

"DESIGN YOURSELF" PROJECT RESEARCH REPORT



Authors:

Marta Brzezińska-Hubert, Katrin Jaschinski, Agnieszka Skraburska



The project is hosted by ARTE EGO Foundation in Poland, and Grenz Kultur in Germany.
Co-financed by Erasmus+ Youth in Action.

"DESIGN YOURSELF" PROJECT

RESEARCH REPORT



Creating something with our own hands makes us mindful. We believe that handcraft and self-expression in cloth design stimulate more independent work and creativity in society. Nowadays, people are already restricted in handmade activities shaped by the market: it's easier to take than to make. That's why we would like to invite you to join a community that does exactly the opposite: make first, take later.

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I. CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

Clothing and design style play one of the most important roles in young people's lives. They are often identifying themselves with what they wear. Although young people are constantly searching for their identity, it often happens that instead of expressing freely their needs and passions and creating their own culture, they are dominated by the mass media and mainstream way of living. While some groups of youngsters become more conscious of the advantage that designing and creating their clothes may bring to them, other remain unaware that their needs and passions may be expressed by their clothes or simply believe that they are not able or skilled to do so.

Therefore we decided to investigate the topic that is still not explored widely, especially in relation to youth. Social scientists already recognize the existence of consumers who engage in 'craft consumption'. According to Campbell, "craft" represents a consumption activity in which the same person designs and makes a certain product, using own "skill, knowledge and passion while being motivated by a desire for self-expression"¹. Designing or re-creating clothes or accessories by adding own elements to take ownership or individualize a given item represents another form of manual self-expression called "possession ritual". Both in Poland and Germany the studies related to this area are not well known, especially in relation to youth work and education.

Thus, it seems worth to explore why young people choose a certain clothing style and how they express themselves through manual (re) creation of clothes and accessories. What is more, in future projects we would like to investigate how the development of own self-expression through creation of own style correlates with the development of pro-activity in other youth participation social areas. Therefore, this research focused also on defining what proactivity means for young people and how it is represented in their lives.

Finally, it is important to underline that this study constitutes the integral part of "Design Yourself" project consisting of both research activities and educational activities in forms of practical craft workshops and coaching sessions. Based on the findings of this research in Poland and in Germany the new educational tool: "Design Yourself Educational Model" was created aiming to support young people's development - creative expression of themselves through the design of own clothing style².

¹ C. Campbell (2005) "Culture, craft and consumption in a postmodern society", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, March 2005 vol. 5 no. 1, p. 23

² For more information visit: <http://designyourself.info/>

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art.
- Andy Warhol

The terms "self-expression through clothing style" and "proactivity" trigger various associations among researchers and practitioners who are in our context youth workers and educators. Therefore, this theoretical framework that was developed out of the literature review constitutes the background for the initial definitions of the key terms addressed in the research questions.

The concepts that were already briefly explained above in the context of our research are: "craft consumption" and "possession ritual". Campbell foresees the process of craft consumption enabling people to express their personality and authenticity to become more and more needed in the future. It seems important to add here (especially in relation to the practical part of the whole "Design Yourself" project) that according to Campbell, craft activities require not only the internal motivation, self-confidence and reflexive awareness, but also a cultural capital. The latter, initially observed by Bourdieu, might be understood in the context of this research as abilities and practical skills that an individual needs to have in order to (re-)create the products that "express a person's individuality or serve as a means to self-fulfillment"³.

What is more, self-expression is also perceived by some researchers to constitute one of the key aspects of people's life that reveal the quality of the social capital within a community⁴.

In this point it is important to underline the social aspect of self-expression as a way of meaningful interaction with the surrounding world. On the one hand expressing your authentic self holds a great value, on the other hand it involves some potential risks such as fear of making mistakes or of rejection by others⁵. Therefore, the barriers for self-expression as well as the identification of support needed will also be a part of "Design Yourself" research.

The more specific definition of "clothing style" seems closely connected with a broader definition of a fashion. As Godart points out, there is a general lack of academic literature and research in the topic of fashion, which is often perceived as something shallow and representing the social manipulation of upper classes and corporations aiming at "artificially sustaining consumption"⁶. While examining the definitions of fashion himself, Godart includes also the perspective of "consumption patterns of individuals, groups and social classes that use clothes to define their identity". What is more, he connects this aspect of fashion with the idea of "adornment" being not only clothes, but also ornaments such as "accessories, jewelry, tattoos, makeup, and the like"⁷. By choosing their clothes

³ C. C. Campbell (2005) "Culture, craft and consumption in a postmodern society", Journal of Consumer Culture, March 2005 vol. 5 no. 1, pp. 35-35

⁴ A Study on Creativity Index, Home Affairs Bureau, The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, p. 51. Available at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/culture/Documents/Hui.pdf>

⁵ "The importance of self-expression", Street-Level Youth Media 2015

⁶ F. Godart (2012) "Unveiling Fashion. Business, Culture, and Identity in the Most Glamorous Industry", Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012, p.4

⁷ Ibidem, p. 5

and accessories, an individual enters in the dialogue with the society. People use their outfit to "express their information to others, to engage in social gatherings and activities and can make a significant place in their social system"⁸. They also express their belonging or lack of identification with certain social groups or subcultures.

As far as the concept of proactivity is concerned, there is a variety of definitions that are applied in both business and social studies. Several academic works contrast proactive attitude or personality with the passive one: people who change the world and those who adapt to the world (psychological perspective), people perceived as sculptors or as sculpture (organisational behaviour literature), people emphasizing innovation and change and those emphasizing stability (level of groups and organisations)⁹. For the purpose of this research, some chosen definitions will be presented below as they constitute the basis for the understanding of proactivity in the context of our project.

(...) Proactive people scan for opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they reach closure by bringing about change. (...) They take it upon themselves to have an impact on the world around them. People who are not proactive exhibit the opposite patterns—they fail to identify, let alone seize, opportunities to change things. They show little initiative, and rely on others to be forces for change. They passively adapt to, and even endure, their circumstances¹⁰.

Being proactive is about making things happen, anticipating and preventing problems, and seizing opportunities. It involves self-initiated efforts to bring about change in the work environment and/or oneself to achieve a different future¹¹

*The proactive individual believes in the existence of sufficient **resources** which can be external or internal (...). The proactive individual takes **responsibility** for his or her own growth. A life course is not fully determined by external forces but can be chosen (...). The proactive individual is driven by **values**. Others' behavior might be determined by their social environment, whereas proactive persons are, in contrast, mindful of their values and choose their path of action accordingly (...). The proactive individual has a **vision**. He or she creates meaning in life by striving for ambitious goals.¹²*

In the light of the above definitions it may be inferred that proactivity is a function of several personal traits as well as situational factors. What is more, it may be measured both from cognitive and behavioral perspective. In this report the definitions of the above concepts will further be developed as result of both qualitative and quantitative research.

⁸ Omair, K. (2009) "Arab women managers and identity formation through clothing" in *Education, Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 24(6): 412-431

⁹ T.S. Bateman and J.M. Crant (1993) "The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates", *Journal Of Organizational Behavior* March 1993, pp. 104-105

¹⁰ Ibidem, p.105

¹¹ S.K.Parker, U. K. Bindl, & K. Strauss (2010). "Making things happen: A model of proactive motivation", *Journal of Management* 36: 827 – 856. doi:10.1177/0149206310363732.

¹² G.S. Schmitz. & R.Schwarzer(1999). Proaktive Einstellung von Lehrern: Konstruktbeschreibung und psychometrische Analysen [Teachers' Proactive Attitude: Construct description and psychometric analyses]. *Zeitschrift für Empirische Pädagogik*, 13 (1), 3-27.

III. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

1. GENERAL AIM AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The research aimed to understand how young people in Poland and Germany express themselves through their clothing style and how this is related to their pro-activity in various aspects of their life. It is important to underline that the aim was not to make comparative analysis of data gathered from Poland and Germany but to explore the topic of self-expression through own clothing style from various angles. Although both research teams investigated the same research questions, the analysis through diverse perspectives was at some points accepted and even encouraged in order to get a broader picture of a chosen aspect of proactivity or self-expression of youth.

Specifically, the study focused on two primary objectives:

1. To identify young people's willingness to and actual design of own style and their pro-activity in life.
2. To describe the current status of identified variables - „expressing oneself through clothing style” and „being pro-active in life”.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Research questions

1. Which clothing style do young people choose?
2. How / in which ways do young people express themselves manually through their clothing style?
3. To what extent do young people add a part of themselves to what they are wearing?
4. Why do young people choose a certain clothing style?
5. What does it mean for young people to be proactive in their lives?
6. How (in what ways) are young people pro-active in their lives?

Definitions of initial key terms

Based on a review of literature the following initial definitions were made for the proposed study:

1. “Clothing style” was defined as the overall appearance of a young person including clothes, hairstyle, bags, tattoos, jewelry, etc.
2. “Being pro-active in life / Pro-activity in life” was defined as making decisions in one’s own life according to one’s own values and needs.
3. “The expression through the individually created clothing style / Expressing oneself through the individually created clothing style” was defined as a series of actions connected to the individual creation of own clothing style: from sewing an extra button to own clothes/bags to the design and creation of a series of clothes.

3. STUDY SAMPLE

This research was planned as consisting of a qualitative and a quantitative phase, the latter founding on the prior. A number of interviews were conducted with people as representative as possible for society and fitting our research interests, meaning a couple of young people (16 to 30 years of age) from different professional and/or educational backgrounds. Based on these interviews the online questionnaire was published for young people to fill-in, regardless their context, apart from age (still 16 to 30 years of age) and their country of residence (these were to be Germany and/or Poland).

Phase one - Qualitative Study

For the qualitative study phase the sample of 32 respondents was covered with in-depth interviews (16 in Poland and 16 in Germany):

Table 1. Profile of respondents in qualitative phase in Germany and Poland

Degree of expression	Background	Number of interviewees in Germany	Number of interviewees in Poland
Young people with a high degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Attending school (between 13 and 19 years old)	1	1
	Studying at the higher educational institution (between 18 and 26 years old)	2	2
	Employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	3	3
	Not employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	2	2
Young people with a low degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Attending school (between 13 and 19 years old)	3	3
	Studying at the higher educational institution (between 18 and 26 years old)	2	2
	Employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	2	2
	Not employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	1	1

Phase two - Quantitative study

We aimed to gather 500 responses using the online-questionnaire: 250 from respondents based in Poland and 250 from those based in Germany. In total we gathered 498 responses: 146 in the Polish language version, 78 in German and 274 in English (in which respondents were coming from Poland – 211 respondents, and Germany – 63 respondents). Nevertheless, not all respondents answered all the questions and for the final analysis we took into consideration the responses of those young people who completed the survey: 155 in Poland and 116 in Germany.

Picture 1: Number of respondents of online questionnaire

ALL SURVEYS			
TITLE	MODIFIED	RESPONSES	ACTIONS
Projekt "Design Yourself!" Polish Created 10/23/2015	01/19/2016	146	   ▾
Design Yourself! project Created 10/24/2015	01/14/2016	274	   ▾
Design Yourself! Projekt _deutsch Created 10/27/2015	01/05/2016	78	   ▾

More detailed description of participants of the qualitative and quantitative study in Germany and in Poland is provided in further chapters of this report.

4. DATA COLLECTION

In this study, two instruments – in depth interviews and online questionnaire were employed to answer the above mentioned research questions and hypothesis. The research was divided into two parts:

Phase one - Qualitative Study

The qualitative study sought to describe the current status of identified and above-mentioned definitions. To support phase one, we conducted a field research in form of in-depth interviews with 32 young people based in Germany and Poland. The goal of this phase was to collect in-depth answers to the research questions no 1-6. In other words we wanted to gather a first-hand feedback from a sample from our target population to validate and (re-)construct our indicators – <proactivity in life> and <expression through the individually created clothing style>.

Phase two - Quantitative study

The quantitative study was realized based on the data collected during the qualitative study. To support phrase two, we conducted a survey using an online questionnaire available in 3 languages on the project platform. In addition to the focus on the individual clothing style and pro-activity of youth, the quantitative study focused more specifically on manual self-expression of young people.

5. DATA PREPARATION

Given the different approaches of data retrieval, analyses naturally differed, as did data preparation for analyses. Analyses to verify or falsify the applied definitions, to receive insights in the meaning of clothing style and proactivity consist mainly of frequency observations as well as summarizing the qualitative data. In some points singular quotes will be used to either illustrate a stated point or to highlight contradictions. Main focus of the analyses of qualitative data is the development of the online questionnaire used for quantitative research of the stated research questions. For all analyses in the chapter "Summary of the research in Germany", names of interviewees have been changed, and all quotes, except from Antonia, are translations from German to English, done by the author of this chapter. In the "Summary of the research in Poland" all quotes were translated from Polish to English by the authors of this chapter.

The analysis of the qualitative interviews was based on code analysis. Coding here followed an open and repetitive approach, based on Grounded Theory. This has led in some cases to quite a high number of codes combined with a relatively low frequency (e.g. Table). However, to show the actual outcomes of the interviews, data adaptation has not been applied until now. The use of Survey Monkey as provider for the online questionnaire proved rather a complicated choice. Acquired data had to be recoded in a very complicated way, unless paid for upgrades. After recoding, data sets were combined using SPSS, to have access to all data from respondents residing in Germany and in Poland.

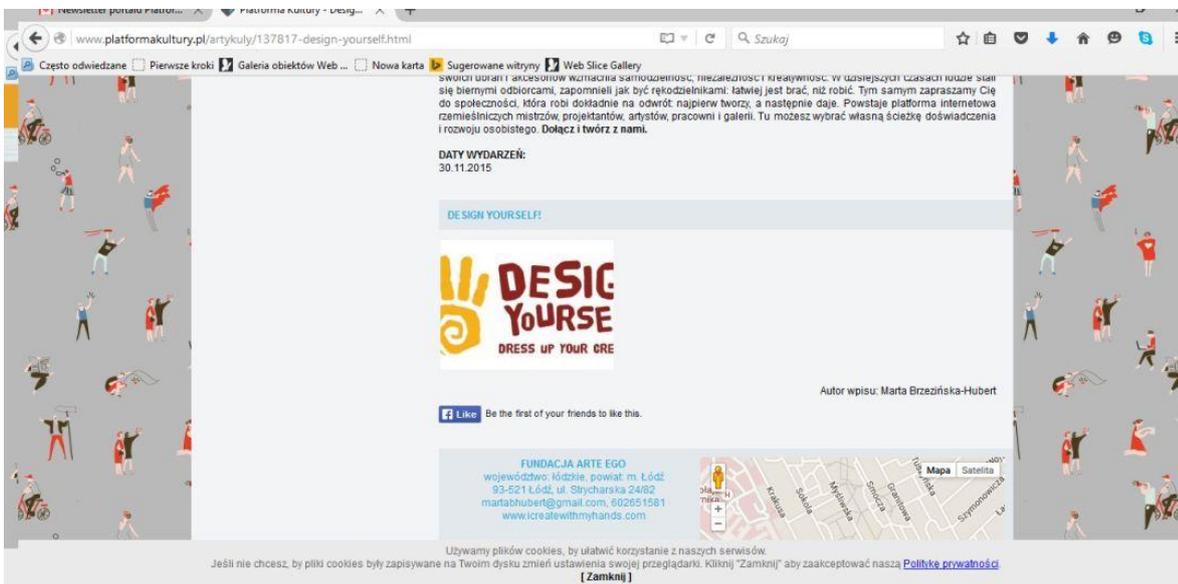
IV. PROMOTION OF THE STUDY

Information about the project was published on the facebook page of the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation as well as educational and cultural projects' platform "Platforma Kultury" (The Platform of Culture).

