Attitudes towards Foresters in Polish Society

Małgorzata Krokowska-Paluszką 1,2, Anna Wierzbicka 1,*, Adrian Łukowski 1,*, Arkadiusz Gruchała 3, Jacek Sagan 4 and Maciej Skorupski 1

1 Faculty of Forestry, Poznań University of Life Sciences, 60-625 Poznań, Poland; gosiakrokowska@gmail.com (M.K.-P.); adrian.lukowski@up.poznan.pl (A.Ł.); maciej.skorupski@up.poznan.pl (M.S.)
2 Faculty of Agricultural and Forestry, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, 10-719 Olsztyn, Poland
3 Faculty of Forestry, Warsaw University of Life Sciences—SGGW, 02-776 Warszawa, Poland; arkadiusz.gruchala@wl.sggw.pl
4 Association of Foresters and Forest Owners, 05-430 Celestynów, Poland; jsagan1983@gmail.com
* Correspondence: anna.wierzbicka@up.poznan.pl; Tel.: +48-508-143-279

Abstract: In recent years, foresters in Poland have faced a decreasing level of social acceptance. Scientists have demonstrated that core values and personal experience shape the social acceptance of foresters and their work. The aim of our study was to determine what kind of attitudes towards foresters (ATF) do Poles have? What shapes Poles' ATF? Is recreational behavior connected to the ATF? Which foresters' PR and educational activities have the biggest impact on peoples' ATF? The research tool used was the original research questionnaire consisting of closed questions only. A sample of 1000 Poles was selected in 2018. Most respondents (85%) held an ATF that was at least slightly positive. Most of the respondents recognized that the foresters are well prepared to do their job, and considered that the foresters perform their job well. Socio-demographic characteristics had no effect on ATF. Personal experiences, such as frequent visits to the forest; the use of educational, bicycle, jogging or horse riding paths in the forest; the picking of forest berries and mushrooms; and knowing a forester, have a small impact on the attitude. An organized community offer provided by foresters, such as picnics, and family events, etc., had no statistical effect on the attitude score.

Keywords: forester; public attitude; society; Likert scale; Poland

1. Introduction

The public attitude towards forests in general, and to forest management, is important from a point of view of the public acceptance of forest management and actions for climate change mitigation. Understanding residents’ attitudes towards forest management practices could potentially allow the State Forests Holding (SFH) to improve their outreach efforts to foster awareness and acceptance of forest management. It would also give the public the knowledge they require to understand the need for managing forests, especially now, when climate change is having a tremendous impact on the state of the forest. For the FAO’s Global forest education project, the image of foresters and an understanding of the foresters’ work are the main points of the call to action [1]. This public attitude is interesting to scientists from different countries and continents [2,3]. Researchers were interested in the core values underpinning the attributes of the forests [4], the emotional connection between people and forests [5], and psychological drives [6,7].

Ford et al. [8] show that, when assessing the method of environmental management, a society is guided by specific values that are beneficial to ecosystems, but also by its own beliefs, trust, and aesthetic experience. All factors (including psychological ones) play a significant role in assessing the work of forest managers. Moreover, the existence of three factors determining the sustainability of forests was demonstrated: utility, non-use (ecological) and recreational. Fuller et al. [9] conducted a study to determine the level
of social acceptance of the activities related to forest management in Great Britain. The obtained results showed that the society does not accept ill-considered logging; the only situations where logging would be socially desirable are when a tree is affected by a disease, has been severely damaged (e.g., as a result of a storm or other weather conditions), or when it threatens human health or life. Men and the elderly more often agreed to use stronger and more intrusive (including non-ecological) methods than women and younger people. The cultural factor has a much smaller impact on shaping the attitude of a society towards forests than the region of residence [10]. It also proved the relationship between the quality of the stands and the willingness to visit the forest. In Europe, the larger the forests are, the more willingly the public declares they would like to visit them. Researchers have identified several important differences between European regions; the described trend has been observed for many years [11]. The inhabitants of Central Europe were more inclined, compared to other inhabitants of the continent, to accept visits to forests with the visible indications of human presence (including logging). This outcome may result from the acceptance of human presence in the forests in this region of Europe, which is in line with local cultural norms [11]. In the Czech Republic—Poland’s neighboring country—research conducted by Krejci et al. [12] shows that the most important topics for the public, connected with forests, are conservation and protection. A total of 60% of the respondents consider forest exploitation and forest management to be the most important causes of damage and threats to forests. Residents of the Czech Republic are visiting forests on a monthly basis.

