Rural Environment. Education. Personality. (REEP)

Proceedings of the 16th International Scientific Conference

No. 16
ISSN 2661-5207 (online)
ISSN 2255-8071 (print)
DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16

Latvia University of Life Sciences
and Technologies
Jelgava, Latvia
2023

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Rural Environment. Education. Personality (REEP). (2023). Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, Volume 16, 12th - 13th May 2023. Jelgava: Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Faculty of Engineering, Institute of Education and Home Economics − 209 pages.

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Editor in-chief – Natalja Vronska
Compiler of the Proceedings – Natalja Vronska
Cover design − Natalja Vronska
Printed in Riga: Drukatava

ISSN 2661-5207 (online); ISSN 2255-8071 (print)
ISBN 978-9984-48-413-6 (online); ISBN 978-9984-48-412-9 (print)

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Abstracted/Indexed: The Proceedings after the conference will be submitted for publishing in databases: Web of Science™, Clarivate Analytics (former Thomson Reuters), SCOPUS, EBSCO Central and Eastern European Academic Source, AGRIS, CAB Abstracts.

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Foreword

The Institute of Education and Home Economics of the Faculty of Engineering, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies organizes the annual international scientific conference **Rural Environment. Education. Personality (REEP-2023)**. The authors of the articles are from 7 countries – Japan, Georgia, Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, and Turkey. Totally 14 educational establishments are represented in the proceedings.

Aim of the Conference: to find out solutions, exchange ideas or highlight topical problems on the 21st century education tendencies in university and adult education, competence, education for sustainable development, career development and personality development in diverse and inclusive environments. Thematic groups of the articles:

- rural environment and career,
- education for a changing world,
- personality development in diverse and inclusive environments.

The focus of the conference is career counselling, digital strategy for the remote and combined training, factors affecting labour productivity, implementation of innovative teaching, strategic development of lifelong learning, new learning strategies, supervision opportunities, self-efficacy and professional achievement.

Articles in the first section on **Rural environment and career** describe the topics: "Interest in Food Wastage Issues as a Determinant of Young People's Involvement in Reducing Food Waste", "Career Counselling in Human Resource Management", "Is the Cold Friend or Enemy for Soldiers in Military Action?", "The Role and Importance of Viticulture winemaking in Agritourism Activity (On the Example of Guria Region)", "Developing a Digital Strategy for the Digitalization and Implementation of Remote and Combined Training in Restoration and Construction", "Factors Affecting Labour Productivity in the Construction Sector", "Career Counselling During Hard Times", "Model for Long-Term Unemployed Social Benefits Recipients Career Management Improvement".

Articles in the third section on **Education for a Changing World** describe the topics: "Implementation of Innovative Teaching Topics in Vocational Agricultural Education", "Employability of University Students as Prospective Specialists in the Context of Their Competitiveness", "Peculiarities of Pupils' Learning to Learn: Insights of Music Teachers", "Early adolescents' beliefs about the development of their moral character: The case of Latvia", "Conversations between Rural Basic School Students, Parents and Teachers about Students' Learning", "The Importance of Previous Education for Foreign Students Entering Studies in the Western Higher Education System", "Learning culture or learning organization – approaches to implement changes at schools", "Everybody Has Their Own Image: Teacher Autonomy of the University Teachers".

Articles in the fifth section on **Personality Development in Diverse and Inclusive Environments** describe the topics: "A Hypothetical Model of Interactive Career Development in Communities of Practice: Extracting the Essence of Practice from the Danish "Efterskole"", "Functioning of the Model of Constructive Mediation", "Visual Mediated Dialogue in Distance Education", "Psychological Correlates of Time Perception", "Supervision Opportunities in Overcoming the Fear of Failure, Increasing Self-efficacy and Professional Achievement", "The Impact of The School on The Development of Normative Understanding of Citizenship: The Case of Latvia".

Authors of the articles – professors, lecturers, teachers, master and doctoral students have made a significant scientific contribution to the preparation of this international proceedings and shared their experiences on topical issues of conference topics.

Many thanks to the chiefs of all conference sections Baiba Briede, Iveta Kokle-Narbuta and Janis Pavulens for organization and management of effective work of sections.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the team of conference organizers and the scientific committee for their significant contribution to improving the work and guaranteeing the quality of scientific papers and ensuring successful working sessions.

On behalf of the Conference Organizing Committee
Associate professor Natalja Vronska
Institute of Education and Home Economics
of the Faculty of Engineering,
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Rural environment and career

DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.001

Interest in Food Wastage Issues as a Determinant of Young People's Involvement in Reducing Food Waste

Krystyna Rejman[1] Dr hab./Associate Professor **Marzena Jeżewska-Zychowicz**[2] Professor; **Maria Biernacka**[3] Graduate Student
Warsaw University of Life Sciences WULS-SGGW, Institute of Human Nutrition Sciences, Department of Food Market and Consumer Research, Poland[1,2], Warsaw University of Life Sciences WULS-SGGW, Faculty of Human Nutrition, Poland[3]
marzena_jezewska_zychowicz@sggw.edu.pl[1]; krystyna_rejman@sggw.edu.pl[2]; s193767@sggw.edu.pl[3]