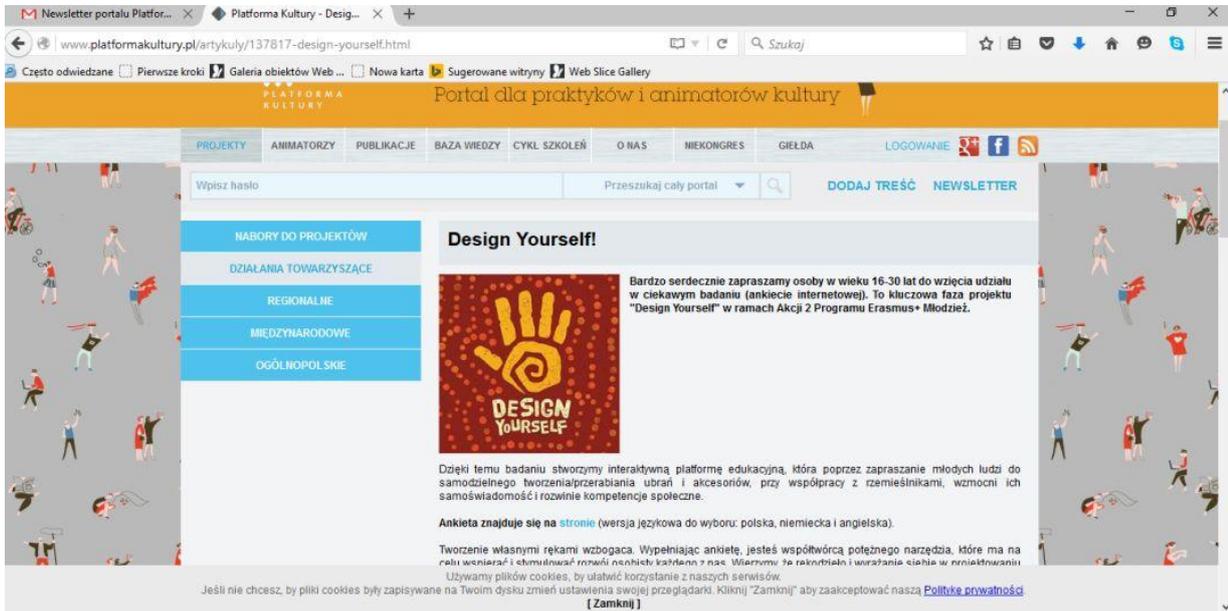
The survey was also spread on:

- FB-Group Design Yourself
- FB-Page Design Yourself
- Erasmus + Trainers Pool
- EVS Trainers Pool Poland
- Youth Culture Spaces in Berlin
- Youth Culture Spaces in Poland

Picture 2. Information about the project and survey research on the Platform of Culture - part 1



Picture 3. Information about the project and survey research on the Platform of Culture - part 2



Picture 4. Information about the project and survey research on the facebook page of the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation



V. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH IN GERMANY

1. PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Initially, research questions were answered by conducting in-depth interviews with 16 people resident in Germany. Interviewees were sought via internet and emails and are described in Table 2 and Table 3. Although the qualitative material could not give a generalizable answer to the main research questions, the analyses facilitated the development of the questionnaire. In addition they increased understanding of the situation of youth, their idea of proactivity and their interest in creating their own style.

Table 2: Interviewee profile

Degree of expression	Background	Number of interviewees
Young people with a high degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Attending school (between 13 and 19 years old)	1
	Studying at the higher educational institution (between 18 and 26 years old)	2
	Employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	3
	Not employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	2
Young people with a low degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Attending school (between 13 and 19 years old)	3
	Studying at the higher educational institution (between 18 and 26 years old)	2
	Employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	2
	Not employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	1

Table 3: Sample sorted by age

Name*	Age	Activity	Gender
Andreas	25	Working in IT	m
Antonia	30	Unemployed, Economist	f
Christian	15	Student (school)	m
Emma	18	Student (school)	f
Hanna	18	Student (school)	f
Jana	23	Vocational training as nursery school teacher	f
Juliane	24	University student	f
Lisa	28	Unemployed, Political Scientist	f



Maria	22	Freelancer for German environmentally engaged NGO, planning vocational training as alternative practitioner, currently working on spiritual development	f
Mathilda	22	Working in veterinarian, planning to start vocational training	f
Matthias	26	University student, Engineering	m
Peter	24	University student, Media Technology	m
Resi	24	University student, Medicine	f
Teresa	26	Working as socio-educational assistant in Kindergarten	f
Thomas	30	Freelancer, theater engineering	m
Valerie	13	Student (school)	f

*Names in the table and in the rest of the report have been changed, as anonymity was promised for the publication of research results.

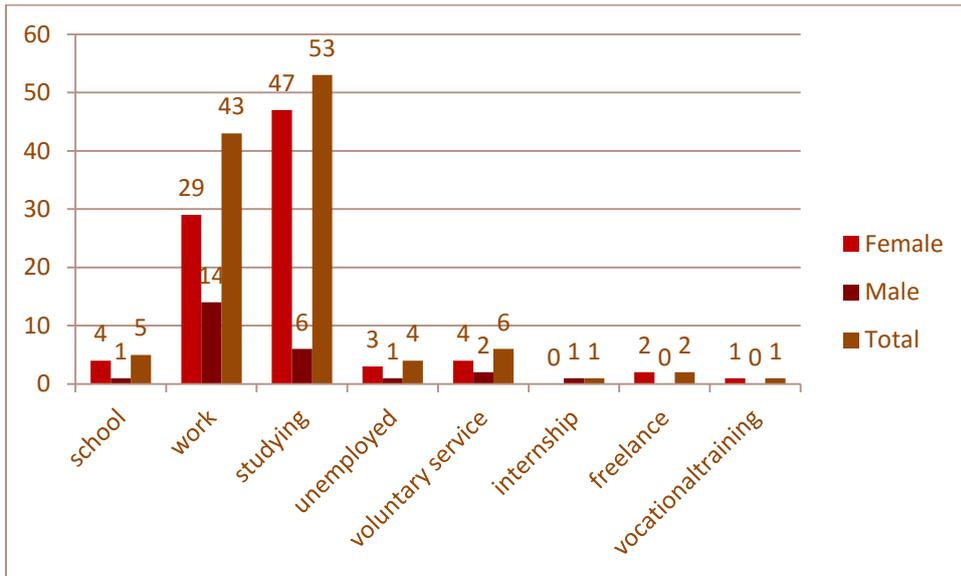
The differentiation between people with high degree of self-expression through clothing and low self-expression through clothing has been omitted here. Initially, this distinction had been very soft and open. Many times people turned out to be very proactive and very thoughtful about their style, or vice versa, contradicting prior assumptions of the interviewer. In a later analysis a distinction will follow.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The initial set of data consisted of 274 people from Germany and Poland having replied to the questionnaire published in English (Design Yourself! Project) and 78 people having replied to the questionnaire published in German (see Picture 1).

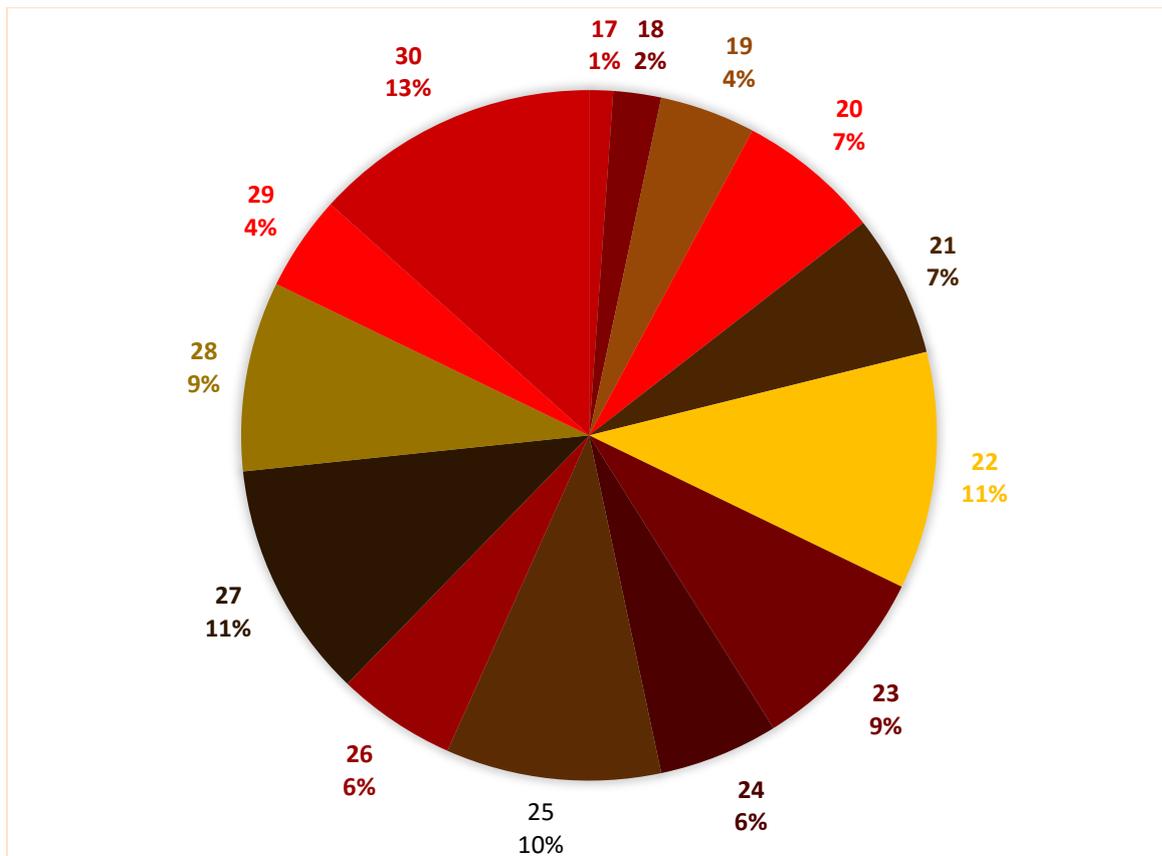
After observation of the replies it became obvious that not as many interviews would be useful for the analyses. For various reasons the number of cases was reduced to a total of 295, of which only 116 contained enough data for analyses. Valid data was provided by mainly female respondents who worked or studied at the time of answering the questionnaire (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Gender and occupation of respondents



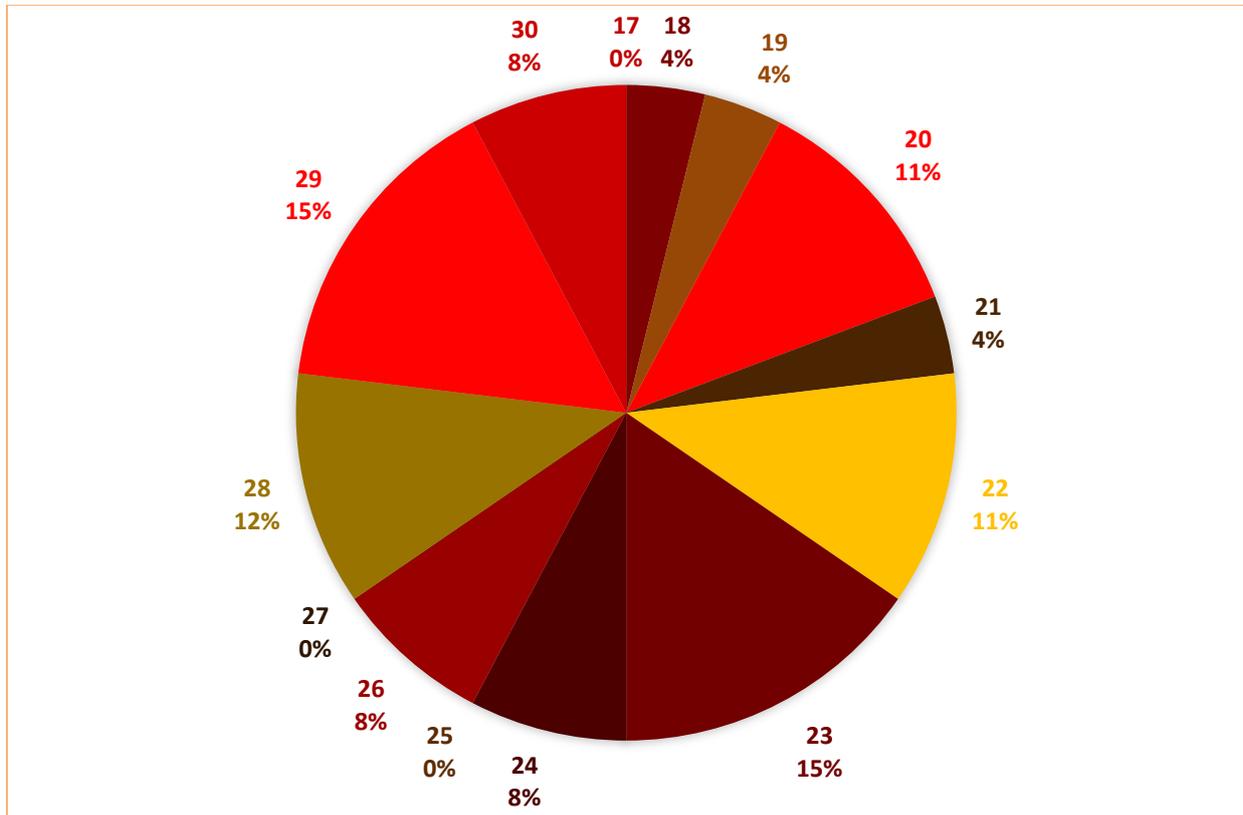
Also, the questionnaire did not reach as many very young people as was hoped for. Figure 2 shows that the largest age groups of the female respondents to the questionnaire were 22, 27 and 30 years old, while only one 17 year old responded.