An interesting aspect from the point of view of the research on shaping attitudes towards forests and foresters, was touched upon in Tindall’s study [13]. He noted that in recent years, in many European countries, an emphasis has been placed on shaping forest values among the public. This was understood as both the assessment of the forest, and the factors that determine a society to increase its willingness to visit forests. The above cited research also confirmed the existence of a relationship between the abstract values of the forest (including aesthetic values) and the opinions on the work of foresters, and the way forest resources are managed. It was also shown that the opinion of the public on forests is strongly related to the shaping of pro-ecological behavior in society. Thanks to the promotion of recreational outdoor activities carried out for several years, there is a strong association of forests with the presence of fresh air, and a preference for the selection of forests, more often than cities, for active leisure. Other scientists [14–16] proved that attitudes are mostly shaped by previous experience and that experiences are the best drivers of them. For example, a good childhood experience of hunting with their parents made people have a higher opinion of hunters when they grew up.

With regard to Poland, there are not many papers about social attitudes towards foresters and the SFH. Krokowska-Paluszak et al. [17] concluded that Poles did not have knowledge about the work of foresters. About 45% of responders had never met a forester and 43% never saw a forester during his/her work in the forest. As a consequence, 41% of responders did not have an opinion about foresters and forest management. For Poles who are interested in these topics, knowledge about forests and foresters was obtained mostly from the Internet [18] or scientific journals [19]. The SFH is aware of this, and half (about 200) of forest districts have a Facebook fan page [20]. Grezuk and Kośmider [21] underline the important role of schools and school teachers in shaping the image of foresters. The SFH puts considerable effort and money into forest education for the public [22–24]. Poles’ attitudes towards forests are shaped by the opinions of family and friends, media coverage, and the Internet (websites and social media). They also depend on how often a person visits forests and if they have had direct contact with a forester [19]. People with higher education associate forests with recreation, while people with secondary or lower education see forests as a source of mushrooms and berries [25]. There is an undeniable need for more in-depth analyses of the public attitude towards foresters and the SFH, and what influences it, especially as not all research findings can be transferred from western European to central European countries [11].
The above displays the fragmentary knowledge available which shows various gaps. In this paper, we want to extend the research to include the problem of the satisfactory acceptance of foresters by society, in the broad framework of global research. Based on an in-depth review of the literature [8–19], we have raised new questions. The initial focus of the study was the adoption of a constructive perspective. Based on this research perspective, questions were raised in the research tool. Cognitive constructivism presupposes, in essence, that social reality, as being at any time the result of the creation of the activities of individuals, and not something “ready” and external to them, and, in principle, is similar to that of the natural world. We conducted a survey to discover the answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of attitude towards foresters (ATF) do Poles have?
2. What shapes Poles’ ATF?
3. Is recreational behaviour connected to the ATF?
4. Which foresters’ PR and educational activities have the most important impact on peoples’ ATF?

We used Likert scale and Principal Component Analysis to describe attitudes by numbers and verify the hypothesis.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Surveyed Country

Poland is situated in central-eastern Europe and covers an area of a little less than 313,000 km². The country’s population is close to 38.5 million people (density—120 people per km²) [16]. Forests cover 31% of Poland. The State Forests National Holding manages about 75% of the forests and supervises most of the private forests (19.3% of the total area of forests). A total of 95% of the forests are under management plans or the equivalent, which are compulsory and approved by an official body. Most forests are certified to both FSC (6.9 million ha) and PEFC (7.3 million ha) standards. The growing stock was 288 m³/ha in 2020, 37% of the forests are protected for the conservation of biodiversity (MCPFE classes 1 and 2), and 35% is designated as protective forests (MCPFE class 3). There is no forest undisturbed by man. Over 300 thousand people are employed in the forest sector in Poland, of which half are employed in wood processing. Employment in forestry itself rose to 75.8 thousand people in 2015. Most forests are open to the public, and recreation and touristic activities are possible all year round for free [26]. Poland is an average size in terms of population and forest coverage for a European country. Although the situation where a government company manages most of the forest area is not common [26], the analysis of the main drivers of Polish citizens’ attitudes shows general trends and required actions in Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe.

2.2. The Questionnaire

The method used in the conducted research was a diagnostic survey using the questionnaire technique. The research tool was the original research questionnaire consisting of closed questions only. A sample of 1000 Poles was selected in June 2018. In this study, a representative sample of Poles was examined; the sample size was calculated using sample size calculators (a 95% confidence interval was assumed, the error size was 0.05 and the fraction size was 0.5). The questions on the questionnaire concerned both the characteristics of the individual respondents and related substantive issues with the acceptance of forest management and the perception of foresters. Computer-assisted survey research was carried out using the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) method [27,28]. The survey was conducted by interviewers who presented the respondents with the questionnaire in an electronic form (the system allowed them to work using an Internet connection and offline). The survey was conducted by trained and experienced interviewers from Partner in Business Strategies, Poland (PBS).