Abstract: Tackling food waste and reducing its purely negative effects on our planet, both its inhabitants and the environment, is one of the most important challenges facing modern generations. The aim of the research was to find out whether young people's interest in this issue is reflected in their opinions and behaviours to reduce household food waste, and whether it is related to their search for information about food waste and the type of knowledge sources they use. The survey was conducted at the end of 2021 among 200 young people, using an online survey method (CAWI). The degree of interest in the topic of food waste significantly determined both respondents' opinions and all analysed behaviours aimed at reducing food waste. Respondents declaring a high level of interest in the issue declared such behaviours in the highest proportion. Regarding sources of information, three clusters of respondents were identified: „Mass media users", „Benefiting from science and Internet", and „Not information-seeking". Respondents in the third cluster were least likely to display behaviour aimed at reducing food waste. Most respondents wrongly perceived foodservice and retail as the links in the food chain with the highest food waste, rather than households. This may be a barrier to undertaking activities to reduce food waste. The results indicate that changes in consumer views and behaviour related to food management and consumption are needed. It is necessary to develop a broad information and education programme for the public at the national level so that awareness of the need to prevent food waste increases in each population group and this is reflected in household activities.

Keywords: food wastage, food waste, consumer behaviour, sources of information, young people.

Introduction

Tackling and reducing food waste is one of the most important challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. FAO estimates have shown that globally, one-third of the mass of food produced to feed the population, i.e. 1.3 billion tonnes, is wasted each year (Gustavsson et al., 2011). The FUSIONS project (2016) showed that 88 million tonnes of food are wasted in the European Union countries, and research conducted in Poland as part of the governmental PROM project shows that 4.8 million tonnes of food are wasted annually (Łaba et al., 2020). In developed countries, this challenge mainly concerns consumers in their households, as this stage of the food chain accounts for 53% of total wastage in the EU, and even more in Poland, 60% (92 and 73 kg/person respectively). Research carried out in Canada showed that, in an average household, the amount of food wasted per week in terms of energy was equivalent to the recommended calorie intake for 1.7 adults or 2.2 children (according to Canadian dietary recommended allowances). This means that the average household preventing food waste could provide 5 extra meals per week for an adult or almost 7 meals per week for a child (Von Massow et al., 2019). The social dimension of the negative effects of food wastage is linked to global food insecurity and the inability to provide sufficient food supplies for the world's growing population. Yet the food groups most valuable for ensuring food security and the nutritional value in the diet are the most wasted: cereals, roots and tubers, and fruit and vegetables (Joint Research Centre, 2020; Goryńska-Goldmann et al., 2021). These three groups account for 83% of the global food waste by weight, with fruits and vegetables accounting for the largest share (44%). Similarly, in terms of calories, these food groups account for 80%, with cereals comprising the largest share of global food loss and waste (53%) (Lipinski et al., 2013).

Food wastage also results in economic and environmental consequences. The estimated value of wasted food is more than 750 billion U.S. dollars (based on 2009 producer prices) per year (FAO, 2013). Food waste also results in reduced real incomes for market participants. Disposal of unused food products also results in additional costs and increased environmental pollution. Food wastage contributes to the environmental damage through the unjustified emission of greenhouse gases and other harmful substances released during the production of food that will not be eaten (Xue et al., 2017). The carbon footprint of food produced and not consumed is estimated at 4.4 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent globally. This means that food wastage is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after the US and Chinese economies (FAO, 2015). The environmental consequences of food waste are also linked to the waste of dwindling water resources and the use of 28% of the world's agricultural land resources for food production in vain (FAO 2013). The unproductive use of land, water and other resources to produce food that will not be consumed simultaneously means a loss of global biodiversity (FAO, 2013; Feldstein, 2017; Newsome et al., 2017).

Raising awareness of the implications of food waste, which are purely negative, increases the chances of taking targeted action to prevent food loss and waste. Therefore, the aim of the research was to find out whether young people's interest in the problem of food waste is reflected in their opinions and behaviour against food waste at home and whether it is related to the search for information about food waste and the type of knowledge sources used.

Methodology

The research question was whether young people’s interest in the problem of food wastage is linked to their opinions and behaviours conducive to reducing food waste, and the use of sources of information on food waste.

The study was conducted in November and December 2021 through a cross-sectional survey. Data were collected using the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interview) technique. The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki. The questionnaire was completed by 208 young adults, of which 200 were included to the study sample. More than ¾ of the sample was female, nearly half lived in large cities (more than 500,000 residents), and one in five survey participants lived in rural areas. All were students at various universities and forms of study. The questionnaire used in the study covered aspects such as:

(1) Interest in the food wastage issues: Are you interested in the topic of food wastage? (answer: from 1 - not interested at all to 5 - very interested);

(2) Sources of information about food wastage: What sources of information about food wastage do you use? (answer yes/no). Information sources such as newspaper articles, television, academic publications, books, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, thematic blogs, and other online resources were included;