Figure 2: Age of female respondents



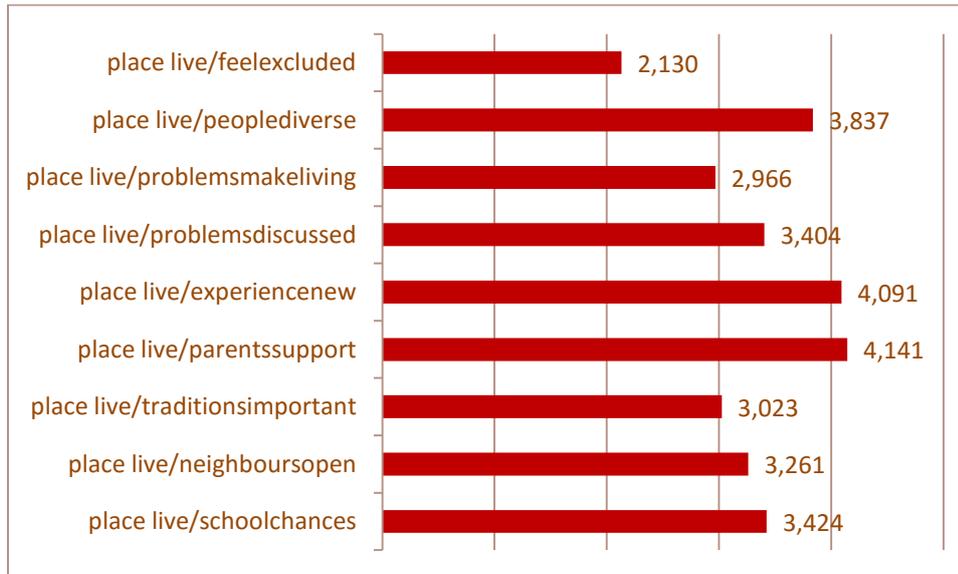
With a considerable lower number (26 respondents contrasting 90 female), Figure 3 shows a similar pattern for the age of male respondents to the questionnaire.

Figure 3: Age of male respondents



The overall picture (mean) of the respondents showed that they do not feel excluded in their surroundings, but are supported by their parents and live in areas, where there exists diversity (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Means of description of place of living and surrounding of respondents



Note: reply options were: 1 – I strongly disagree; 2 – I disagree; 3 – I don't know; 4 – I agree; 5 – I strongly agree.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIFIC AIMS

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WILLINGNESS TO DEVELOP AND ACTUALLY DESIGN THEIR OWN STYLE AND THEIR PROACTIVITY IN LIFE

As can be seen in Table 4, most of the people interviewed during the qualitative phase considered themselves as proactive (56.25%).

Table 1: Self-assigned proactivity and willingness to create own style

Name	Age	Activity	Gender	Self-assigned proactivity	Willingness to create own style
Not being proactive					
Jana*	23	Vocational training as nursery school teacher	f	1	Yes
Christian	15	Student (school)	m	1	No
Valerie	13	Student (school)	f	1	No
Being partially proactive					
Emma	18	Student (school)	f	2	Yes
Matthias	26	University student, Engineering	m	2	No
Peter	24	University student, Media Technology	m	2	No
Lisa	28	Unemployed, Political Scientist	f	2	No
Being proactive					

Mathilda	22	Working in veterinarian, planning to start vocational training	f	3	Yes
Thomas	30	Freelancer, theatre engineering	m	3	Yes
Andreas	25	Working in IT	m	3	No
Maria	22	Freelancer for German environmentally engaged NGO, planning vocational training as alternative practitioner, currently working on spiritual development	f	3	Yes
Juliane	24	University student	f	3	No
Teresa	26	Working as socio-educational assistant in Kindergarten	f	3	Yes
Antonia	30	Unemployed, Economist	f	3	Yes
Resi	24	University student, Medicine	f	3	Yes
Hanna	18	Student (school)	f	3	Yes

Note: 1 – No

2 – Partially

3 – Yes

Only four of them considered themselves not entirely proactive, but wanted proactivity as part of their personality traits, as for example Lisa:

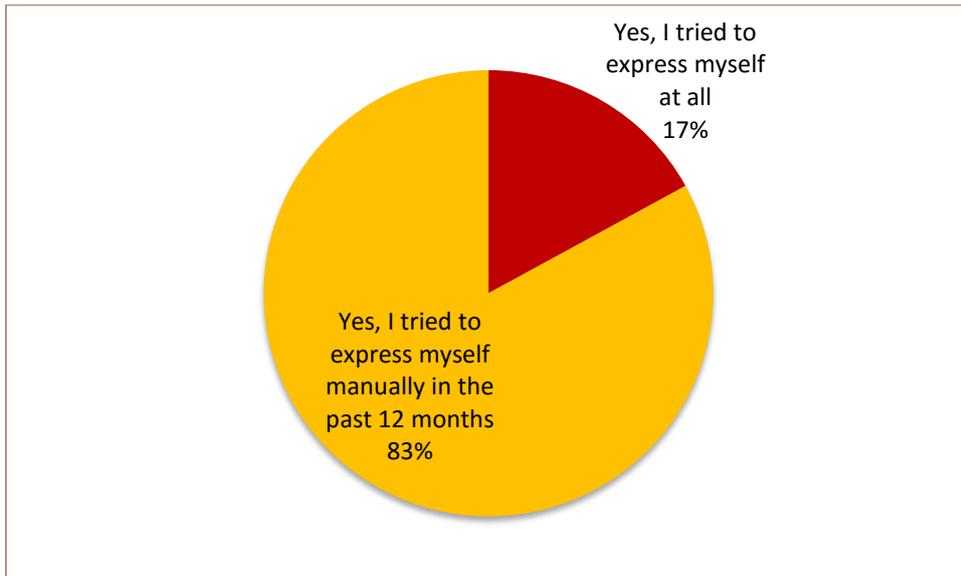
...I try to be it [proactive, Ed.]. There are so many studies [stating, Ed.] that you always move in different stages of life, and I mean, right now arriving at the job market and trying to stay there is a very pleasant phase, offers little fun, and triggers enormous identification processes, so I think that I should tackle this merely proactively [...]

The three remaining interviewees considered themselves as not proactive. While sounding plausible for the case of Jana, for Christian and Valerie, this concept might just have been phrased too complex to grasp, given their age. In the remaining groups other interviewees share the same age as Jana does, so her self-identification seems “valid”.

The willingness to create own style is also shown in Table 4, here not every person being proactive stated interest in creation of own style, although the majority did. As for the group of not proactive people and the one striving for proactivity, here the majority showed little to no interest in the design of own style. There are however exceptions in all three groups, showing that one cannot assume a clear connection between proactivity and the creation of own style. For the questionnaire this meant that to observe a relation between creation of own style and proactivity, these concepts needed to be adapted and refined.

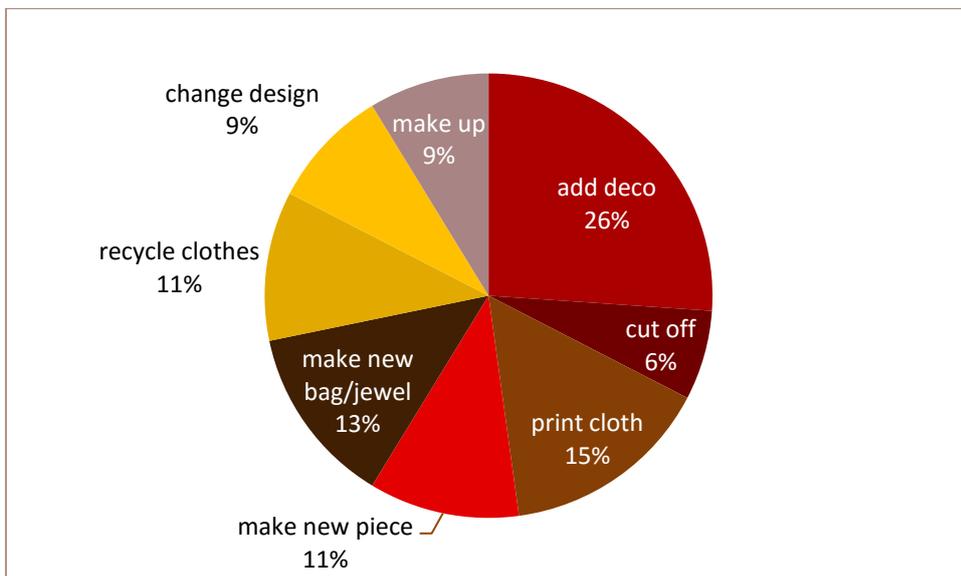
For the online questionnaire, of those who actually tried expressing themselves manually, the majority had done so in the past 12 months (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who stated, they had expressed themselves



Of those who tried to express themselves a while ago, the majority (26%) added decorations as a means of self-expression and the development of own design, with only 6% actually cutting parts of the clothing of (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Means of self-expression of those who tried self-expression a while ago



THE CURRENT STATUS OF VARIABLES “BEING PROACTIVE IN LIFE” AND “EXPRESSING ONESELF THROUGH CLOTHING STYLE”

“BEING PROACTIVE IN LIFE”

The above-mentioned definitions of the theoretical concepts share main components with theories applied in organisation psychology and development psychology. Interestingly, interviewees in the qualitative research phase had a very diverse understanding of what proactivity means and how proactive people behave. Table 5 shows, how many aspects belong to proactivity according to the people interviewed [sources].

Table 5: Frequencies of characteristics assigned to proactivity

Attribute	Frequency
Actively developing own passions, talents, interests	8
Making choices according to own beliefs	6
Being self-confident	5
Being active	5
Being assertive	5
Creating new	4
Making choices according to own needs	4
Knowing what one aims for	4
Being open for new experiences	4
Brave	3
Critical	3
Take initiative	3
Multiplying/having effect on society	3
Actively engaging in social initiatives	3
A bit outsider	2
Arrogant	2
Being very confident in their views and in themselves	2
Colourful	2
Contributing with sth. and oneself	2
Extravagant	2
Extroverted	2
Honest	2
Overcome outer boundaries/(moral) conventions	2
Rhetorically competent	2
Taking responsibility for own actions	2
Trying different things	2
Having own opinions	2
Being intelligent	1
Charisma	1
Choice of friends	1
Consider structure and context	1
Eager to learn/reflecting environments opinions	1
Focus on individual	1
Partying	1
Trouble with parents	1
Well-informed/ news	1

Ignoring opinion of others	1
In dialogue	1
Political participation	1
Reflecting	1
Self-acceptance	1

Many of them aim at strong and outgoing personalities. Only few focus on the proactive individual interacting with society and being connected to it. In addition to these findings, more differentiated perspectives on personality traits came up, for example with Antonia talking about making decisions based on own needs and values:

Yes, but not all the time, in general people do it 5 times out of 10, they [proactive people] do it 7 times out of ten. For example, you might have some privileges, you might live in a family with high prospects and relations and there you might neglect or despise these people but they are still ... Proactive it is more due to their possibilities how they behave.

Also interesting are the ideas of developing into a proactive person, here one of Lisa's statements:

...but I believe that, before one can come to unison with oneself one must always doubt. So even when a proactive person does not doubt, this person has done so before.

Lisa is also the one stating that "... they [proactive] can also be people, which are shy and very quiet in group processes."

Based on the findings and in preparation of the quantitative phase of research the definition of proactivity was adapted. Three issues became obvious:

1. Too many attributes were assigned to the term pro-activity by interviewees.
2. There was no clear direction in the attributes.
3. Such a number of criteria could not to any positive effect be used as base for a quantitative measure.

Thus, the results were narrowed by combining the frame for proactivity given at the outset (see above), the findings of the qualitative phase and a very practicable definition of proactivity. This combination formed the base for the questionnaire items in question 6 in the questionnaire (see the Design Yourself Educational Model manual).

"EXPRESSING ONESELF THROUGH CLOTHING STYLE"

The initial definition of expression through own clothing style experienced a transformation analysing quantitative data. In Table 6 it shows that the haircut seems to be a very prominent way to express the own self.

Table 6: Ways of expression through own clothing style and frequencies

Name	Frequency
Haircut	9

Producing, designing jewellery	7
Producing a new piece of clothing	6
Decorating clothes, shoes, bags	6
Modifying or simplifying clothes or accessories	6
Having (designed) a tattoo	4
Playing with colours	3
Choosing ecological / fair trade clothes	3
Re-combining different styles	2
Buying atypical clothes	2
Having piercings	2
Using accessories	1
Using make-up to distinguish oneself	1
Sewing or gluing a button or patch	1
Having untypical clothes	1
Recycling clothes	1

Measures included dying, cutting it by oneself, but also regularly going to the coiffeur and trying new things. Jana explains:

... in general I rather went to the hairdresser and let them do it. I actually changed colours quite a lot, from dark brown to red, but actually I am blond, permanent waves I had, too. I always liked trying new things, but not doing it myself.

Interviews showed, that in many cases even buying clothes can be part of a high degree of self-expression through the own clothing style. Factors such as buying second hand clothing or fair-trade clothing identified as profound measure of expression of own values and beliefs. The availability nowadays also led in some ways not to producing the own idea of style, but to a more elaborate search for the piece in mind:

... I don't change something myself, but sometimes I have ideas in mind, only most of the time it actually already exists like that and I just have to look for it. (Teresa)

Apparently, not only people actually sewing their own clothes or strongly modifying them have an intense relation to their style. Quotes like the one from Teresa show that an individual style also is made of bought clothes in the understanding of the interviewed.

Upon identifying this definition of own clothing style, another adaptation was made to the direction of this research. For the questionnaire, the focus was directed at the actual production of an individual style, in the sense of physical creation.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

WHICH CLOTHING STYLE YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE?

Comfort, the need to express oneself, as well the opinion of others are important reasons for the style of clothes. Comfort here is at times given more importance than being “chic,” sometimes even reaches metaphorical dimensions, for example when Maria explains:

... I just can't, for six, seven years I have not been wearing jeans anymore, because I find them terribly uncomfortable [...] I always need something that is comfortable, I don't force myself into something, that somehow [restrains] me, that strikes me as uncomfortable in everyday life, I don't want that and I don't like that. And that is, what distinguishes me, because I always wear what i like and what is comfortable.

Comfort is in different ways important for all three groups of style-related interest. There are difference for people not expressing their own style (here group 1) and people creating their own style either partially or with a high degree (here group 2 and group 3). This can be seen nicely comparing the 10 most given codes for the three different groups in Table . However, there are great differences in what is the most important for each group, at least when we observe the material divided by degree of creativity in expression of the own self through style. Table 7 also shows that the priorities differ again when we divide the data by proactivity into the group identifying as proactive (group 3), the one in the middle (group 2) and the one not identifying as proactive (group 1).