In this study, a representative sample of Poles was examined (N = 1000); and the sample size was calculated using sample size calculators (an assumed 95% confidence interval, an
error size of 0.05, and a fraction size of 0.5). This sample was procedurally representative (random)—one for which respondents were selected using one of the random sampling schemes, and the probability of selecting each unit from the population was known. The tests that meet the postulate of procedural representativeness—random samples—are the best tests to conduct research. However, they are difficult to implement due to the need to have a complete list of units belonging to the studied population.

The sample was collected during June 2018. The respondents were requested to provide data regarding their age (<20 years; 21–30 years; 31–40 years; 41–50 years; >50 years), their sex (female; male), level of education (primary; vocational; secondary; higher), and their place of residence (<5000 inhabitants; 5000–50,000 inhabitants; 50,000–150,000 inhabitants; >500,000 inhabitants). They also provided data about the frequency of their visits to the forest during the year prior to the survey (often; rarely; not at all). They were questioned on whether they used the educational, bicycle, jogging or horse riding paths available in the forest (yes; no). Additionally, they were asked if they knew any foresters from their surroundings (yes; no). They were questioned on whether they used an organized community offering provided by foresters, such as picnics, and family events, etc. (yes; no). Finally, respondents were asked if they consumed forest berries, mushrooms, or game meat (yes; no).

2.3. Statistical Analysis

Firstly, results were combined based on eight statements defining the respondents’ ATF and their work (Table 1). The respondents were given the following five choices (Likert’s five-point scale): I agree completely (which we valued at 2 points), agree somewhat (1), no opinion (0), disagree somewhat (−1) and disagree completely (−2). Thus, the setting scale ranged from −16 to 16. Secondly, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to assess the construct validity of all items. Thirdly, Cronbach’s α was used to measure the internal consistency [29].

Table 1. Opinions of Polish residents regarding eight items related to attitudes towards foresters (ATF). Loadings (from Principal Component Analysis) of each item on principal component one (PC1) are also shown.

| Item                                                   | N   | Agree (%) | N   | Disagree (%) | N   | No Opinion (%) | Factor Loading PC1 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|---------------|--------------------|
| Foresters are well prepared to perform their job.      | 764 | 76        | 49  | 5            | 187 | 19            | 0.80               |
| The foresters perform their job well.                  | 736 | 75        | 84  | 8            | 180 | 18            | 0.77               |
| Forests in Poland are not well managed by foresters.   | 418 | 42        | 282 | 28           | 300 | 30            |                    |
| I don't like foresters.                                | 162 | 16        | 643 | 64           | 195 | 20            | 0.56               |
| I don’t see anything wrong with forest management and cutting down trees. | 448 | 48 | 260 | 26 | 256 | 26 | 26 |
| In kindergartens and schools, there should be more information about Polish nature, forests and the foresters work. | 767 | 77 | 49 | 5 | 184 | 18 | 0.71 |
| Foresters should meet more often with the local community and explain what their job is. | 740 | 74 | 79 | 8 | 181 | 18 | 0.66 |
| Foresters appear too often on radio, television and the Internet. | 219 | 22 | 510 | 51 | 271 | 27 | 0.38 |

We used an ANOVA and Tukey’s to compare the differences in the attitude scores among the categories of the respondents, and we used omega square $\omega^2$ to investigate the effect size, with cut-off levels of $\omega^2 > 0.01$ for a small effect, $\omega^2 > 0.06$ for a medium effect and $\omega^2 > 0.14$ for a large effect, as this is widely accepted [30]. For this analysis,
similar to our previous work [16], the respondents’ ages were divided into two classes, \( \leq 40 \) years and \( >40 \) years. The level of education was simplified to higher and below higher. Additionally, the places of residence of the respondents were divided into two groups: places with <50,000 inhabitants and places with >50,000 inhabitants.

3. Results

We conducted an examination of 1000 respondents. None of which were excluded in the statistical analysis, as they had filled in all points of the survey.

3.1. Characteristics of Respondents

Among the respondents, the number of men was lower (40.3%). More than one third of the respondents resided in places with <500 inhabitants (38%), the remaining respondents resided in places with <5000 inhabitants (21%), 5000–50,000 inhabitants (16%), and 50,000–150,000 inhabitants (21%). The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50 years (36%). The remaining respondents were <20 years (1%), 21–30 years (7%), 31–40 years (28%), and >50 years (28%). About 34% of the respondents invited to take part in these surveys represented people possessing a secondary level of education. The majority of the respondents had a primary (19%), vocational (30%), or higher (17%) level of education. More than a half of the respondents (55%) visited urban or managed forests rarely during the year prior to the survey. The remaining respondents visited the forest often (18%) or not at all in the previous year (27%). Only 44% of the respondents used the educational, bicycle, jogging or horse riding paths available in the forests. Most of the respondents (82%) did not use an organized community offer provided by foresters, such as picnics, and family events, etc. More than one fifth of the respondents (18%) knew a forester from their surroundings. The majority of the respondents had never consumed game meat (81%), but 69% consumed forest berries and mushrooms in their diet.