(3) Selected opinions conducive to reducing food wastage: Have you ever thought about the effects of food waste? (answer yes/no); At which stage of the food supply chain do you think the most food is wasted - agriculture, food industry, transportation, retail, foodservice, households? (answer yes/no); How would you rate your household in terms of measures to reduce food waste? (answer: nothing is being done; not much is being done; efforts are being made, but without success; there are already some successes in this area; there is a significant reduction in throwing away food);

(4) Selected behaviours conducive to reducing food waste: Do you engage with organizations that work to reduce food waste, e.g., eateries, food banks? (answer: no, occasionally, often, constantly cooperating); Do you buy products with a short shelf life from a promotional shelf in a shop or at a similar stall in a bazaar? (answer: no, occasionally, often, I constantly buy this way); Do you go to such restaurants that offer food at a lower price 2 hours before closing? (answer: no, occasionally, often, I constantly use this option); Do you donate food to an eatery? (answer: no, happened once or twice, occasionally, often, very often).

Descriptive statistics were used to present characteristics of study sample. The Chi-square test was used to assess the diversity of respondents’ opinions between groups. The Shapiro-Wilk test was applied to check the normality. P-value lower than 0.05 was considered significant. Factor analysis (FA) with Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was performed to identify main sources of information about food

wastage. To identify the factor the following criteria were applied: eigenvalue ≥1.0, interpretability of the solution and factor loadings of at least 0.60. KMO value was 0.597 Bartlett's test had a significance of $p < 0.0001$. A Varimax normalized rotation was used in order to extract no correlated four factors and obtain large variance explained (Field, 2009). The rotation reached convergence in 6 iterations. Total variance explained was 62.4% (Table 1). A K-means cluster analysis was applied using identified factors to separate groups which were homogenous in terms of the use of different sources of information about food waste (Berget, 2018). The Kruskall-Wallis test with Dunn's post hoc test was used to compare mean values between the three separate clusters of respondents. All analyses were performed with IBM Statistics SPSS, version 27.0 (IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA).

Results and discussion

Table 1 illustrates the correlations between the use of different sources of information about food wastage and each of the identified factors, i.e. social media, Internet, scientific sources and mass media.

Table 1

Factor-loading matrix for the factors identified by principal component analysis (PCA)

	Factors			
	Factor 1 Social media	**Factor 2 Internet**	**Factor 3 Scientific sources**	**Factor 4 Mass media**
Press articles	-0.141	0.161	0.312	0.649
Scientific publications	-0.097	0.236	0.622	0.225
Television	0.155	-0.080	-0.071	0.824
Books	0.189	0.009	0.800	-0.046
Facebook	0.720	0.053	-0.191	0.307
YouTube	0.696	-0.105	0.284	-0.064
Instagram	0.688	0.209	0.029	-0.090
Thematic blogs	0.142	0.758	0.265	-0.085
Other Internet resources	0.018	0.845	-0.021	0.117
Variance Explained (%)	22.0	15.8	13.4	11.2
Total Variance Explained (%)	62.4			
Kaiser's Measure of Sampling dequacy	0.597			

Subsequently, 3 clusters were distinguished in the study sample due to the declared use of food waste information sources: „Mass media users", „Benefiting from science and Internet", and „Not information-seeking" (Table 2). The number of respondents in the clusters was fairly even. Clusters differ from each other except for the lack of difference between "Mass media users" and "Benefiting from science and Internet" in the use of social media.

Table 2

Profile of the clusters in terms of factors identified in factor analysis

Clusters		**Factors**			
		Factor 1 Social media	**Factor 2 Internet**	**Factor 3 Scientific sources**	**Factor 4 Mass media**
Cluster 1 (N=62)	„Mass media users"	1.7a; 0.31	1.4a; 0.34	1.4a; 0.32	1,8a; 0,25

Cluster 2 (N=70)	„Benefiting from science and Internet”	1.7a; 0.29	1.9b; 0.22	1.6b; 0.38	1,3b; 0,31
Cluster 3 (N=68)	„Not information seeking”	1.5b; 0.36	1.1c; 0.23	1.1c; 0.29	1,1c; 0,19
Total sample		1,6; 0,34	1.5; 0.41	1.4; 0.37	1.4; 0.38

a, b, c – Means with the same letter are not significantly different in the Kruskall-Wallis test with a post-hoc Dunn test.

Separate clusters did not differ in their opinions about eating in restaurants that offer dishes at a lower price 2 hours before closing time, donating food to an eatery and indications of the link in the food chain where they think the most food waste occurs (Table 3). It turned out that the highest number of indications of food waste were in foodservice and retail, and much less in households, while the scale of waste is highest in households.

The perception that most food is wasted in retail may be due to the fact that consumers observe a significant oversupply of food items relative to demand at the point of sale. They also have opportunities to observe food management by outlet staff and consumer behaviour. This is a false stereotype, as in Poland these two stages of the food chain account for the smallest share of total food wastage, 1 and 7% respectively (Łaba et al., 2020). In the EU, the situation is similar, as the retail stage has the lowest share of total food wastage, equal to 5%. However, it is at the sales stage (retail and including wholesale) that completely edible food products are wasted to the greatest extent, as such food accounts for as much as 83% of the weight of discarded food. Households are second in this regard (60%), followed by foodservice (59%) (FUSIONS, 2016).