Table 7: Top 10 reasons for own clothing style grouped by degree of creativity, and proactivity

Creating own style		Proactivity	
Codes	Frequency	Codes	Frequency
Group 3		Group 3	
Showing who I really am	12	Showing who I really am	14
Dressing according own feelings_supportive	10	Dressing according own feelings_supportive	11
Showing values and beliefs	8	Comfort	11
Uniqueness	8	Supportive environment	10
Supportive environment	7	Uniqueness	10
Separate from one part of society	7	Showing values and beliefs	8
Facilitating communication	6	Separate from one part of society	7
Comfort	6	Facilitating communication	6
Belonging to group/subculture	4	Opinion of others	6
Finances	4	Finances	6
Group 2		Group 2	
Comfort	6	Opinion of others	5
Showing who I really am	6	Showing who I really am	5
Opinion of others	5	Practicability	3
Role play	3	Role play	3
Freedom	3	Showing values and beliefs	3
Own concept of beauty	3	Separate from one part of society	3
Fun	3	Neutrality	3

Being original	3	Freedom	2
Being attractive	3	Own concept of beauty	2
Uniqueness	3	Fun	2
Group 1		Group 1	
Practicability	5	Comfort	4
Opinion of others	5	Quality	4
Comfort	4	Role play	2
Quality	4	Opinion of others	2
Current fashion	4	Current fashion	2
Adaptation/blending in	4	Showing who I really am	2
Neutrality	4	Brand	2
Showing who I really am	3	Practicability	1
Brand	3	New	1
Separate from one part of society	3	Being attractive	1

The qualitative research shows that the type of preferred clothing style strongly depends on the individual.

HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE EXPRESS THEMSELVES MANUALLY THROUGH THEIR CLOTHING STYLE?

As has been seen in Table 6, interviewees identified sixteen ways of self-expression through clothing. This shows the differences in ideas and understandings of using clothes to express oneself. As in the previous table, codes and their frequencies are observed for the different groups. Haircut shows in all groups, and some of the codes are not that different. However, for example <playing with colors> does not show in either of the group 1. Also <re-combining>, another action to handle creative material in developing the own style, is only mentioned in groups 2 and 3. Group 1 for proactivity does not even come up with 10 codes for ideas on self-expression through own style.

Table 8: Distribution of creating own style and proactivity for the qualitative interviews

Creating own style		Proactivity	
Codes	Frequency	Codes	Frequency
Group 3		Group 3	
Haircut	9	Haircut	11
Decorating clothes, shoes, bags...	4	Decorating clothes, shoes, bags...	8
Playing with colours	4	Producing, designing jewellery	5
Producing, designing jewellery	3	Modifying/simplifying	5
Re-combining	3	Playing with colours	5
Choosing ecological / fair trade clothes	2	Having a tattoo	4
Modifying/simplifying	2	Producing ...	4
Producing ...	2	Re-combining	3

Piercing	1	Piercing	2
Having a tattoo	1	Choosing ecological / fair trade clothes	2
Group 2		Group 2	
Haircut	5	Haircut	4
Modifying/simplifying	4	Re-combining	3
Buying atypical clothes	3	Buying atypical clothes	2
Re-combining	3	Having a tattoo	2
Producing, designing jewellery	2	Modifying/simplifying	2
Having a tattoo	2	Recycling clothes	1
Decorating clothes, shoes, bags...	2	Producing, designing jewellery	1
Producing ...	2	Choosing ecological / fair trade clothes	1
Choosing ecological / fair trade clothes	1	Playing with colours	1
Playing with colours	1	Producing ...	1
Group 1		Group 1	
Having a tattoo	3	Haircut	2
Decorating clothes, shoes, bags...	3	producing ...	2
Haircut	3	Producing, designing jewellery	1
producing ...	3	Decorating clothes, shoes, bags...	1
Producing, designing jewellery	2		
Recycling clothes	1		
Sewing or gluing a button or path	1		
Piercing	1		
Make-up	1		
Modifying/simplifying	1		

Apparently the ideas of expression become more complex, the more creative or the more proactive a group is. This also shows in the interviews, for example where Maria (creativity group 3, proactivity group 3) explains how she found a new hobby:

I produced some jewellery at some point, earrings and such, and I thought, I have many pearls and wire, so I will just try something. I like geometrical shapes and I tried to represent them in earrings.

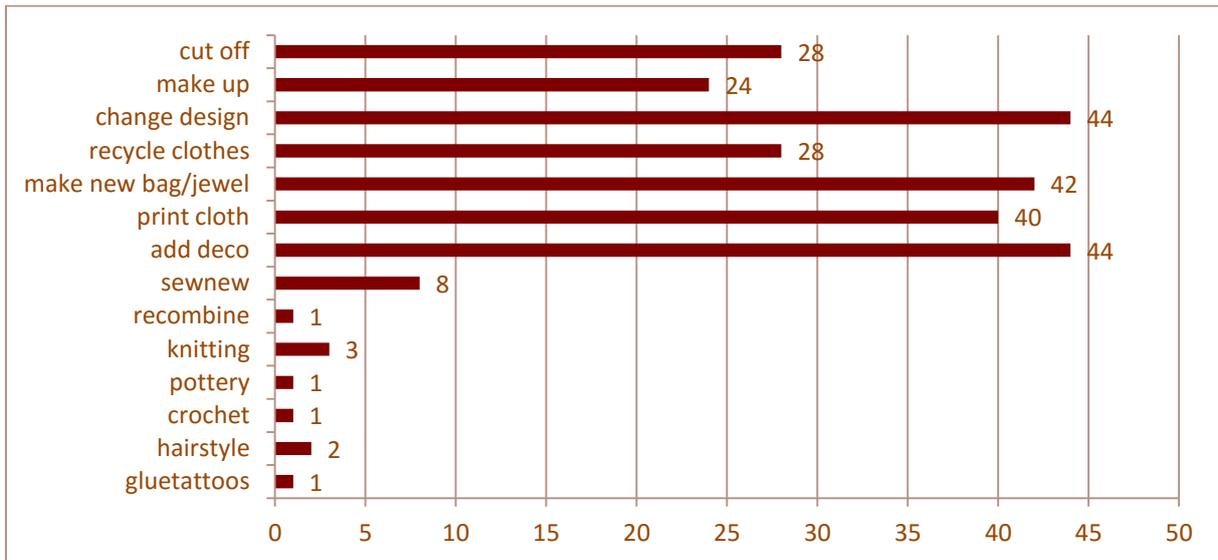
Later she will talk about how this led her to try working as a goldsmith. Teresa explains that her

... haircut [is] definitely one stylistic element. And I always try, not necessarily, well, I choose on purpose something not everyone is wearing. Because sometimes I find it really terrible when due to a trend you can only see a unified picture. I like diversity a lot more.

As a stark contrast here serves Peter's (creativity group 1, proactivity group 2) reply to how he chooses what to wear when starting the day as "...fitting the weather".

As seen above, young people that once tried to express themselves did so mostly by adding decorations (Figure 6). Respondents currently expressing themselves showed a broader range of methods (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Methods of self-expression used by respondents employing their own style by number of mentions



Here, adding decoration is also a very prominent measure, but even more prominent is actually changing the design of garment, meaning the change of the cut of a piece of clothing, or changing a path. Open replies were used by the respondents to add more possibilities. These were summed by type and led to the small numbers at the bottom of the figure. One very interesting aspect is here the gluing of tattoos as means of expressing own style.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOUNG PEOPLE ADD A PART OF THEMSELVES TO WHAT THEY ARE WEARING?

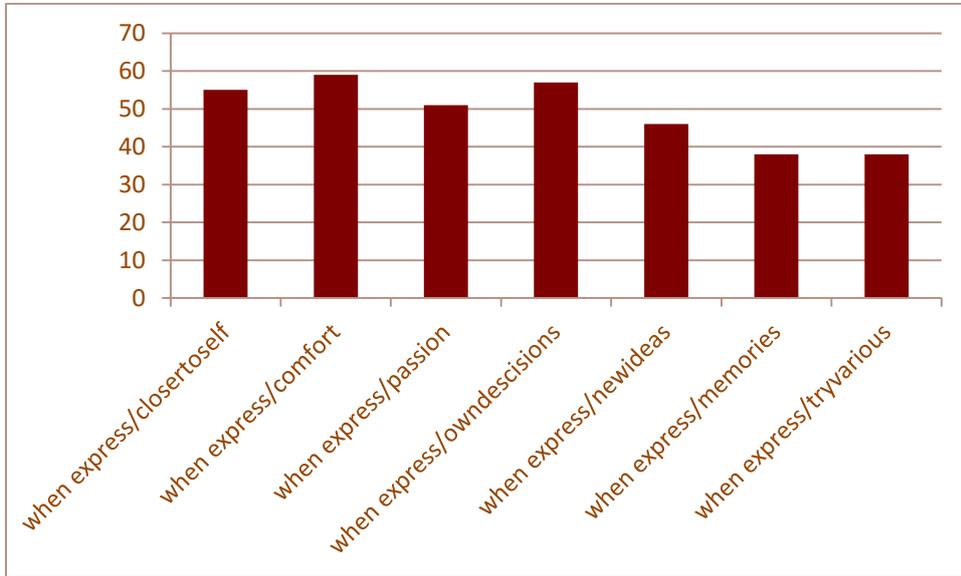
Creating own clothing or style holds different meanings for the people creating them (here only for group 2 and group 3 of the quantitative research). Some feel more creative after producing an individual piece of clothing and wearing it. For some it is the ultimate way to express themselves. Others use these ways to communicate with their environment and transport their values and beliefs. And then there are people that use their clothing style to be a visible opposition of “mainstream” society and its ideas, and on the other hand relate themselves to a subculture, as for example Thomas:

I have political statements on my shirts, or pictures from artists, which transport political opinions through their art. Which concerns, that it is against capitalist norms and against this forced unification, which state and society want and require. [...] I don't have the same understanding and I don't want anyone to dictate this.

The quantitative data shows this variety of handling one's own style. Figure 8 shows what young people feel when wearing something they created themselves. We can see that a relatively large number feel closer to themselves through wearing what they designed on their own. Another major aspect is decision-making in the design of own clothing. Greater comfort had been mentioned in the

qualitative interviews, when it came to different body types and the fact, that clothes from shops did not fit all these different type. Also here comfort is one of the major aspects in the importance of designing own style.

Figure 8: Young people adding personal to their own style



WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE A CERTAIN CLOTHING STYLE?

Again Table 6 shows the diversity for reasons for different people and how they choose their clothes. Most impressive in this regard were the factors of expressing oneself, being in contact with society, and dressing to support the personal mood. As already mentioned, expressing opinions through clothing style can refer to political attitudes. But it can also show a world view as Teresa's:

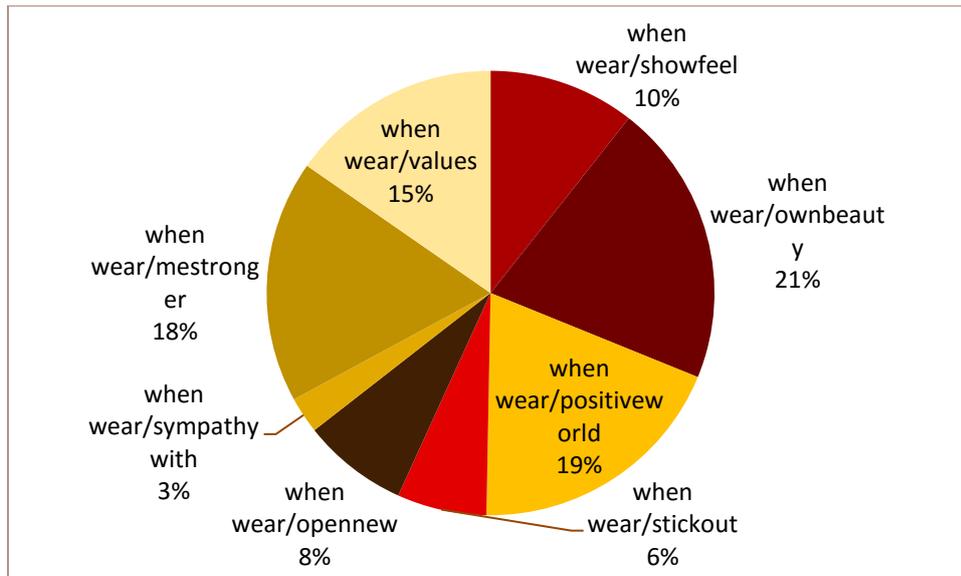
...I express a certain attitude with it, I don't walk around like a Goth, more colourful. And I believe, that mirrors how I see and perceive the world, which is just as colourful, and I reflect this through my clothes. But I also dress a little hippiesque. Don't know, with stronger contrasts, not because I want to cause attention, but because I like colours and it expresses a certain joy of life.

As seen above, Hanna uses her outfit to strengthen herself for the day. Lisa and Maria use adapt their style to their feelings and choose for example less bright colours for sad or melancholic days, but instead bright colours for days when they feel open and talkative and eager to get to know new people. Maria here explicitly states that she enjoys to look different, and tries not to be assigned to one subculture or style.

Being exceptional or original was another important point for most interviewees concerned with their style.

This became also visible in the responses of the online questionnaire. Here however, dressing according to the own concept of beauty was much more relevant than during the qualitative interview (own beauty). Sticking out and receiving attention as well as showing sympathy with a group did not come out as important as the self-reflective wish of making one-self feel stronger through the choice of own clothes being hand-made (18%).

Figure 9: Young people while wearing things created by themselves



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE PROACTIVE IN THEIR LIVES AND HOW ARE THEY PROACTIVE?

Those identifying as proactive or as partially proactive during the qualitative research phase in core agreed on an essential part: making decisions based on own convictions, values, and beliefs and considering personal needs as a base. Some understood being proactive more as existing on a personal level, and for example as idea to understand life as a series of chances. Also, being critical of most things in life was mentioned several times by people being assigned to the proactive group (value 3). For Lisa it was essential to explain that her definition of proactivity had a focus on interaction with people, and on, where others agreed, self-reflexion and the constant willingness to reflect on oneself and the surrounding.

HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE PROACTIVE IN THEIR LIVES?

Interviewees of the qualitative research phase had been grouped according to their “degree” of creating own style:

No	person is not interested in own style; identifies through matching current fashion or brand concepts
Partially	person is interested in own style, with reflexion on potential of clothing, but not putting much effort in creation of own style
Yes	person is interested in own style, potential of clothing; reflects much about effect of clothes; shows complex thoughts and connections to clothing and own style; observes changes, actively creates own style in different grades, through combination, recycling, or own production

Based on this distinction, we can see in the above tables (e.g. Table 1) that the majority of people interested in the creation of own style is found in the group identifying as proactive (value 3). And here an interesting pattern shows: while the majority of proactive people are interested in the creation of own style, the majority of people in the only partially proactive or not at all proactive group claim no interest in the creation of own style.

