attempts to kiss or requests for a massage. Such behaviour went beyond the norms of professional contact and was clearly assessed as a violation of personal space and a form of sexual violence.

## **Balancing work and private life**

In both editions of the study, respondents clearly reported difficulties in balancing professional and academic responsibilities with their private lives. Respondents emphasised the lack of flexibility in scheduling classes and meetings, which makes it difficult for people with care responsibilities, especially parents, to function. The lack of systemic support and understanding for such needs was pointed out. At the same time, organisational and structural problems resulting from the functioning of the institution were described, including excessive teaching loads, low salaries, a lack of transparent career paths, extensive bureaucracy, deteriorating working conditions and difficulties with accommodation in student halls of residence. These factors caused frustration, a feeling of underappreciation and burnout. The academic environment also seems to have a clear impact on mental well-being – exhaustion, stress, depression, neurosis,

symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and self-destructive thoughts. All these difficulties were compounded by a lack of psychological support and understanding from others. Overwork was often seen as the "norm". The problems affected both working and studying people. In the latter case, this particularly affected those trying to combine study or work with family life – conflicts between class and meeting times and domestic responsibilities were highlighted, especially in part-time studies, as well as contact from superiors outside working hours. There was also hostility towards women who took maternity leave, manifested, for example, in comments questioning their commitment to work or study.

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## Topics discussed in 2024

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Compared to the 2019 edition, in 2024 we observed new topics with a high emotional charge. Particularly noticeable was the intensification of discussions on worldviews, language and the perceived ideological orientation of institutions' activities.

Importantly, our approach to creating the survey has changed over the few years between the two editions. In 2024, we tried to use neutral or more inclusive language in the questions throughout the survey. We also added questions about discrimination based on characteristics other than gender, which greatly expanded our research area. As already mentioned, the characteristics of the sample also changed. In percentage terms, the respondents in 2024 were more likely to be employed at the University of Warsaw and less likely to be students. On average, they were therefore older than in 2019, from an older generation, but also, probably, considering themselves to be hosts rather than guests at the University of Warsaw and expressing their opinions with greater confidence. These circumstances collectively may have contributed to who responded and what answers they gave. Below, we list the topics that emerged as perhaps an interesting observation of how some respondents

responded to the survey, or even more broadly, what thoughts these individuals have about the various processes currently taking place in the academic world:

- political correctness – some respondents perceived the university's actions as imposing a "left-wing" worldview and limiting pluralism;
- inclusive language – feminine forms and forms such as "student person" were criticised, as they were perceived as artificial and imposed, or even "linguistic nightmares";
- neglect of the majority – there was a sense of 'reverse discrimination' against people with traditional views or, more generally, because they belonged to the majority;
- political engagement – criticism was levelled at the university's inconsistency in its political declarations and actions, as well as a lack of transparency in internal processes;
- frustration with the institution – there was a visible sense of powerlessness in the face of the hierarchical structure and a lack of faith in the effectiveness of mechanisms for reporting problems;
- discrimination against other groups – experiences of neurodiverse and disabled people were reported more frequently, especially in the context of accessibility and the organisation of classes.

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## Summary and recommendations from the qualitative part

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Based on the identified problems and experiences of the respondents, we have prepared a number of proposals and suggestions for actions that could improve the situation in the academic environment of the University of Warsaw.

### Safe procedures

It is crucial to create effective, transparent and safe procedures for reporting cases of discrimination, symbolic violence and abuse – with

guarantee confidentiality and real protection against retaliation. The visibility and accessibility of information about existing support institutions and procedures for reporting discrimination should be increased, e.g. through regular information campaigns, the inclusion of this content in introductory programmes for students and staff, and the creation of simple, easily accessible materials (e.g. infographics or step-by-step guides) explaining the entire process.

## **Training, support and flexibility**

Respondents also pointed to the need for systematic, mandatory training for the entire academic community (staff, students and administration) on equality, anti-discrimination, inclusive communication and responding to violence and abuse. An important element of the changes should also be the adaptation of work organisation and class planning to the needs of people combining academic responsibilities with their private lives, including ensuring greater flexibility and sensitivity to care issues. The need for access to professional psychological support and protection for people who report problems was also pointed out.

Combining the results of the open-ended questions with those of the closed-ended questions, it seems that many people are unaware of the possibilities or institutions that already exist at the University of Warsaw. Therefore, it would be important to provide better information, perhaps as part of compulsory training, about the existing possibilities. Of course, with greater awareness, the number of people seeking help would increase, and the university should also be prepared to support these institutions to avoid overburdening them.

## **Dialogue**

In order to effectively implement equality policy and build a truly inclusive environment, it is necessary to take action to address concerns related to the marginalisation of certain communities, especially those who perceive equality measures as threatening their identity or status. In the face of emerging

In response to voices claiming "reverse discrimination," it is worth ensuring that broad educational measures are taken to explain the meaning and purpose of equality policies and to show that their essence is not to take away the rights of any group, but to equalise them. It is worth developing dialogue within the academic community, respecting different sensitivities and beliefs, and creating space for open, safe conversation about social and cultural changes. It is also important that institutional language and actions are not perceived as exclusionary towards the so-called majority. It is worth referring to common values: dignity, respect and equal treatment of all members of the academic community, regardless of their identity, views or lifestyle.