In the 'Mass media users' cluster, the largest percentage (45%) declared an interest in the topic of food wastage, but at the same time the smallest percentage was involved in the activities of organisations working to reduce food waste. The largest proportion of people in the 'Benefiting from science and Internet' cluster (46%) declared a very high interest in the topic of food wastage and almost all were thinking about the effects of food wastage. Also the largest percentage (but a small percentage, 11%) declared frequent or ongoing involvement in organisations working to reduce food waste and purchasing short-life products from the promotional shelf in the shop (almost 60%). More than 3/5 of respondents in this cluster declared that their households had managed to significantly reduce food throwing away. In the 'Not information-seeking' cluster, on the other hand, the fewest respondents thought about the consequences of food wastage and, at the same time, the majority declared at most an average interest in the topic of food wastage, did not get involved in the organisation's activities, and did not purchase short-life products from the promotional shelf in the shop. Only just over a third of these people declared that their households had succeeded in significantly reducing food throwing away, and one in four indicated no such activities (Table 3).

Table 3

Profile of the clusters in terms of declared interests in food wastage, selected opinions and behaviours concerning food wastage

Variables	Total (% of sample)	Cluster (% of sample in each cluster)			p (Chi-square test)
		„Mass media users”	„Benefiting from science and Internet”	„Not information-seeking”	
Interest in the food wastage					
Little interested	37.5	37.1	14.3	61.8	<0.001
Interested	37.0	45.2	40.0	26.5	
Very interested	25.5	17.7	45.7	11.7	
Thinking about the impact of food waste					
Yes	84.5	87.1	97.1	69.1	<0.001

No	15.5	12.9	2.9	30.9	
Opinion on which stage in the food supply chain causes the most food wastage					
Primary production	1.5	0.0	1.4	2.9	
Food industry	2.5	3.2	2.9	1.5	0.556
Transportation	14.5	14.5	11.4	17.6	
Retail	28.0	19.4	37.1	26.5	
Foodservice	34.0	38.7	28.6	35.3	
Households	19.5	24.2	18.6	16.2	
Engagement with organizations that work to reduce food waste					
No	68.5	58.1	65.7	80.9	0.006
Occasionally	24.5	38.7	22.9	13.2	
Often or constantly cooperating	7.0	3.2	11.4	5.9	
Purchasing short-life products from a promotional shelf in a store or similar stall in a bazaar					
No	17.5	14.5	10.0	27.9	0.002
Occasionally	40.0	43.6	31.5	45.6	
Often or constantly cooperating	42.5	41.9	58.5	26.5	
Dining in restaurants that offer food at a lower price 2 hours before closing time					
No	62.0	59.7	54.3	72.0	0.215
Occasionally	26.0	29.0	28.6	20.6	
Often or constantly cooperating	12.0	11.3	17.1	7.4	
Donating food to an eatery					
No	79.5	77.4	75.7	85.3	0.336
Yes	20.5	22.6	24.3	14.7	
Assessment of own household in terms of actions to reduce food waste					
Not much is being done or efforts are without success	16.5	19.4	2.9	27.9	<0.001
There are already some successes	36.5	38.7	34.3	36.8	
There is a significant reduction	47.0	41.9	62.8	35.3	

The degree of interest in the topic of food waste significantly determined both the opinions of respondents and all analysed behaviours aimed at reducing food waste (Table 4). In the group declaring a very high level of interest in the issue, almost all of them had thought about the consequences of food wastage (96%). The same proportion declared that food throwing had already been reduced in their households, with 61% having made significant progress in this effort and 35% having achieved some success in this area. This group also had the highest number of people who were donating food to an eatery.

Redistribution of surplus food is the most desirable method of preventing food waste, as indicated in the universal food recovery hierarchy adopted in the global forum (HLPE, 2014), in the EU (European Union, 2020), in Poland (FPBŻ, 2013) and many other countries. Redistribution of surplus food is mainly handled by non-governmental organisations. Among them, the most involved are food banks, whose mission is to prevent food waste. Food banks acquire food at risk of going to waste free of charge and distribute it to those most in need. Food redistribution is also at the heart of food sharing, a relatively new social initiative involving the donation of surplus food to eateries by individuals, business organisations and others to people in need of support, with the mission of preventing food waste by building social responsibility. Eateries are specially marked fridges and cupboards where people can leave unwanted food (meeting food safety requirements) or use what others have left for free. More than 100 eateries have already been launched in Poland and are mainly located in large cities. In Warsaw (the

largest city, with around 2 million inhabitants, the capital) there are currently 46 eateries in operation (Konieczek, 2022).