3.2. Attitudes towards Foresters (ATF)

Approximately three quarters of respondents recognized that foresters are well prepared to do their job and considered that foresters perform their job well (Table 1). Nearly half of the respondents see nothing wrong with forest management and cutting down trees. However, most of the respondents agreed that forests in Poland are not well managed by foresters. More people stated that they disagree with “I don’t like foresters”, and that foresters appear too often on radio, television and the Internet. The above answers were used to determine Poles’ ATF, and thus, answer the first research question. To find out the answer to the fourth research question, we have analyzed the following statements. The respondents admitted that foresters should meet more often with the local community and explain what their job is. A very large number of respondents agreed that at different levels of education (in kindergartens and schools) there should be more information about Polish nature, forests, and the foresters’ work.

The eight questionnaire items (Cronbach’s \( \alpha = 0.6361 \)) had different factor loadings \((-0.01 \text{ to } 0.80\) ) on principal component 1 (PC1), which was the only component with an eigenvalue \( \geq 2 \) (2.73). PC1 explained 34.1% of the variance and thus, we judged that it was sufficient to use this principal component only. PC1 was highly correlated with the attitude score \( (r = 0.9234, n = 1000, p < 0.001) \), which is easier to interpret than PC1. We, therefore, concluded that the attitude score is a suitable measure of the ATF. Most of the respondents (85%) held an ATF that was at least slightly positive (i.e., had an attitude score of \( \leq 1 \)); Figure 1). The mean score was 5.4 (standard deviation = 4.4).
To answer the second and the third research questions, we have connected socio-demographic variables (Table 2), and answers to the questions from Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics had no effect on the ATF. Only gender was marginally statistically important ($p = 0.0646$), where women had a slightly higher mean attitude score result. Some of the items, with regard to the experiences connected with forests and foresters, had a significant impact on the attitude score, but based on the $\omega^2$ effect size calculation, their influence was small. The frequency of visits to forests, however statistically significant, had a small influence on the attitude score. Higher points were observed when respondents visited forests sporadically or regularly than when they were not visiting the forest (based on Tukey’s test). The respondents who expressed that they used the educational, bicycle, jogging or horse riding paths available in the forest, had on average 0.68 more points on the attitude scale than their counterparts. A similar relationship was observed among the respondents who stated that they consumed forest berries and mushrooms, who had on average 1.7 more points on the attitude scale than their counterparts who did not consume forest products. Both the use of an organized community offer provided by foresters such as picnics, and family events, etc., and the consumption of game meat, had no statistical effect on attitude score. Finally, social networks, including acquaintances among foresters, had a small but significant positive influence on the attitude score. The respondents who have knowledge of such a person, had an average attitude score of 2.01 more points than those who did not.
### Table 2. Average attitude scores of Poles (±SE; n = 1000) in relation to their socio-demographic characteristics, experiences connected with forests and foresters, and social networks.

| Attitudinal Items (Options) | Attitude Score | p Value | F   | \(\omega^2\) | Effect Size |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------|-----|---------------|-------------|
|                            | First Option   | Second Option | Third Option |               |             |
| **Socio-demographic information** |                |          |     |               |             |
| Sex (male; female)          | 5.04 ± 0.22    | 5.57 ± 0.18 | 0.0646 | 3.42          | 0.00        | -           |
| Age (≤40; >40)              | 5.07 ± 0.23    | 5.51 ± 0.18 | 0.1293 | 2.3           | 0.00        | -           |
| Current place of residence (≤50,000 inhabitants; >50,000 inhabitants) | 5.51 ± 0.17 | -5.09 ± 0.24 | 0.1529 | 2.1           | 0.00        | -           |
| Education (university; other) | 5.32 ± 0.18    | 5.41 ± 0.22 | 0.7587 | 0.1           | 0.00        | -           |
| **Experiences connected with forests and foresters** |                |          |     |               |             |
| Frequency of visits to forest (often; rarely; not at all) | 5.30 ± 0.36 A | 5.82 ± 0.18 A | 4.27 ± 0.27 B | <0.0001 | 10.8 | 0.02 | Small       |
| Use of educational, bicycle, jogging or horse riding paths available in the forest (yes; no) | 5.74 ± 0.21 | 5.06 ± 0.19 | 0.0161 | 5.81          | 0.01        | Small       |
| Use of an organized community offer provided by foresters, such as picnics, family events, etc. (yes; no) | 5.75 ± 0.35 | 5.27 ± 0.15 | 0.1821 | 1.8           | 0.00        | -           |
| Consumption of forest berries and mushrooms (yes; no) | 5.89 ± 0.16 | 4.19 ± 0.24 | <0.0001 | 32.2          | 0.03        | Small       |
| Consumption of game meat (yes; no) | 5.48 ± 0.32    | 5.33 ± 0.16 | 0.6848 | 0.2           | 0.00        | -           |
| **Social network** |                |          |     |               |             |
| Acquaintances among foresters (yes; no) | 7.02 ± 0.35    | 5.01 ± 0.15 | <0.0001 | 30.5          | 0.03        | Small       |