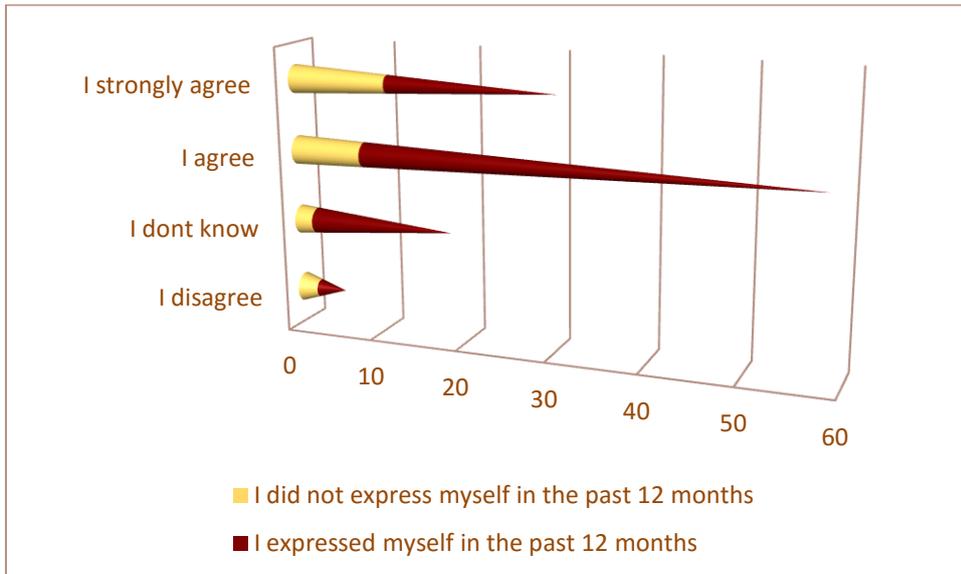
Thus the qualitative research phase shows that yes, people creating their own style are proactive, but no, proactive people not automatically express themselves strongly through their own style. Interesting highlights on this are given by Thomas, who explains that he, parallel to expressing himself through clothes, also expresses himself through his behaviour and opinions stated. This is reflected in numerous interviews, especially the ones not creating their own style, but considering themselves as proactive. Additional aspects are brought up by Jana, talking about friends, expressing themselves through music or arts in woodwork.

It could be assumed that not all individuals not expressing themselves through clothing are necessarily less-proactive people (see also paragraphs above). However, it seems clear that proactive people somehow express themselves, but might choose other ways than clothing style. This opens a wider space of research than this one can cover. The findings of the qualitative interviews stabilize our assumption that there is a connection of proactivity and self-expression through an individual clothing style.

In the online questionnaire different items were used to show if a person was proactive or not (see variables A13 to A15). Given the numerous items used for this, this chapter will show a few examples.

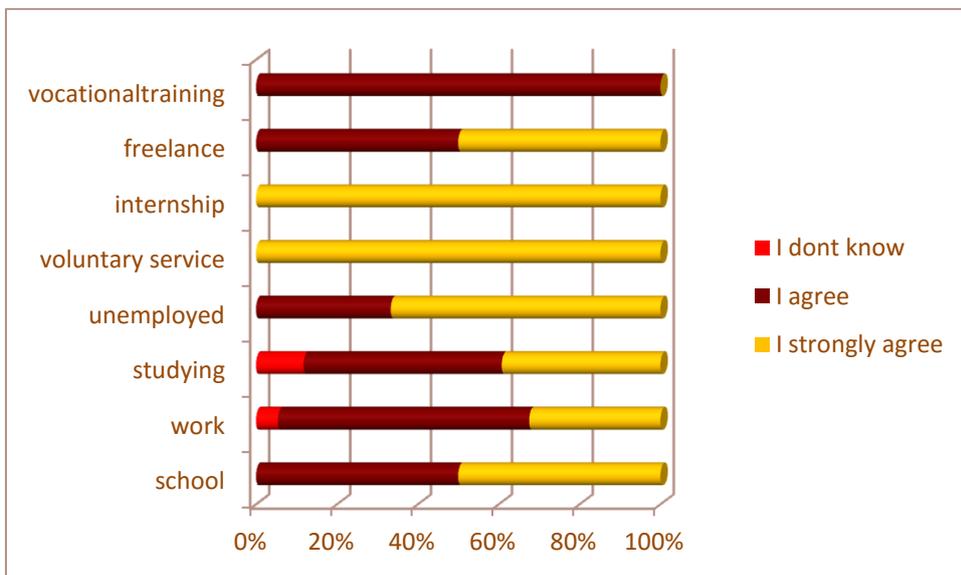
For people who expressed themselves in the past 12 months it was important to be well-informed, and attribute ascribed to proactivity. This contrasted the opinion of people not having expressed themselves in that period (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Importance to be well-informed by self-expression in past 12 months



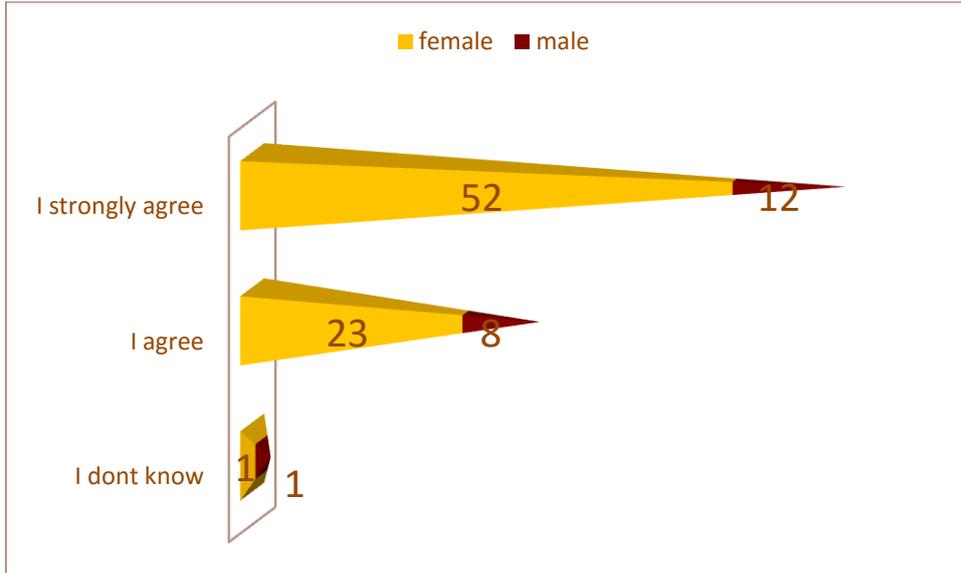
Also the majority of respondents, regardless of having expressed own style or not found it important to have an own opinion (see Figure 11 below).

Figure 11: Importance of own opinion by occupation



The importance of having their own way shows for both female and male respondents (see below).

Figure 12: Importance of having own way by gender



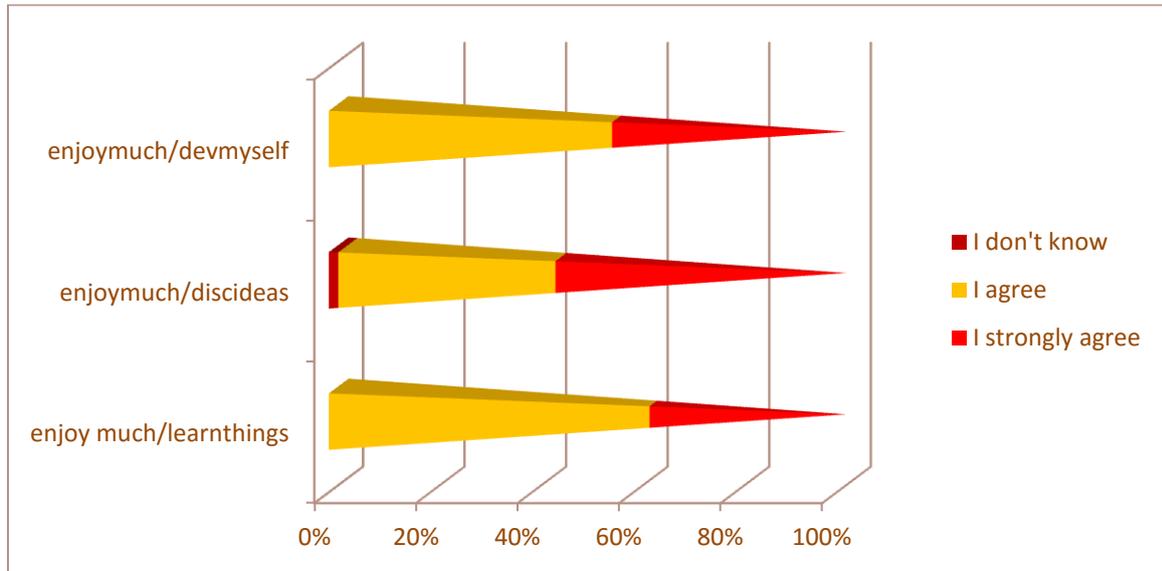
Interestingly, regardless of self-expression through own style, having a passion is important for most of the respondents (see Figure 13 below).

Figure 13: Importance of having a passion



Also, the majority of respondents enjoy self-development and discovering new ideas (see below).

Figure 14: Enjoying self-development, discovering new ideas and learning things



This pattern, with few exceptions shows for the rest of the items for proactivity. This leads to the understanding that the majority of respondents of the online questionnaire are proactive or are at least in parts.

VI. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH IN POLAND

1. PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Participants of this research phase were invited to take part in the in-depth interviews in two ways: personally in the public space and via social media. The choice was influenced by the criteria of the background defined in the research proposal as well low/high degree of expression. While background criteria was determined in objective way and could be clearly distinguished, the criteria of high/low degree of expression was initially assumed by the interviewer and verified in course of the interview. Table 9 and 10 show the characteristic of the study sample in more detailed way.

Table 9: Interviewee profile

Degree of expression	Background	Number of interviewees
Young people with a high degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Attending school (between 13 and 19 years old)	1
	Studying at the higher educational institution (between 18 and 26 years old)	2
	Employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	3
	Not employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	2
Young people with a low degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Attending school (between 13 and 19 years old)	3
	Studying at the higher educational institution (between 18 and 26 years old)	2
	Employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	2
	Not employed (between 16 and 30 years old)	1

Table 10: Sample sorted by age

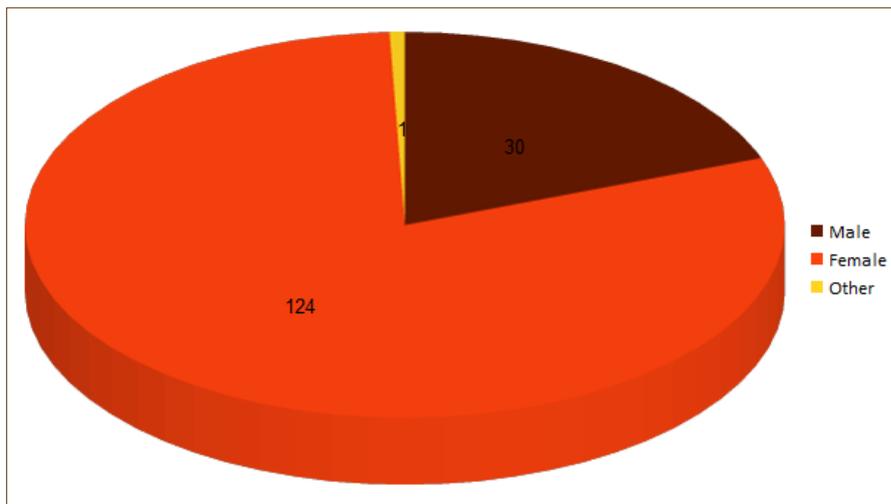
Name	High degree of expression through individually created clothing style	Age	Gender	Status
Adam 1	no	16	male	attending secondary school
Adrian	no	17	male	attending secondary school
Angelika	no	21	female	studying (also working)
Łukasz	no	23	male	unemployed
Magda	no	27	female	working
Mateusz	no	18	male	attending secondary school
Pamela	no	25	female	studying (also working)

Weronika	yes	30	female	working
Adam 2	yes	24	male	working
Hania	yes	19	female	attending secondary school
Joanna	yes	21	female	unemployed
Karolina	yes	20	female	studying
Magda	yes	no data	female	working
Monika	yes	26	female	working
Paulina	yes	25	female	unemployed
Renata	yes	22	female	studying

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

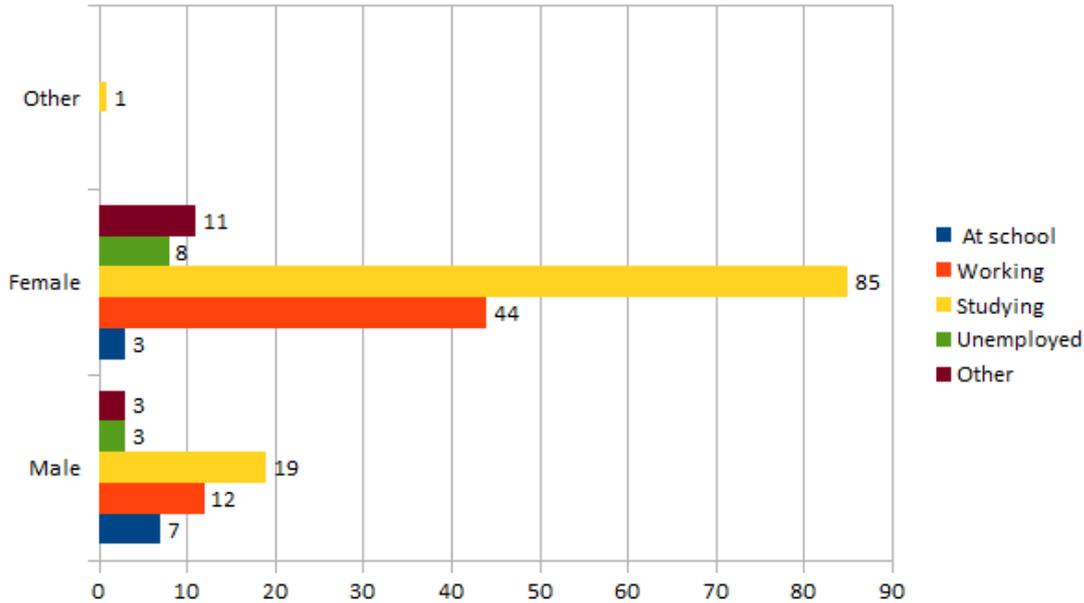
357 Polish respondents have taken part in the quantitative research and 155 completed the questionnaire (See Picture 1). Therefore 155 answers were taken into consideration for final analysis. As presented in chart 1, the majority of respondents were women - 124 out of 155 persons – followed by men – 30 persons. 1 person reported to have gender other than male or female.

Figure 15: Gender of respondents



The majority of respondents reached by this study - both men and women – declared to be students. Some of them stated to work and study at the same time. Only a few respondents who declared to either be unemployed or at school took part in the survey.

Figure 17. Number of respondents per type of occupation.



2. ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIFIC AIMS

YOUNG PEOPLE’S WILLINGNESS TO DEVELOP AND ACTUALLY DESIGN THEIR OWN STYLE AND THEIR PROACTIVITY IN LIFE

In the qualitative study, only two young people (one with the high and one with the low degree of self-expression) defined themselves as not proactive at all. Six interviewed people assigned themselves as partially proactive, and eight people as entirely proactive.