Table 4

Respondents' opinions on various options for reducing food waste according to their interest in the problem

Variables	Total (% of sample)	Interest in the food wastage			p (Chi-square test)
		Little interested	Interested	Very interested	
Thinking about the impact of food waste					
Yes	84.5	66.7	94.6	96.1	<0.001
No	15.5	33.3	5.4	3.9	
Opinion on which stage in the food supply chain causes the most food wastage					
Primary production	1.5	1.3	1.4	2.0	
Food industry	2.5	2.7	4.1	0.0	0.239
Transportation	14.5	12.5	14.3	20.0	
Retail	28.0	27.8	24.3	38.0	
Foodservice	34.0	38.9	42.9	20.0	
Households	19.5	20.8	18.6	22.0	
Engagement with organizations that work to reduce food waste					
No	68.5	86.7	60.8	52.9	<0.001
Occasionally	24.5	10.7	33.8	31.4	
Often or constantly cooperating	7.0	2.7	5.4	15.7	
Purchasing short-life products from a promotional shelf in a store or similar stall in a bazaar					
No	17.5	28.0	9.5	13.7	<0.001
Occasionally	40.0	53.3	44.6	13.7	
Often or constantly cooperating	42.5	18.7	45.9	72.5	
Dining in restaurants that offer food at a lower price 2 hours before closing time					
No	62.0	73.4	60.8	47.1	0.023
Occasionally	26.0	21.3	27.0	31.4	
Often or constantly cooperating	12.0	5.3	12.2	21.6	
Donating food to an eatery					
No	79.5	89.3	77.0	68.6	0.015
Yes	20.5	10.7	23.0	31.4	
Assessment of own household in terms of actions to reduce food waste					
Not much is being done or efforts are without success	16.5	34.7	6.8	3.9	<0.001
There are already some successes	36.5	30.6	43.2	35.3	
There is a significant reduction	47.0	34.7	50.0	60.8	

The study showed that interest in food wastage issues is determined by the search for information on the subject and the type of knowledge sources used. The literature shows that there are a number of other factors that shape behaviour regarding food waste prevention, including the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals. For example, people in Scandinavian countries are more sensitive to sustainability issues, including not wasting food. In a comparative study among Polish and Swedish

students, it was shown that Swedish students perceived food waste mainly in terms of negative environmental impacts, while for Polish students the most important issue was the loss of money (Zabłocka et al., 2016). Similarly, the WRAP project on food waste in the UK showed that in households the vast majority of people consider wasting food to be a waste of money. Wasting food has also been shown to be a waste of good quality food and often leads to feelings of guilt (Quested et al., 2013). Norwegian students, like Swedish students, also had a better understanding of the necessity of population behaviour in the context of sustainability compared to Latvian students. But many students from both countries understood the need for sustainability and believed that sustainability topics should be included in school curricula (Porozovs et al., 2017).

Conclusions

In the sample of young people participating in the survey presented here, 3 clusters were identified, bringing together similar numbers of respondents. A distinguishing factor was the use of different types of information sources on food wastage. The research showed that about 2/3 of the respondents from the 'Not information-seeking' cluster were not interested in food wastage issues and were not concerned about its consequences. These behaviours determined their least involvement in each of the food waste prevention options analysed, as well as their least achievement in reducing food waste in their households. Respondents using scientific and Internet sources of information on food wastage issues ('Benefiting from science and Internet' cluster) performed most favourably in this respect. Declaring greater interest in the topic of food wastage was associated with taking action to reduce food waste. Most people linked food waste to foodservice and retail rather than the household which may be a barrier to taking action in the latter.

Meanwhile, the EU's "Farm to Fork Strategy" adopted a commitment to halve food waste in retail and consumption by 2030 (European Commission, 2020). This means that a programme of specific actions needs to be implemented in each Member State to achieve this goal. In the initial stages of the food supply chain, innovative solutions, methods, techniques and tools are needed. In the final stages, on the other hand, where not wasting food is the responsibility of the consumer, it is necessary to disseminate knowledge about the impacts of food waste and methods of reducing it. Raising awareness should result in desirable changes in views and various behaviours related to food management and consumption in households. The need for extensive action in this area is confirmed by the results of the own survey among young people presented here.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.002

Career Counselling in Human Resource Management

Inita Soika[1] Mg. paed.; **Natalja Vronska**[2] Dr. paed.
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvia;
inita.soika@lbtu.lv[1]; natalja.vronska@lbtu.lv[2]

Abstract: The relevance of the research is related to the expansion of the career counsellors' professional activity, which has been affected by the continuous socio-economic changes in society. This, in turn, has created various challenges in people's career development and life design, and made career counselling look at from the point of view of human resources management. The purpose of the study is to evaluate how career counselling fits into human resources management. Research methodology includes theoretical studies and analysis of guidelines in career counselling, career support and human resource management. The results of the study show that career counselling in human resources management requires evaluating the career counsellor's professional profile and professional roles, considering the complex and diverse context in which a person manages his own career and designs his life. The results of the research are significant because they give an insight into the problems of career counselling and guidance in the development of wider society. The results of the study are useful for career guidance researchers and career guidance practitioners.

Keywords: career counselling, career guidance, human resource management.

Introduction

The professional activity of career counsellors is most directly affected by the continuous socio-economic changes in society, both global and local, that have been taking place in recent decades. This, in turn, has created various challenges in the design of people's lives, looking at career development and career support in a much broader context (Greenhaus et al. 2018; Hall, 2001; Baruch, 2004; Savickas et al., 2009), touching on the following areas.

