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# The rite of passage

## School-age youth and educational stages

### Summary

The purpose of this book is to describe the school-age youth's rite of passage from one educational stage to another, in the light of the theory of the rites of passage.

The book comprises five theoretical chapters, a methodological part and two chapters focusing on the results received in the course of quality and quantity longitudinal studies.

The theoretical chapters include the following key concepts: rite, rite of passage, identity and relationship between them, as well as the characteristics of contemporary adolescents and the context of their development, i.e. dynamically changing reality.

The text refers to the tradition of pedagogical research in which the category of "the rite of passage" is used to study school culture, its customs, festive character and everyday life. Furthermore, the authors of different theses and studies perceive school as a living space not only in the context of time of life (between childhood and adolescence) but also as a temporary socializing environment (between family and broadly defined society).

All interpretations of the rites of passage characteristic for pedagogy are present in the author's way of thinking about school and clearly visible in the theoretical part as well as in the analysis and interpretation of the study results. However, the concept of educational stages and the situation of the students passing through them are both particularly highlighted.

The research is focused around the issues related to acquiring knowledge about the process of transferring from junior high school to high school, accounting for the subjective aspects of sense of identity of the research subjects, their temporary and educational plans for future and the image of oneself as a student, the image of school and the attitude towards the changes, with the use of three-stage concept of rites of passage and finding variables that diversify the phenomena and the explanation for this diversity.

From the initial trial group of 765 junior high school students, the target group of 124 people was selected. The experiences of this group in the three stages of the rite

of passage (between junior high school and high school) were studied. Additionally, 20 interviews on the issue of the transfer from one school to another were analyzed.

In the light of the results, the image of passing from one education stage to another was interpreted. It reflects the preliminal, liminal and postliminal stages, described by van Gennep, that are characteristic for temporary phases. Additionally, this image was interpreted with different factors in mind. The conclusions suggesting a considerable role of the desired personal characteristics (e.g. high level of commitment) which facilitate coping with difficult situations and an immense role of the school context are not new. However, consequently formulated pedagogical recommendations referring to the rite of passage prove the value of the work presented.