Table 11 : Self-assigned proactivity and degree of expression through own style

Name	Age	Activity	Gender	Self-assigned proactivity	High degree of expression through individually created clothing style
Not being proactive					
Adrian	17	attending secondary school	male	1	no
Weronika	30	working	female	1	yes
Being partially proactive					
Łukasz	23	unemployed	male	2	no
Magda	27	working	female	2	no
Mateusz	18	attending secondary school	male	2	no



Joanna	21	unemployed	female	2	yes
Paulina	25	unemployed	female	2	yes
Renata	22	Studying	female	2	yes
Being proactive					
Angelika	21	studying (also working)	female	3	no
Adam 1	16	attending secondary school	male	3	no
Pamela	25	studying (also working)	female	3	no
Adam 2	24	working	male	3	yes
Hania	19	attending secondary school	female	3	yes
Karolina	20	studying	female	3	yes
Magda	no data	working	female	3	yes
Monika	26	working	female	3	yes

Note: 1 – No
 2 – Partially
 3 – Yes

It may be thus seen that there is no significant difference in the proactivity of people who create their own style and who do not do it. However, the potential limitation of the study was that the proactivity and self-expression through individually created style would be measured as subjects' perception, not actual behavior. In essence, the study did not address the actual aspects that make up a person's life more pro-active, rather it referred to the values that young people ascribe to these areas.

Therefore some young people who participated in the in-depth interviews perceived themselves among respondents assuming themselves as rather not proactive, while getting deeper into conversation they gave examples of their proactive attitude, such as promoting the participation in civic local initiatives (Renata).

What is more, partially proactive young people often declared that they were proactive in the past or would be more proactive if the life circumstances - mostly employment - would give them more time and energy to do it. As Magda states:

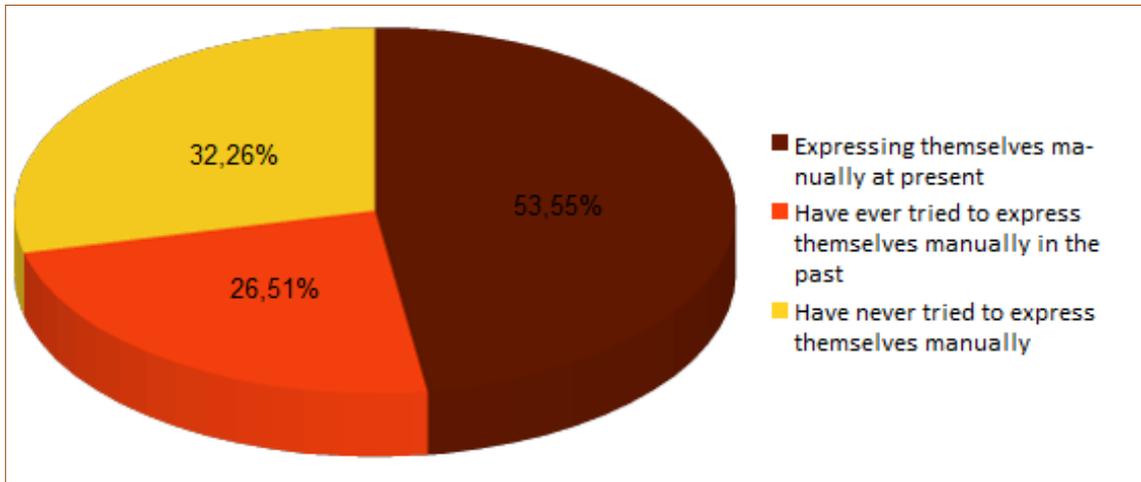
... I think that my proactivity at the moment is a bit limited by the work and lack of time. By contrast, so far (before) I definitely felt such a person - I like to be active, I like to organize and to be involved socially. However, in the moment this is limited and I admit that I miss it a lot.

For Paulina, the change from student life to employment seeker influenced the change in her proactivity:

Once I felt more proactive but then my personal situation made me much less proactive. But now I would give more pace to my life because before I felt satisfied and not like now a little lethargic and lazy. The more I could give from myself the more I had power for anything. In the past I was involved at the university scientific clubs: we were organizing blood donation actions, we cooperated with older people, I was volunteering at the camps for people with disabilities, I gave the tutoring to the kids...

In quantitative part of the research, the majority of young people reached by the online survey - over 55% of respondents - declared to express themselves manually at present. 26% of the study sample – declared not to express themselves manually at present but trying to do it in the past. 32% of respondents have never expressed themselves manually.

Figure 16. Respondents per type of expression.



THE CURRENT STATUS OF VARIABLES “BEING PROACTIVE IN LIFE” AND “EXPRESSING ONESELF THROUGH CLOTHING STYLE”

“BEING PROACTIVE IN LIFE”

In the qualitative study, the perceptions and understanding of proactivity were diverse. Full list of indicators for proactivity identified within this study is available in the table below.

Table 12. Frequencies of characteristics assigned to proactivity

Factors of proactivity	Low degree of expression through individually created clothing	High degree of expression through individually created clothing	Sum
Actively engaging in social initiatives	4	8	12
Being active, including sport	6	6	12
Knowing what one aims for	4	6	10
Actively developing own passions, talents, interest	4	2	6
Making choices according to own beliefs	3	2	5
Healthy diet	0	3	3
Being self-confident	2	1	3
Being open for new experiences	0	3	3
Being assertive	3	0	3
Being happy most of the time	1	2	3
Making choices according to own needs	3	0	3
Overcoming own barriers	2	0	2
Being intelligent	1	0	1
Taking responsibility for own actions	0	1	1
Having own opinions	0	1	1

The study revealed that most of the young people - with both high and low degree of expression through individually created clothing style - understand proactivity mostly as an ability to actively engage in social activities, being active, knowing what one aims for and actively developing own passions, talents and interests and making choices according to own beliefs.

What is more, respondents with a high degree of expression through the individually created clothing style indicated also the following factors of proactivity:

- healthy diet
- being open for new experiences
- taking responsibility for own actions
- having own opinions.

Indicators of proactivity mentioned only by respondents with a low degree of expression through the individually created clothing style are: being intelligent, overcoming own barriers, making choices according to own needs and being assertive.

“EXPRESSING ONESELF THROUGH CLOTHING STYLE”

The qualitative study revealed the variety of ways of expression through clothing style. Young people indicated not only clothes, but also other part of own style such as hairstyle, make-up or accessories. The persons interviewed create own clothing style both in ways that may require a lot of own work and creativity - like designing and making own clothes or recycling clothes - and in ways that may not require much own work, like having a tattoo, piercing or buying atypical clothes, especially in second

hand shops. However, it may also happen that the tattoo represents concrete values or passions of a person. To bring the example of Monika:

... I have tattoos related to my views. I am a vegetarian and I am interested in cooking this is why on one side of my body I have a scarification in the form of cupcake. On the other side (I have) a tattoo, which shows the vegetarian cake.

The interviewed people gave also other examples of ways of expression that are not directly connected with clothes, but refer more to creation of own style by using own body. These are for example making own hairstyle or making special pattern on nails and adopting them to the outfit. As Joanna describes:

I paint my nails. I invent patterns myself. When I meet my friends they use to ask me "How your nails today look like?" Recently I have been at the seaside where I was eating different ice-cream each day. And hence I took an idea that I would paint ice-cream on my nails. I love to paint nails. It de-stresses me a lot.

For her another way of creation own style beyond clothes is also important:

I mostly care about my hair, not clothes. (..)The hair is my "visit card". Without my fringe I could not live. Because I like or hide behind it, or to notoriously stylize it. Hair is the most important. I have equipment to curl it or straighten, a few pieces of each because I like experimenting. For example those curls were made using the hair straightener. The color is dyed. I have brown hair, but I chose red because this color apparently fits me.

The whole list of ways of expression of own clothing style identified in the qualitative research is presented in Table 13.

The most frequent definitions of self expression through clothing style were used to create the online questionnaire. To explore the manual self-expression further, the quantitative research focused more on the practical self-expression through creation or modification of clothes, accessories and hairstyle. The results of this study are presented by Figure 17.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

WHICH CLOTHING STYLE DO YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE?

While focusing specifically on clothing style, most of young people interviewed for the purpose of this study either choose or would like to choose clothing style that allows them to feel comfortable:

Comfort and textile are important for me. A lot of freedom and comfort. (Karolina)

I like to wear clothes I feel comfortable with. For example I need trousers with many pockets so that you may put inside a lot of things. Because sometimes I carry a lot with me. (Adrian)

For me comfort is the most important. I like comfortable clothes. If I like something in a

shop but it is not comfortable enough I will probably not buy it.(Monika)

The possibility to show and highlight the uniqueness was brought several times. However, as far as uniqueness is concerned, vast majority of youth interviewed claimed that it is not to show off but rather to have personal awareness that the clothes they are wearing are unique. As Pamela declares,

When I buy in second hand shops I look mostly for such things that are not terribly noticeable, but on the other hand I like to wear something that no one else has.

Another important factor influencing the choices of young people are colors. There are various reasons: colors they just like or the ones that reflect/influence their mood. As Magda explains:

I have got for instance red trousers which are the most extravagant in terms of color. And when I feel confident or if I have something to do and I feel that I need some energy, then I put on this trousers.

Sometimes particular values were also mentioned. For example for Adam,

It is connected to my values and beliefs, that I have in my life. It's not about praising that I know history but about showing to other people that knowing history and being proud of history is not a problem.

Hania brings another reason for dressing in a certain style, which on the one hand refers to the symbols of subculture, and on the other hand reflect the intention of interacting with the environment:

I often put also "fandom" t-shirts from Marvell or Star Wars - it helps me in getting new contacts. Because someone while seeing it may say "o, nice shirt, I'm a fan too" and you may start the conversation.

Therefore, taking into consideration not only personal preferences but also the potential the reactions of other people while choosing a certain clothing style was declared several times. As in the case of Hania a particular t-shirt could be seen as invitation for interaction, in case of Karolina the motivation is different:

It is important for me how people perceive me - I do not want to provoke, I do not need to attract much attention so I dress rather for me and to feel good with myself. Because I'm more open when he I feel confident in a way I am dressed. Because it is, however, important. This is a big part of our relation with our environment.

HOW / IN WHICH WAYS DO YOUNG PEOPLE EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH THEIR CLOTHING STYLE?

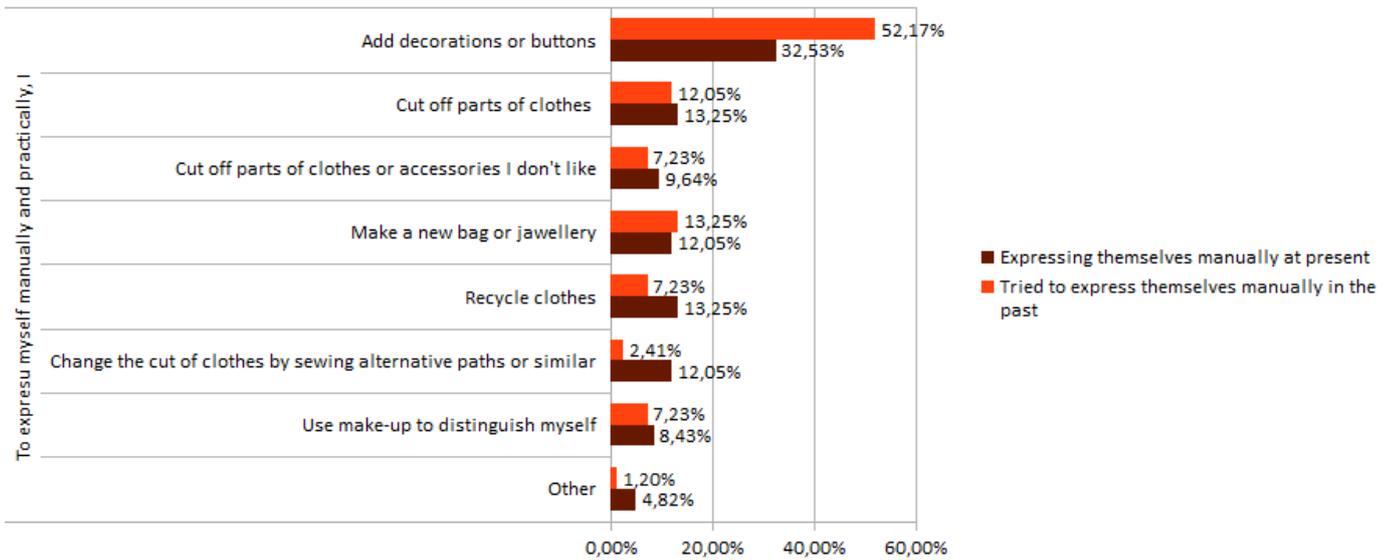
All the ways of creating own clothing style identified in the in-depths interviews are listed below, ranked by popularity of the factors among respondents. The top 5 most popular ways of creating own clothing style are: recycling clothes, playing with colors, having a specific haircut, having a tattoo and producing & designing jewelry. On the other hand the least popular ways of expressing oneself among respondents are: buying atypical clothes, wearing brand clothes, having specific make-up, wearing accessories and choosing ecological / fair trade clothes.

Table 13. Ways of expressing oneself through clothing style

Ways of expressing oneself through clothing style	Indications
Recycling clothes	17
Playing with colours	14
Having specific haircut	12
Having a tattoo	10
Producing, designing jewelry	10
Having untypical clothes	7
Decorating clothes, shoes, bags...	7
Piercing	5
Sewing or glueing a button or path	5
Having specific manicure & pedicure	4
Designing and making clothes	3
Choosing ecological / fair trade clothes	3
Wearing accessories	2
Having specific make-up	1
Wearing brand clothes	1
Buying atypical clothes	1

The results of the qualitative research showed that both groups of respondents – those who expressed themselves manually at present and those who have done it in the past – do it most often by adding decorations or buttons. The least popular way of expression among respondents who express themselves manually at present was using make-up. The minority of respondents who have tried to express themselves manually in the past chose to change the cut of clothes by sewing alternative paths or similar.

Figure 17. Respondents and their ways of expression.



TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOUNG PEOPLE ADD A PART OF THEMSELVES TO WHAT THEY ARE WEARING?

The study revealed that young people add a part of themselves to what they wear through various ways that all are considered as equally important for respondents. This means that those people who either spend a lot of time to design and create own clothes or the others who simply buy a t-shirt with a specific overprint or get a tattoo, they all feel that they add a part of themselves to what they wear.