Numbers followed by different letters are statistically different \(p \leq 0.05\) (Tukey’s test).

### 4. Discussion

Detailed analysis of the obtained data allowed the formulation of a number of convergent conclusions, that characterize the factors influencing the perception of forests, foresters and the SFH. We were able to answer all the raised research questions. There are no differences in the literature in terms of societies’ opinions on the perception of forests [31–33]. The discussed topic seems to be particularly important because Poland is at the forefront in terms of afforestation of the country, while the research so far shows that Poles do not visit forests too often, and do not have a high level of knowledge about the work of foresters and forestry in general. The proposed research protocol should be used periodically in order to analyze Poles’ attitudes towards forests and forestry on an ongoing basis, and to monitor the impact and range of promotional activities on offer from the SFH. However, the SFH Information Center (CILP) has been conducting public opinion polls on the perception of the SFH since 2012. These surveys are carried out annually in the last quarter of each year by PBS (Social Research, Poland). This fact should be important when analyzing their results. The season of the year in which the survey is carried out, may have an impact on the results. Compared to the results of the CILP study, our study showed an increase in the number of occasional forest visitors and a decrease in the people declaring no visits to the forests. By asking the respondents in November whether they go to the forest, we will obtain answers that may differ from the answers given in June, which could be considered as a limitation of our study. CILP research indicates that 38% of the respondents do not visit forests (with a constant upward trend); in our study 27% did not visit forests. A detailed and multi-threaded analysis of the research results is all the more...
important, as on their basis, the guidelines for promotional and educational campaigns, planned and implemented by the SFH, are established.

The discrepancy in the results of various studies [19,34] may indicate the existing impact of education and programs, aimed at increasing knowledge and building a positive attitude towards the SFH and the profession of a forester. The overall ATF was slightly positive. Surprisingly, gender and other socio-demographic variability had no impact on the results. Contrary to the general trend, women are more interested in conservation issues and more often against any forest utilization [12,15,35]. A small positive influence on the ATF was caused by the frequency of visits to the forest, using recreational facilities provided by the SFH, and using non-wood products. The biggest influence, but still only having a small impact, was a personal contact with a forester. This is in line with the knowledge about hunters—if people personally know a hunter, their attitude is positive [14,15,36,37]. Therefore, behavior and experience are not the dominant drivers of the ATF.

Most of the respondents visit forests at least once a year. Poles visit forests less often than Czechs, 70% of whom visit forests at least three times a month [35,38], but similarly to US residents, where half of the respondents visited forests once a year [2]. More than 40% of the respondents visit forests for recreational purposes, again this is less than in the Czech Republic (79% of respondents) [12,38], and less than in the US, where more than 90% visited national forests for relaxation and tourism [2]. However, the percentage of the respondents is still low and further work is recommended to promote active leisure in forests [39,40].

The respondents think that foresters perform their job properly, but at the same time 42% think that forests are ill managed. In other countries, citizens also perceive forest utilization (especially logging) as a threat to the forest, e.g., in the US, almost all (99%) of the respondents think that national forests should be protected, and only 39% agreed with logging. In Austria, commercial items had importance for 0 to 15% of the respondents, whereas visual appearance was important for 78% [2,12,41]. More and more people in Denmark accept forest management that focuses on non-wood forest products (berries, mushrooms, and outdoor recreation) rather than logging, but in Norway, hunting, wildlife experiences and use-oriented recreation is important [42].

The majority of the respondents want more forestry related topics at school and would be happy to meet with foresters and talk about forest management. Therefore, more knowledge and communication is needed by Poles—this is in accordance with FAO guidance for forest education [1] and EU recommendation for forest communication [43]. The SFH actions had no considerable impact on the ATF, because a low number of the respondents take an active part in educational activities (picnics, lessons, educational paths), however, knowledge, even that provided by information boards at the site of an emotional concern (e.g., a logging area), increases the acceptance of forest management [41]. The SFH in Poland, and other agencies across Europe, need to pay more attention to communication with the public and knowledge transfer.