- The area of education as a focus on individual progress in lifelong learning, as citizens must be able to return to education, training and learning throughout their lives, as their needs and circumstances change and develop along with the introduction of various innovative technologies into the labour market. Various EU policy initiatives have increased flexibility by allowing individuals to start, resume and combine education, training and learning according to their specific needs and circumstances (OECD, 2023; ILO, 2022).
- The area of employment, because changes in the labour market no longer guarantee a secure job with one employer for a lifetime. Therefore, individuals are forced to take greater personal responsibility for managing their careers and ensuring the necessary personal and professional growth (CEDEFOP, 2021).
- The area of social policy, as questions about the security, equality, and well-being of the individual's personal and working life are brought up in connection with such global developments as demographic changes, migration and growing inequality (OECD, 2023; Hooley et al., 2016).

This creates new challenges for career guidance policymakers in their efforts to better understand the impact of these factors on employment and education systems. This indicates the expansion of career counsellors' professional activities, as it is necessary to take into account not only the models of individual development of clients and career development created in organizations, but also the diverse context in which life designing takes place. Moreover, it should be emphasized that career counsellors provide both key conditions and contexts to promote individual growth in the context of lifelong career development (European Commission, 2020).

The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) (International Competencies for Educational..., 2018) also points out that the continuous structural changes of the labour market, labour migration and the increase in the pace of technological development in the last ten years have been the main reason to raise the issue of the professional activities and training of career guidance specialists. The fact that the influence of these topics on the provision of career guidance is

huge both in the EU countries and in the world is indicated by several scientific studies (Enoch et al., 2022; European Lifelong Guidance ..., 2015; Ertelt et al., 2011). This also applies to the education of career counsellors in Latvia universities. The position of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Ministry of Education and Science is that it is necessary to prepare these specialists with more widely applicable competences than only the field of education. Although many graduates of this study program work in the field of education, they are not teachers and do not perform pedagogical activities. In addition, looking at the total workplace, work in educational institutions is only a small part of career counsellors' employment opportunities. Consequently, the issue of educating these specialists in a different field of study, except for the direction "Education, Pedagogy and Sports" has been brought up (Nestere-Nikandrova, 2018). One of the areas where the education of career counsellors fit in is human resource management. This is also indicated by the Professional Standard of the Republic of Latvia that a career counsellor works in state and local government institutions, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, companies, with merchants, in connection with personnel or human resources management or as a self-employed person or individual merchant (Karjeras konsultanta profesijas…, 2011). The target audience of his work is people of all ages, representing clients of various social and cultural backgrounds. A career counsellor performs the following tasks: advises, informs and educates clients of different ages, social and cultural origins in career development issues, provides support in career planning and development; helps develop career management skills, including job search skills; advises in the form of individual discussions and in groups; informs and educates the public on issues related to career guidance services (writes articles, speaks at seminars and mass media) (Karjeras konsultanta profesijas..., 2011). The activity of career counsellors in the field of human resources management is also confirmed by the IAEVG competence framework (International Competencies for Educational..., 2018), which indicates the broad general and special competencies of educational and vocational guidance practitioners, regardless of their work environment or specialization.

The significance of this scientific article is also confirmed by the research carried out on the topic of Master Theses of career counsellors defended in Latvian universities, which revealed their interdisciplinary nature (Soika et al., 2021). This, in turn, shows not only the diverse context and challenges in solving career development issues, but also the fact that career counsellors have to take on multiple professional roles to meet the different needs of clients at different levels of career guidance.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the inclusion of career counselling in human resources management, as well as to describe the career counsellor's professional profile and areas of activity in human resources management.

Methodology

The following tasks were put forward in the study:

- investigate and describe trends in explanations of career-related theoretical concepts;
- describe human resources management, its functions and purpose;
- find out how career counselling is included in human resources management, emphasizing the career counsellor's professional profile and areas of activity in human resources management.

The descriptions of career counselling, career guidance and human resources management in the works of Western European and global scientists for the 21st century, as well as in guidelines and documents of various levels are investigated in the study. The main research method was a theoretical analysis of the importance of career counselling and career guidance in human resource management, which has been studied by scientists from various fields and career guidance policymakers.

Results and Discussion

Career, career counselling and career guidance

Changes in the structure of employment and the economy, as well as intensification of competition and globalization, have increased the importance of the individual in the career management process. The person himself is responsible for the choice of profession and occupation and the way to design his life. He is required to have the skills to plan his employment more and to be open to a lifelong learning process. This has given the basis for defining a career as the interaction of education, work and private

life during a person's lifetime. The concept of career has an interdisciplinary nature, and its research is mainly carried out in the context of the areas of education, psychology, sociology, political science, economics and management science. The development of the concept of career is closely related to socioeconomic changes and the actualization of such theoretical concepts as follows.