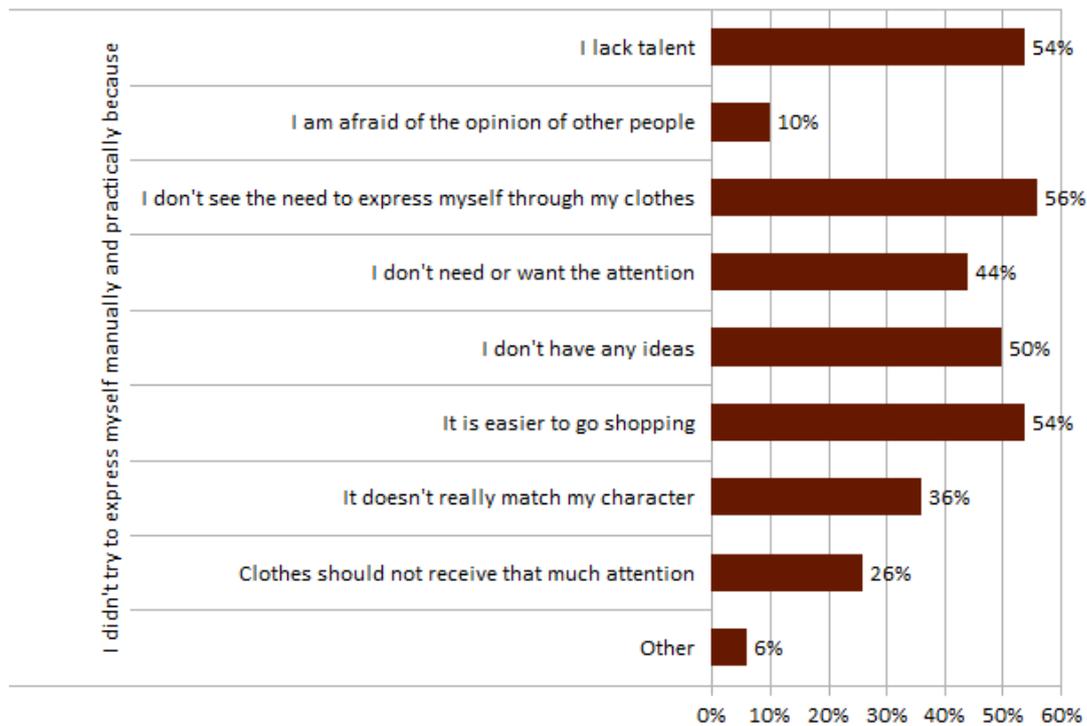
Therefore it is extremely difficult to divide people into two categories – those who express themselves through the individually creating clothing style and those who do not express themselves in that way. In fact the reason behind this difficulty may be connected to the broad definition and understanding of „individually created clothing style” that young people have. The study revealed that both designing clothes on one’s own and simply buying clothes in a specific color is considered as the individual creation of own clothing style by young people.

This was one of the major reasons for specifying the area of own style creation in the quantitative part of research and defining it as "manual self expression through creation or modification of clothes and accessories".

What is more, the qualitative study reveals what blocks people from adding part of themselves to what they wear as well as what helps /would help young people to express themselves manually through what they wear.

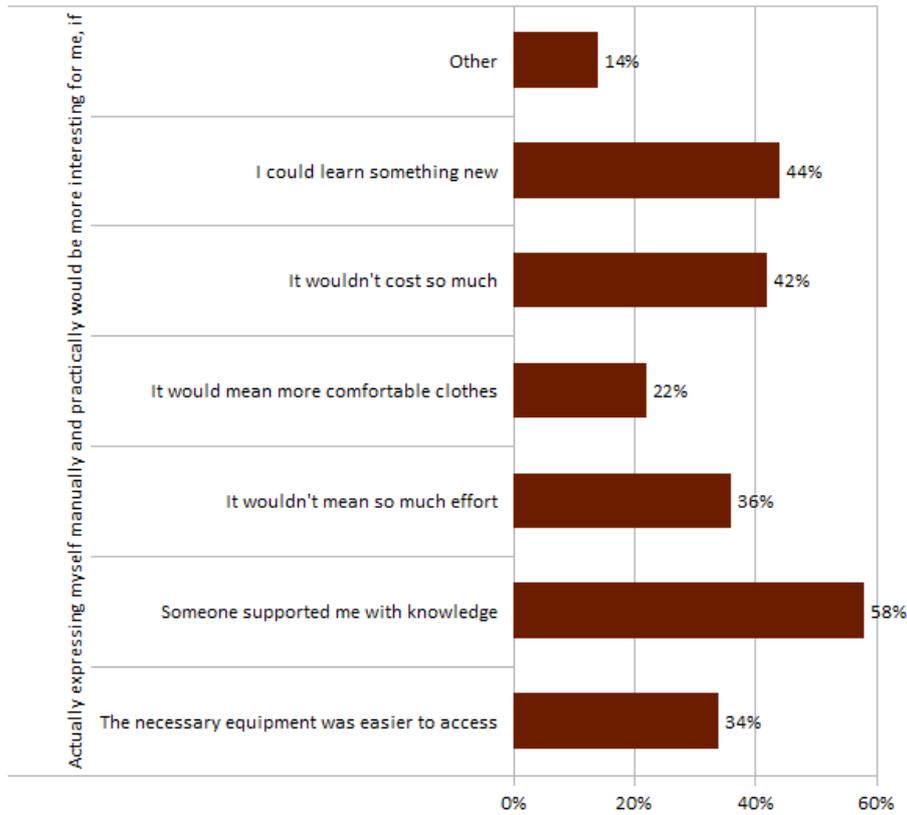
As for the blocking factors, most of the respondents who have never tried to express themselves manually either don't see the need to express through clothes or feel that they lack talent, ideas and it's easier for them to go shopping.

Figure 18. Reasons for lack of manual expression.



As far as supporting factors are concerned, the majority of respondents who have never tried to express themselves manually, declared that manual expression would be more interesting for them if someone supported them with knowledge (58% of respondents), they could learn something new (44% of respondents) or manual expression wouldn't cost so much (42% of respondents). Figure 7 shows also other ways of supporting manual expression.

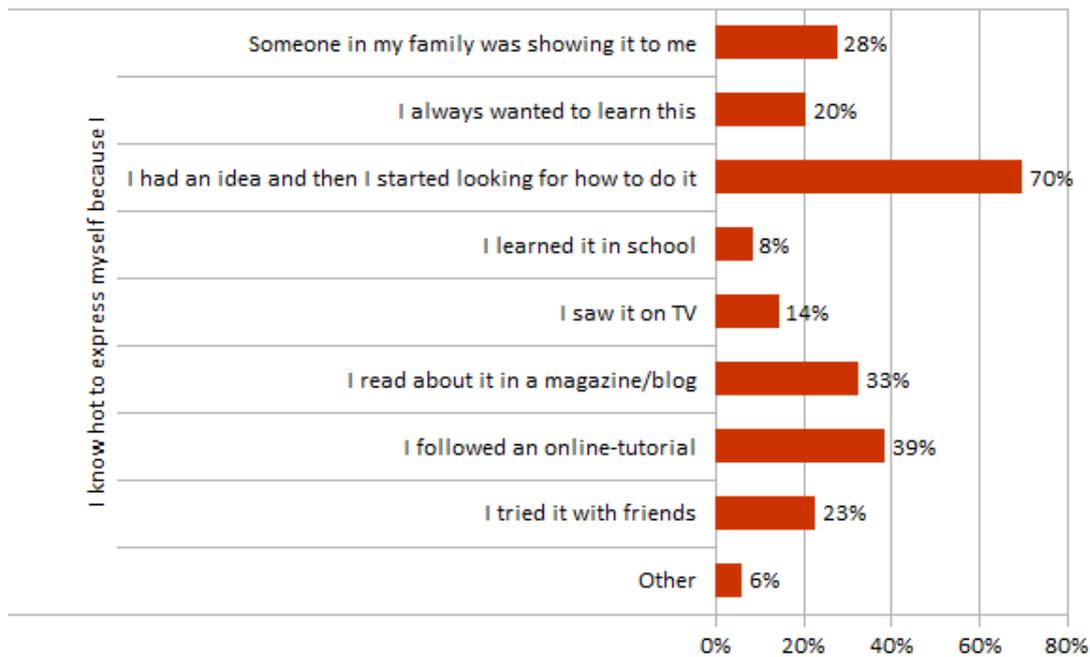
19. Ways of supporting the process of manual expression



The main reasons for lack of expression given by a group of respondents who have never expressed themselves manually are confirmed by the feedback on what supports manual expression gathered from the opposite group of respondents.

Here, 70% of respondents who express themselves manually stated that they knew how to do it because they had an idea and then started to look for the information on how to implement it. Respondents stated that they followed an online tutorial, read a magazine/blog or were supported by someone in the family.

Figure 20. Factors encouraging self-expression



The results of the online study presented in Figures 19 and 20 were taken as a basis for practical part of Design Yourself project. During the craft workshops participants of the project were supported with knowledge and skills by masters; the workshops offered the possibility to learn something new and were free of charge.

What is more, the outcome of the research demonstrating the great importance of having an idea for own expression was also taken in consideration in the test phase of the Design Yourself Educational Model. Participants were provided with coaching sessions that stimulated and supported them in finding their own idea for self-expression. Moreover, the virtual learning paths were created in order to facilitate the creative process of self-expression of young people¹³.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE A CERTAIN CLOTHING STYLE?

Based on the shared views from respondents who participated in the study, this research identified six most frequent factors that determined respondents' decision (both those with low and high degree of expression through the individually created clothing style) to choose a certain clothing style:

1. Desire to raise attention
2. Desire to spend a reasonable amount of money on clothes

¹³ More about the learning paths at: <http://designyourself.info/learning-paths/>

3. Desire to be original
4. Desire to show values and beliefs
5. Opinion of other people
6. Desire to feel comfortable

Circumstances that require a specific clothing style were a reason for present clothing style only for respondents with low degree of expression through the individually created clothing style.

Respondents with high degree of the individually created clothing style gave much broader explanations why they created own clothing style individually. Most popular were:

1. Desire not to follow current fashion
2. Desire to feel unique
3. Desire to have brand clothes
4. Desire to have own style
5. Desire to have clothes in specific colors
6. Desire to have high quality clothes

Table 14 below presents all reasons for creating own clothing style given by respondents in detail.

Table 14. Reasons for creating own clothing style

REASONS FOR CREATING OWN CLOTHING STYLE		
Respondents with low degree of expression through individually created clothing	Respondents with high degree of expression through individually created clothing	Given by both groups
* Circumstances that require specific clothing rules	* Desire not to follow current fashion	* Influence of own hobby
	* Desire to express feelings through clothing style	* Desire to have clothes that match own figure
	* Desire to be noticeable	* Desire to make attention
	* Desire to separate from one part of society	* Desire to spend a reasonable amount of money on clothes
	* Having complexes	* Desire to show who one really is through clothing
	* Desire to break stereotypes	* Desire to be original
	* Desire to feel unique	* Desire to show values and beliefs
	* Desire to have brand clothes	* Desire to follow current fashion
	* Desire to have own style	* Opinion of other people
	* Desire to have clothes in specific colours	* Desire to feel comfortable
	* Desire to feel attractive	
	* Desire to have high quality clothes	

** reasons highlighted in yellow were given by respondents most frequently*

When asked for the most important advantages of actively creating own clothing style both groups of respondents – with low and high degree of expression through the individually created clothing style – indicated saving money, easily communicating with others, easy manifestation of own beliefs, being noticeable and being original as the most important advantages.

Disadvantages given by both groups were the facts that active creation of own clothing style is time consuming and people who have own style may be considered as strange. All advantages and disadvantages given by young people within this study are listed in the Table 15 below.

Table 15. Advantages and disadvantages of creating own clothing style

	Low degree of expression through individually created clothing	High degree of expression through individually created clothing
Disadvantages of creating own clothing style	Time consuming Being considered as strange	Time consuming Being considered as strange Being considered as out of fashion
Advantages of creating own clothing style	Making money Saving money Being creative	Being ecological Saving money Easier communication with others

	<p>Easier communication with others Easy manifestation of own beliefs Being noticeable Being original</p>	<p>Easy manifestation of own beliefs Being noticeable Feeling good Being original Feeling comfortable</p>
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Young people while indicating difficulties with actively creating own clothing style, stated the following reasons:

- no competences
- anxiety about other people's opinion
- lack of money
- limited time because of children and other reasons
- lack of consequence

Qualitative part of research further shows the reasons for manual expression and own style creation. Most of the respondents (49%) who express themselves manually declared to do so in order to feel free to create own style based on own decision. The other most popular reasons for own style creation were:

- being closer to oneself while having something unique
- making one's style as comfortable as possible.

Respondents also frequently declared that when they were wearing things created by themselves they dressed according to their own concept of beauty as well as felt positive and could be positive with the world around them.

Figure 21 and Figure 22 below show detailed results on this topic.