Every fourth Pole has no opinion about the SFH and foresters. This means that nearly a quarter of the population represents a group for which separate promotional and educational activities must be prepared. This group can significantly influence the social perception of forests and foresters, as well as the shaping and perception of the social role of forests. This is all the more important because the social role of forests is a broad concept—it applies to both areas related to the protection of human life [44,45], and the development of the labor market [46], but also to educational roles and culture formation [47]. It is extremely important to identify the causes of and the reasons behind the indifference towards foresters. Gaining this knowledge should help to define what kind of promotional activities should be targeted at this group. The conducted research indicates the need to carry out planned promotional activities aimed at improving the image of the forester and the State Forests. One recommended way is to conduct extended social research (quantitative, qualitative and focused) and to create a long-term plan of promotional activities. Such a promotional strategy was successfully implemented by
Svenskka Skogen, which can be a valuable example and set the direction in which to follow. The FAO guidance for forest education [1] and EU recommendation for forest communication [43] can also be helpful when new approaches are planned. Perhaps the lack of a specific view is due to the lack of knowledge about forests and local foresters. In this case, the main activities should be targeted at local or regional promotions. The lack of clearly defined knowledge about the profession of a forester, may contribute to the stereotyping of this profession by society. This phenomenon was thoroughly described by Britt [48], who assumed that images become public stereotypes, and that people tend to stereotype people and professions that are not exactly known to them. Apart from the analyses aimed at the characteristics of the respondents’ activity in forests, the focus was also on determining the factors shaping the attitude of the society towards forests and foresters.

5. Conclusions

Most respondents had a slightly positive ATF, and recognized that the foresters are well prepared to do their job and considered that the foresters perform their job well. Socio-demographic variables had no impact on the ATF. A small, positive impact on the ATF was caused by: the frequency of visits to forests, using special paths (educational, bicycle, jogging or horse riding), the consumption of forest berries and mushrooms, and having acquaintances amongst the foresters. Foresters’ PR and educational activities, most commonly picnics, and family events, etc., and the consumption of game meat, had no statistical effect on the attitude score. However, respondents admitted that foresters should meet more often with the local community and explain their jobs. To improve Poles’ ATF, we suggest that the described research protocol should be used periodically in order to analyze Poles’ attitudes towards forests and forestry on an ongoing basis, and to monitor the impact and range of promotional activities on offer from the SFH. Additionally, extended social research (quantitative, qualitative and focused) and a long-term plan of promotional activities should be developed.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.G., J.S. and M.S.; formal analysis, A.Ł.; investigation, M.K.-P.; methodology, M.K.-P. and A.W.; supervision, A.W. and M.S.; visualization, A.Ł.; writing—original draft, A.W.; writing—review and editing, A.Ł., A.W., A.G., J.S. and M.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: On request to corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References
1. FAO. Available online: http://www.fao.org/forestry/forest-education/en/ (accessed on 15 November 2021).
2. Dwyer, J.F. Urban perceptions of s forests: Three examples from the northern united states. In Proceedings of the 2002 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, Bolton Landing, NY, USA, 13–16 April 2002; pp. 159–162.
3. Floress, K.; Vokoun, M.; Silver Huff, E.; Baker, M. Public perceptions of county, state, and national forest management in Wisconsin, USA. For. Policy Econ. 2019, 104, 110–120. [CrossRef]
4. Anderson, N.; Ford, R.M.; Bennett, L.T.; Nitschke, C.; Williams, K.J.H. Core values underpin the attributes of forests that matter to people. Forestry 2018, 91, 629–640. [CrossRef]
5. Baur, J.W.R.; Ries, P.; Rosenberger, R.S. A relationship between emotional connection to nature and attitudes about urban forest management. Urban Ecosyst. 2020, 23, 187–197. [CrossRef]
6. Ford, R.M.; Anderson, N.M.; Nitschke, C.; Bennett, L.T.; Williams, K.J.H. Psychological values and cues as a basis for developing socially relevant criteria and indicators for forest management. For. Policy Econ. 2017, 78, 141–150. [CrossRef]
7. Matilainen, A.; Pohjya-Mykra, M.; Lahdesmaki, M.; Kurki, S. “I feel it is mine!”—Psychological ownership in relation to natural resources. J. Environ. Psychol. 2017, 51, 31–45. [CrossRef]
8. Ford, R.M.; Williams, K.J.; Smith, E.L.; Bishop, I.D. Beauty, belief, and trust: Toward a model of psychological processes in public acceptance of forest management. *Environ. Behav.* 2014, 46, 476–506. [CrossRef]