- *Life designing*, which is an ongoing iterative process of self-exploration, setting career goals, learning and developing skills, and searching for suitable employment opportunities (Savickas et al, 2009).
- *Career management skills* that provide structured ways for individuals and groups to collect analyse, synthesize and organize information about themselves, education and occupations, as well as skills for career planning, decision-making and transitions. These are the life, learning, training and employment skills that individuals need to effectively develop and manage their careers (European Lifelong Guidance..., 2010).
- *Career management* - the process in which individuals develop, implement and control their career goals and strategies. It helps to optimize the match between the individual and the educational or work environment, thus maintaining his employability both in changing labour market conditions and in adapting to new situations (Greenhaus et al., 2018; Sullivan et al, 2009).
- *Career self-management* - a process that must take place continuously and regularly during an individual's life in order to promote developing personal and professional trajectories. This process includes: (a) career exploration, in particular, self-knowledge (values, interests, skills) and knowledge of the world (education, training, professionalism) in a systematic and deliberate manner; (b) developing life and career goals that are clear, realistic and take into account short-term, medium-term and long-term dimensions; (c) planning and implementation of action plans, which include all the behaviours and strategies an individual uses to achieve their defined career goals, and (d) monitoring and obtaining feedback, through which individuals continually assess their progress against their defined career goals (Greenhaus et al., 2018; King, 2004; Pinto et al., 2013).
- *Employability*, when an individual is able to manage, direct, and change the shape of his career according to personal choice, because the world of work is changing rapidly, introducing a new reality in which the occupations and jobs of the future and the skills that will be needed to perform them are not clearly known today. Therefore, the focus should now be on employability more than promotion (Aylott, 2018).

Linear and predictable careers are becoming less common as individuals become more interested in doing work that is personally meaningful to them. For a long time, career researchers (Hall 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2014; Allan et al., 2020) point out that career is fluid and diverse. The following main features characterize boundary less and protean career (Hall, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2009; Inkson, 2006):

- career is managed by the person himself, not by the organization;
- career is reinvented from time to time as the person and the environment change;
- career becomes an individual's identity;
- career is a series of experiences, skills, knowledge, transitions, and identity changes that occur during a professional life;
- career development is continuous, self-directed and related to learning, which is found in professional challenges and takes place throughout life;
- career development is not always formal professional training, retraining, upward mobility, but also horizontal, i.e., related to mixing jobs with similar duties in different areas of competence;
- psychological success has become an essential goal of an individual's career, consisting of a sense of pride and personal fulfilment resulting from the achievement of the most important personal life goals.

An individual's personal life, work and career are constantly undergoing tremendous changes, which has contributed to the need for lifelong career guidance. Receiving such support allows every person at any stage of life to determine their abilities, competences and interests, to make meaningful decisions in the field of education, training and profession and to manage their individual situation in studies, work and other circumstances (European Commission, 2020). Moreover, in order to help an individual to promote meaningful and sustainable career development throughout life, both individual (changes in

personality, work values or goal-setting that affect career development) and contextual factors must be taken into account (Nagy et al., 2019; Nykänen et al., 2012). Lifelong career guidance reflects individual, organizational and societal expectations. Therefore, career counsellors work in a variety of settings, both in the education and employment sectors (Vuorinen et al., 2017). Lifelong career guidance enables people to get decent work, manage their learning and careers in a way that reflects their interests and goals, benefiting themselves, the economy and society as a whole.

Human resources management - a view from another side

When looking at career counselling in human resources management, an obvious difference is noticeable. Career counsellors have always worked with clients in specific periods of career development and change, making a choice of profession, transitioning from school to the labour market, from secondary school to post-secondary education and then to work; during periods of unemployment or returning to work; moving from one job to another, etc. The various interventions have included counselling on career exploration and life designing, decision-making and goal-setting strategies, career assessment, and job transition and search skills (Neault, 2000). Human resources (HR) specialists, on the other hand, usually work with people who are already employed, providing assistance in building internal careers in the organization, achieving plans, benchmarking skills and competencies, and corporate evaluations (Neault, 2000; Vulpen, 2019). Although there is some overlap in the practice of career counsellors and HR professionals, traditionally the focus of interest of these two groups has been very different. Career counsellors are primarily concerned with providing assistance and support to individuals, whereas HR professionals generally serve the needs of organizations. (Neault, 2000). And yet, career counselling in human resources management can be looked at from another side - as a developing process in which career is the effective use of the individual's own resources to achieve one's life goals, purposeful activity for the improvement and expression of one's competences in both the social and professional sphere throughout life.

Competition in the global labour market has led to new management approaches, especially in human resources management. The traditional definition of human resources management is the use of the qualified workforce in the organization (their knowledge, skills, abilities and talents) to keep the organization growing. Since every organization is made up of people, it is important to obtain their services, develop their skills, motivate them to achieve higher performance and ensure that they continue to maintain their loyalty to the organization to achieve the goals of the organization (Armstrong et al., 2014). The objectives of human resources management are: to support the organization in achieving its goals by developing and implementing human resources strategies that are integrated with the business strategy; to promote the development of a high-performance organizational culture; to ensure that the organization has the talented and skilled people that it needs; to create a positive atmosphere and mutual trust between management and employees; to promote the application of an ethical approach to people management (Armstrong et al., 2014).