Figure 21: Reasons for expressing oneself manually and practically

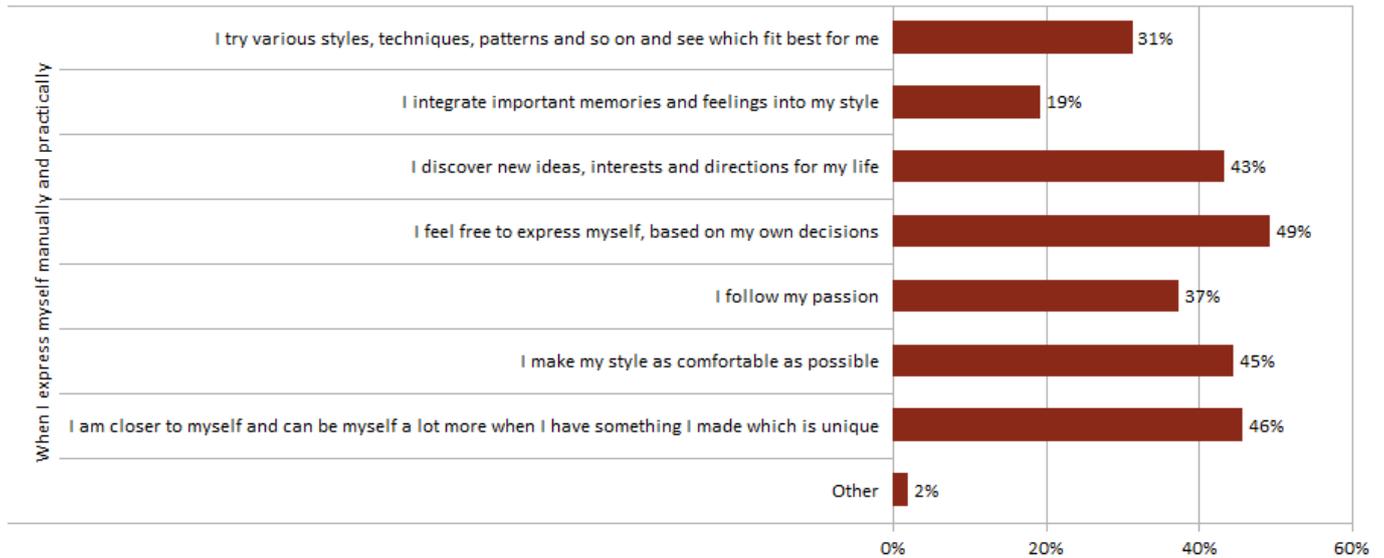
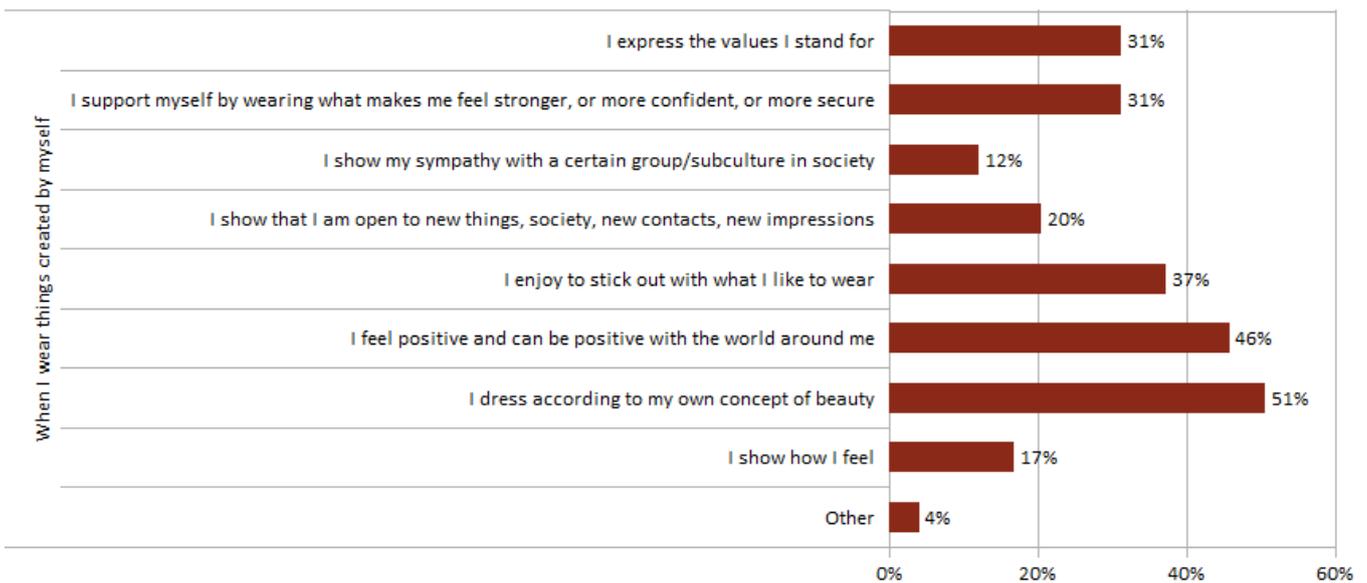


Figure 22 : Young people while wearing things created by themselves



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE PRO-ACTIVE IN THEIR LIVES? HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE PROACTIVE?

As described in previous chapters of this report, the ways of understanding proactivity are different among persons interviewed in qualitative research. Similarly, the actual proactivity in their lives is represented in diverse ways.

Goal of the quantitative part of this research was to investigate further the meaning of proactivity for young people. Survey participants were asked to what extent they agree with several statement being the factors of proactivity - they could choose one option on the scale 1-5, in which 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree".

The results show that the major difference between survey participants who created own clothing style and the others – who have never tried to do so – is seen with the following factors of proactivity:

- developing ideas of projects and following them through
- being active in social organisation
- working hard until changing what is worth changing
- participating in the activity to improve situations
- organizing like-minded people to affect change

Figures 23, 24 and 25 show detailed results on this topic.

Figure 23 shows also that for all groups of respondents the most important elements of pro-activity among those listed there are: to have own opinion, to find own way of life and to be well informed.

Figure 23. Factors of proactivity per respondents' group - part 1.

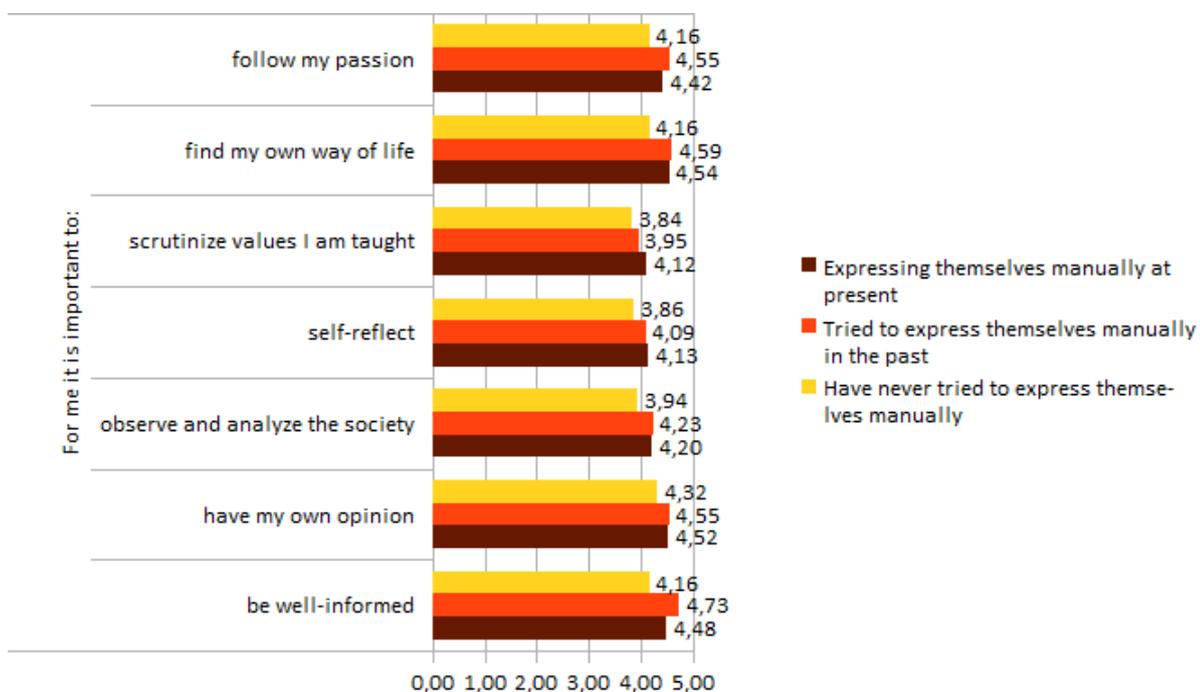


Figure 24. Factors of proactivity per respondents' group - part 2.

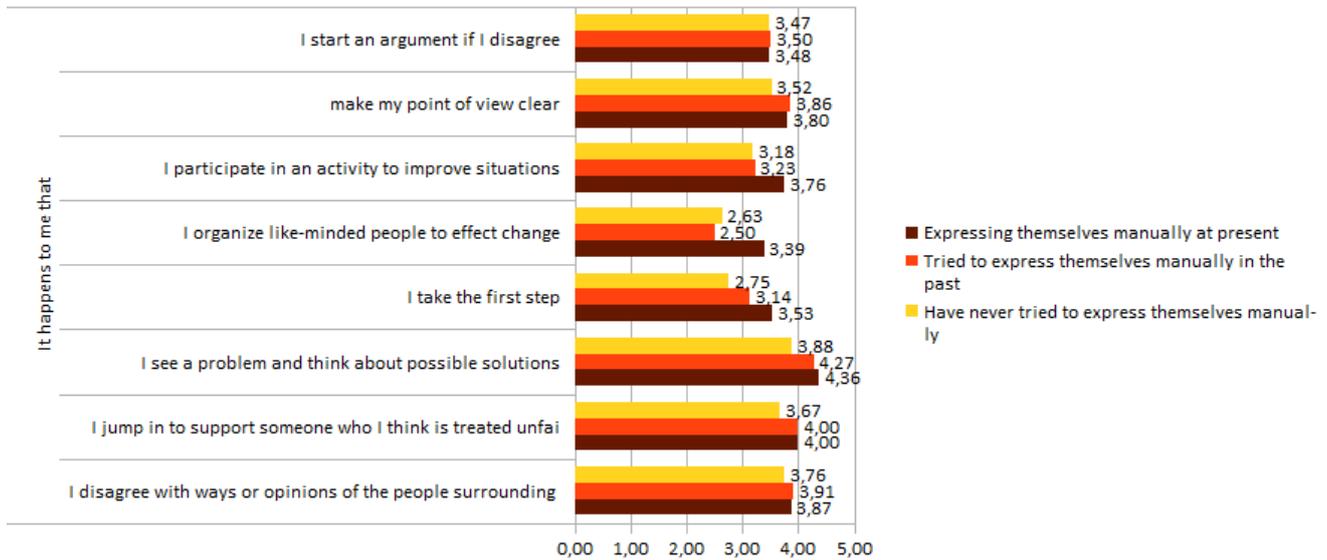
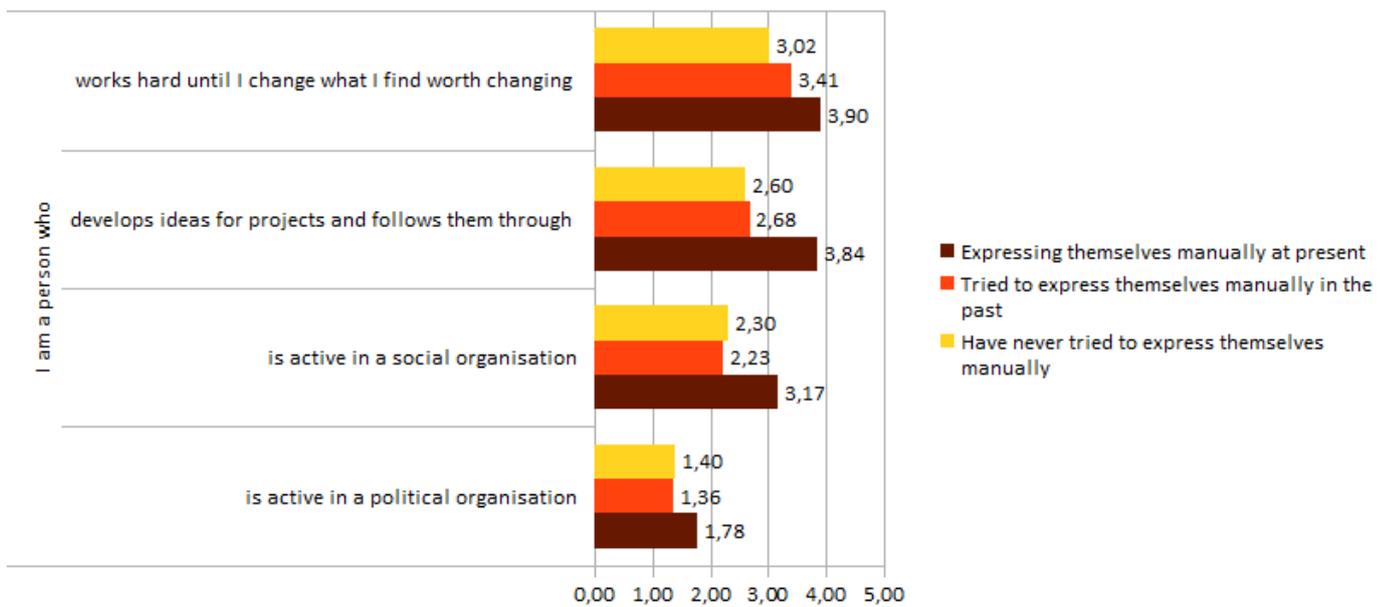


Figure 25. Factors of proactivity per respondents' group - part 3.



VII. DIFFICULTIES OF RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The above results show one problem already – who answers an online questionnaire? Is the online questionnaire by choice not a selection of those who already are interested in participating and being active? While this almost philosophical question pops up in every research, more direct difficulties had been identified during this research.

SAMPLE FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The initially planned sample consistent of an even distribution of interviewees, as can be seen above. Finding interviewees in described ways led to very low response. Given difficulties (also of ethical nature) in identifying fitting subjects by just spotting them in the street (e.g. unemployed people), and of course limited resources, as time and money for conducting the research, the sample experienced slight adaptations in the sense of age and number of respondents.

RECEIVING VALID DATA FROM THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

The online questionnaire brought difficulties on various levels. First, the choice of software for implementing an online questionnaire planned for this research was not the best. Then, the technical implementation on websites and the usability on mobile devices posed some problems, leading to many incomplete questionnaires. Third, it appears that in this mobile time there is a saturation regarding online “games” or questionnaires. The questionnaire could probably be made more fitting for young people, avoiding long and dire text passages, as well as using more pictures to make it more interesting and entertaining and to fully use the potential of the media at hand. Also, there should be a strategy to reach out to a more equalized respondent group in the sense of gender.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH OUTLOOK

Clothing is important for most of young people. This importance can have different forms, either it is important to be trendy, or to use brands, or to express oneself. Where self-expression is the reason of importance, it is not a far step to creating own style. Developing this style consists of different methods, starting with easy things as adding decorations or gluing something, or cutting off small pieces. Methods can be more complicated, too, and can result in the creation of a hairstyle or actually sewing completely new clothes.

The data has shown that young people interested in self-expression through their own style very often find ways to do so, regardless of lack of finances or access to machines. However, the study

had also demonstrated that the idea of what and how to express oneself is crucial in this process. Linking this outcome with education and youth work it seems important to support young people in discovering and developing their own ideas for self-expression through personal or online support, such as learning paths created on the Design Yourself project's web page. This in turn goes in line with the research results focusing on factors that encourage young people to manual self-expression, in which personal support was indicated the most. Thus, Design Yourself project can offer chances to learn more ways of creating the own style, and find a community that has similar interests. This can be a way for young people interested in this form of self-expression to connect with individuals on local but also transnational level, offering the chance of being part of a creative community, also to swap ideas and inspirations.

The data also shows that many are interested in expressing themselves through their style but either feel little talented or lack ideas. This could be an outset for further research: to find out more about the reasons behind such limiting self-belief; how to empower young people to feel that they are talented and how to bring them closer to creative forms of self-expression. It also could be the start of another project which might reach out to school classes to try and raise their interest in creating things. This seems worth in the light of other results of our study revealing that young people both in Germany and in Poland while wearing things created on their own feel positive with the surrounding world as well as with themselves: they feel stronger, more confident or more secure.

As for the proactivity of young people different aspects became visible during this research. There seems to be a difference between proactivity of people expressing themselves manually and those who don't express themselves manually. However, this difference is not as clear cut as it was imagined to be at the start of this research. The analyses of proactivity for both German and Polish data show that most respondents are proactive or show this potential. So, while there seems to be a connection of proactivity and manual self-expression, a deeper understanding of this can only be found in another research setting. The present research can give a great foundation for this.



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"DESIGN YOURSELF" PROJECT RESEARCH REPORT

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