9. Fuller, L.; Marzano, M.; Peace, A.; Quine, C.P.; Dandy, N. Public acceptance of tree health management: Results of a national survey in the UK. *Environ. Sci. Policy* 2016, 59, 18–25. [CrossRef]

10. Edwards, D.; Jay, M.; Jensen, F.S.; Lucas, B.; Marzano, M.; Montagne, C.; Weiss, G. Public preferences for structural attributes of forests: Towards a pan-European perspective. *For. Policy Econ.* 2012, 19, 12–19. [CrossRef]

11. Edwards, D.; Jay, M.; Jensen, F.S.; Lucas, B.; Marzano, M.; Montagne, C.; Peace, A.; Weiss, G. Public Preferences for Silvicultural Attributes of European Forests. EFORWOOD Report D2.3.3, Forest Research, UK. 2010. Available online: https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/222/EFORWOOD_D2_3_3_Public_preferences_for_silvicultural_attributes_of_European_forestsGc4V.pdf (accessed on 15 November 2021).

12. Krejci, H.; Stanová, M.; Hrbek, I.; Navrátilová, M.; Beranová, M. The perception of forests by the Czech Republic general public. *J. For. Sci.* 2019, 65, 226–233. [CrossRef]

13. Tindall, D.B. Social values and the contingent nature of public opinion and attitudes about forests. *For. Chron.* 2003, 79, 692–705. [CrossRef]

14. Heberlein, T.A. *Navigating Environmental Attitudes*, 1st ed.; Oxford University Press: Oxford, MS, USA, 2012.

15. Ljung, P.E.; Riley, S.J.; Heberlein, T.A.; Ericsson, G. Eat Prey and Love: Game-meat consumption and attitudes toward hunting. *Wildl. Soc. B.* 2012, 36, 669–675. [CrossRef]

16. Krokowska-Paluszak, M.; Łukowski, A.; Wierzbicka, A.; Gruchała, A.; Sagan, J.; Skorupski, M. Attitudes towards hunting in Polish society and the related impacts of hunting experience, socialisation and social networks. *Europ. J. Wildl. Res.* 2020, 66, 73. [CrossRef]

17. Krokowska-Paluszak, M.; Łukowski, A.; Gruchała, A.; Skorupski, M.; “Oko lasu”—Obraz i współczesne media w ręku edukatora. *Studia Mater. CEPL* 2018, 20, 166–170.

18. Krokowska-Paluszak, M.; Wierzbicka, A.; Skorupski, M.; Gruchała, A. Przegląd i analiza programów telewizyjnych finansowanych przez PGL. Lasy Państwowe-ich rozpoznawalność, oglądalność oraz znaczenie w budowaniu marki własnej PGL. Lasy Państwowe oraz kształtowaniu wizerunku leśnika. *Studia Mater. CEPL* 2016, 18, 170–176.

19. Krokowska-Paluszak, M.; Łukowski, A.; Gruchała, A.; Skorupski, M. Las i leśnicy oczami społeczeństwa—Co wpływa na wizerunek Lasów Państwowych i leśników—badania sondażowe w województwie wielkopolskim. In Proceedings of the Zimowa Szkoła Leśna. X Sesja Współczesne Problemy Komunikacji Społecznej i Edukacji w Leśnictwie, Sękocin Stary, Poland, 13–15 March 2018; pp. 323–342.

20. Smarul, N.; Tomczak, K.; Wierzbicka, A.; Łukowski, A. Possibilities and level of use of Facebook by the State Forests. *Sylwan* 2019, 163, 542–550. [CrossRef]

21. Grenczuk, M.; Kosmider, J. Edukacja przyrodniczo-leśna-odpowiedzialność leśników oraz nauczycieli wobec kształtowania postaw uczniów szkół podstawowych i średnich. *Studia Mater. CEPL* 2013, 15, 286–290.

22. Chrzanowski, T. Wytyczone do Tworzenia Programu Edukacji Leśnej Społeczeństwa w Nadleśnictwie; CILP: Warszawa, Poland, 2003.

23. Kapuścinski, R.L. *Edukacja Leśna Stan Obecny i Perspektywy*; CILP: Warszawa, Poland, 2003.

24. Chrzanowski, T. Edukacja przyrodniczo-leśna w Lasach Państwowych. In *Rola Mediów w kształtowaniu wizerunku leśnika*, Dąbrowski, T.J., Ed.; Marketing i Rynek: Warszawa, Poland, 2013.

25. Krokowska-Paluszak, M.; Opalińska, P.; Łukowski, A.; Blasiak, A.; Wierzbicka, A.; Gruchała, A.; Skorupski, M. The perception of forests by the Czech Republic general public. *Urban For.* 2014, 12, 8–9.