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# Summary of the report and recommendations

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In the second edition of the survey, conducted among students and employees of the University of Warsaw in 2024, 3,228 people took part. When comparing the results of both editions, it is worth remembering that in 2019, many more people took part, namely 10,907, mainly from the student body, which means that in the current survey, the percentage of people working at the University of Warsaw is higher than in the previous survey. As in the previous edition from 2024, the main objective of the survey was to deepen knowledge about the perceived prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment, but this time, not only gender was taken into account, but also national and ethnic origin, age, gender expression, neuroatypicality and the status of the respondent. This provided a more complete picture of discrimination in the university environment.

**Prevalence of various forms of unequal treatment.** The second edition of the study confirmed the previous conclusions from 2019 that the most common forms of unequal treatment at the University of Warsaw remain verbal and behavioural expressions and behaviours (comments, jokes, inappropriate remarks). Once again, the most serious offences, such as sexual propositions or persistent attempts to make contact, were the least frequently reported, which is consistent with previous results. The survey was expanded to include questions about negative comments relating to various characteristics other than gender (including nationality, mental health and gender expression), with comments about ethnic origin proving to be the most frequently reported problem. At the same time, the vast majority of respondents declared that they had not encountered comments about their socio-economic status, health or accent.

**Persons committing and experiencing unequal treatment.** With regard to perpetrators and victims, the trend from 2019 continues: men were more often identified as the initiators of discriminatory behaviour, and women as

experiencing unequal treatment. However, the new data also takes into account persons of other genders (including non-binary persons) – this group was relatively rarely identified as perpetrators by the respondents, but more often appeared as victims. The results of the study also indicate that the perpetrators of unequal treatment are most often Polish citizens, middle-aged or older, employed in scientific and research positions, while the main victims are mostly young students. At the same time, each academic group (including administrative, library and technical staff, teachers and doctoral students) most often perceives itself as the most affected, but also as perpetrators of discrimination.

Furthermore, hierarchy and power relations in the university environment have a significant impact on the scale and nature of the phenomenon, which points to the need for comprehensive preventive measures, especially in supervisor-subordinate relationships, but also in peer groups.

**Response.** In this year's edition of the survey, as in 2019, participants often pointed to a lack of response or rare responses to manifestations of unequal treatment, confirming the continuing problem of insufficient intervention by witnesses. As was the case five years ago, reporting cases of discrimination to superiors or university institutions was rarely mentioned – a significant proportion of people still resorted to informal forms of support (e.g. talking to friends). A new feature of the current study was a more detailed analysis of responses by professional group, which revealed that students and doctoral students were the least likely to respond, while those working in research, technical, administrative positions and those employed on non-standard contracts, such as commission contracts. In both editions of the study, the key reasons for not responding were a lack of belief in the effectiveness of the action and fear of consequences. What emerges from a comparison of the two editions is therefore a continuing need to implement more effective support mechanisms and clear procedures that would encourage the reporting of cases of discrimination, especially among groups lower down in the university hierarchy.



**Supporting institutions.** Approximately one-third of respondents had experienced discrimination in the last four years, and, as in 2019, only less than 20% reported a lack of any support in difficult situations. Most often, help was provided by loved ones (family, friends) and acquaintances from the university, which confirms the continuing predominance of informal sources of support. At the same time, satisfaction with the support provided by UW institutions (e.g. the Office for Persons with Disabilities or faculty authorities) was rated moderately high, as in the previous edition. Nevertheless, relatively few people sought formal forms of assistance, which indicates a need to further strengthen the role of official procedures and encourage reporting of discrimination. Overall, a clear majority of respondents feel "at home" at the University of Warsaw and rate the university's support positively, although, especially when looking at the open-ended responses, there is still room for improvement and further action.

**Mental well-being and its relationship to unequal treatment.** Compared to the 2019 survey, there was a noticeable increase in stress related to work and studies and an intensification of negative psychological symptoms, despite higher overall life satisfaction. Women had lower levels of mental well-being than men, and this difference has remained virtually unchanged since 2019. Analyses showed a strong link between feelings of loneliness and lower well-being; a greater number of remote contacts had a negative impact on mental health, especially among those who preferred face-to-face meetings. Although some of the adverse changes (e.g., increased stress and poorer self-rated health) intensified in 2024, positive ratings of overall life satisfaction may signal a greater role of non-university factors in shaping well-being. However, the strong link between unequal treatment (both experienced and observed) and poorer mental well-being remains significant. Compared to 2019, this problem remains relevant, with no clear improvement in gender disparities, and people of non-normative gender categories still showing particularly low levels of well-being. As a result, further differentiated measures are needed

to support specific groups in the academic environment, taking into account both gender issues and hierarchical relationships at work and in study.