26. Martin, J.; O’Muireachtaigh, C.; Curtice, J. The Use of CAI for Attitude Surveys: An Experimental Comparison with Traditional Methods. *J. Off. Stat.* 1993, 9, 641–661.

27. Böhme, M.; Störh, T. Household Interview Duration Analysis in CAI Survey Management. *Field Methods* 2014, 26, 390–405. [CrossRef]

28. Vaske, J. *Survey Research and Analysis: Applications in Parks, Recreation and Human Dimensions*; Venture Publishing: State College, PA, USA, 2008.

29. Field, A.P. Discovering *Statistics with IBM SPSS Statistics*, 4th ed.; SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2013.

30. Tarrant, M.A.; Cordell, H.K.; Green, G.T. PVF—A Scale to Measure Public Values of Forests. *J. For.* 2003, 101, 24–30.

31. Li, C.; Wang, C.-P.; Liu, S.T.; Weng, L.H. Forest Value Orientations and Importance of Forest Recreation Services. *J. Environ. Manag.* 2010, 91, 2342–2348. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

32. Eriksson, L.; Nordlund, A.M. How is setting preference related to intention to engage in forest recreation activities. *Urban For. Urban Green.* 2013, 12, 481–489. [CrossRef]

33. Turczyk, M. Jak Nas widzą. *Glos Lasu* 2014, 12, 8–9.

34. Butler, J.S.; Shanahan, J.; Decker, D.J. Public attitudes toward wildlife are changing: A trend analysis of New York residents. *Wildl. Soc. B.* 2003, 31, 1027–1036. Available online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3784448 (accessed on 20 December 2021).

35. Gamborg, C.; Søndergaard-Jensen, F. Attitudes towards recreational hunting: A quantitative survey of the general public in Denmark. *J. Outdoor Recreat. Tour.* 2017, 17, 20–28. [CrossRef]
37. Ljung, P.E.; Riley, S.J.; Ericsson, G. Game meat consumption feeds urban support of traditional use of natural resources. *Soc. Natur. Resour.* 2015, 28, 657–669. [CrossRef]
38. Šodková, M.; Purwestri, R.C.; Riedl, M.; Jarský, V.; Hájek, M. Drivers and Frequency of Forest Visits: Results of a National Survey in the Czech Republic. *Forests* 2020, 11, 414. [CrossRef]
39. König, A. Fears, attitudes and opinions of suburban residents with regard to their urban foxes. A case study in the community of Grünwald—A suburb of Munich. *Eur. J. Wildl. Res.* 2007, 54, 101–109. [CrossRef]
40. Cullinan, J.; Hynes, S.; O'Donoghue, C. Using spatial microsimulation to account for demographic and spatial factors in environmental benefit transfer. *Ecol. Econ.* 2011, 70, 813–824. [CrossRef]
41. Huber, J.; Lea Ranachera, L.; Stern, T.; Schwarzaue, P. Forest management or greed of gain?—An information experiment on periurban forest visitors’ attitudes regarding harvesting operations. *Urban For. Urban Green.* 2017, 27, 214–220. [CrossRef]
42. Janse, G.; Ottisch, A. 2005. Factors influencing the role of non-wood forest products and services. *For. Policy Econ.* 2005, 7, 309–319. [CrossRef]
43. Rametsteiner, E.; Eichler, L.; Berg, J. Shaping Forest Communication in the European Union: Public Perceptions of FORESTS and Forestry; Tender no. AGRI-2008-EVAL-10 under the Framework Contract No. 30-CE-0101908/00-50 Final Report; Ecorys: Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2009.
44. Koźuch, A.; Piszczek, M.; Kuc, M. Znaczenie komunikacji marketingowej Lasów Państwowych i Polskiego Związku Łowieckiego w informowaniu i kształtowaniu postaw społeczeństwa wobec ubocznego użytkowania lasu. *Studia Mater. CEPL.* 2014, 38, 46–53.
45. Novak, D.; Hirabayashi, S.; Bodine, A.; Greenfield, E. Tree and forest effect on air quality and human health in the United States. *Environ. Pollut.* 2014, 193, 119–129. [CrossRef]
46. Porter, B.; Czyżyk, K.; Trzciński, G. Las i leśnictwo dla rozwoju gospodarki. *Studia Mater. CEPL* 2016, 49B, 72–77.
47. Ludwiczak, I.; Maciaszczyk, K.; Rzeźnik, W.; Witczak, A. Przegląd funkcji lasu w praktyce. Studencki oboz naukowy w Puszczy Augustowskiej. *Studia Mater. CEPL.* 2012, 32, 297–301.
48. Britt, S.H. Psychological Principles of the Corporate Imagery-Mix. *Bus. Horiz.* 1971, 14, 55–59. [CrossRef]