Although the main functions of HRM are attracting and retaining professionals, motivating them and developing their skills, and that sustainable human resource management (SHRM) defines the broader goals of human resource management, recognizing the complexity of the dynamics of the world of work, including the opportunity for an individual to develop as a person, as a professional and to a member of society through work-related experiences (Kramar, 2014), it does not really address the current career needs of individuals and the needs of society (Prins et al., 2020). Flexicurity, robotization, lifelong learning and cross-border labour mobility are the main drivers of change and innovation in the global labour market, where there is a strong tendency for the importance of an individual's career to dominate over the importance of the workplace in one particular organization. These challenges not only where and how individuals learn and work, but also when and why they do so. In addition, an aging Europe is creating a working population that has to work longer, requiring more support for 'second careers'. Added to this is the trend to personalize learning, which is necessary to remain relevant to the labour market (European Commission, 2019; OECD 2019). The people taking responsibility for their career development and life designing; choose the best and most suitable occupation for themselves, because they need to feel safe in order to plan their future. This allows seeing human resources management from a different point of view. As noted by several researchers (McGaughey, 2018; Vernon, 2009; Hooley et al., 2016), the principle of social justice is thus emphasized by thinking more about the development of the person himself and human rights. In a just society, human capacity expands through

education, better health and sustainable prosperity. In turn, the creativity that is necessary for the functioning of people's lives is enabled when they have a voice in political and economic power and the security to design their lives and realize their potential.

A self-directed career in human resource management

Here we can already talk about a person's self-directed career as a process of regulation of actions (Raabe et al., 2007) and a process of resource management, which is organized and monitored by the individual himself (Hirschi, 2012). Thus, it can be assumed that a self-directed career is a process of conscious creation, maintenance and use of various personal (self-assessment of skills, interests, hobbies, values and passions) and contextual resources that lead to successful career outcomes (Spurk et al., 2018). For example, in a work or educational setting, this can be achieved through means such as mentoring, developmental feedback or career workshops, turning the career management relationship between the individual and the career practitioner or employee and employer into a 'shared responsibility' (Aburumman et al., 2022). Two components are important in order to achieve such synergy: first, there must be expectations that the recipients of career guidance will be responsible for managing their own careers; and second, organizations must provide enabling career development support that is integrated into the organizational culture. Moreover, an individual, by exploring and realizing his resources, learns himself and creates his own career path, and this may not be limited to just one organization. The individual takes the initiative to find resources that can help their career development with a personal career path (Wilhelm et al., 2019). Realizing the intellectual, emotional, physical and moral potential of his personality (Kosturiak, 2010), the individual develops and improves his skills depending on the demand of the labour market (Bridgstock, 2011) and gains confidence that by fully using his resources and potential, he will be able to live a more fulfilling life (Vernon, 2009; McGaughey, 2018).

Human resources and potential have an adaptive and contextual nature, depending on how life circumstances shape its expression, development and realization. Awareness of an individual's resources begins already in childhood, in the school years, when under the influence of various circumstances, the basis for the development of the individual's potential, i.e., intellectual, moral and physical abilities, is formed. Any type of education a child receives from day one will determine the outcome of their potential and prospects in the future. A child's brain is constantly changing and growing, and it can develop in any direction. Through early learning and childhood development, a child is prepared for formal education and life. By encouraging children to rebel, explore and develop their curiosity for learning and knowledge, and matching this with quality education, they are empowered to become strong individuals (Dai, 2020). Facilitating conditions are essential, which actually make it possible to increase the individual's abilities - they allow individuals to develop new characteristics that are biologically secondary and therefore related to extensive educational experience and training and allow less able individuals to surpass themselves through development. One must agree with Dai, D. Y. (2020) that an individual realizes and develops their own resources by going through a progressive process of learning and talent development - informal learning experiences, followed by formal education and/or self-study as systematic learning, in-depth training, and finally progressive work in certain areas.

Career counsellor's professional profile and areas of activity in human resource management

The above points to the need for individuals to be provided with personalized, objective and timely career support, thereby helping them realize their resources and reach their potential. Such support acts as a promoter of the discovery, nurturing and development of individual talents. This allows individuals to navigate digital and green transitions more confidently during economic turmoil. It helps to implement lifelong approaches to learning and more active involvement in the labour market. Both young people and adults need such career guidance. Young people, because they, experience a much higher unemployment rate than older people. Rapidly changing labour demand, many new occupations emerging and many existing ones changing or declining complicate their decision-making about education and training opportunities. For adults, because of their ageing, technological advances and globalization are causing huge changes in the labour market - old jobs are disappearing or radically changing, and new jobs are emerging that require different skills and competences. Retraining and upskilling are increasingly considered an integral part of working life (Investing in Career..., 2021).

This indicates the wide field of activity (in different educational and employment and social environments) for individual career counsellors and organizations that offer career guidance services

and educational institutions that monitor labour market developments and try to facilitate career transitions for both individuals and organizations. Focusing on the importance of a career affects the professional work profile of a career counsellor much more than before. A career counsellor must be competent in solving many career issues: in *career information*, there should be knowledge of updated information on education and training, as well as current information on employment trends, labour market and social issues. In *career education* – one must be able to integrate theory into research practice in the field of career guidance, demonstrate knowledge of the lifelong career development process, and use goal-setting tasks in career planning and decision-making. In *career counselling* - carry out research, choose and use appropriate diagnostic and counselling methods, be able to cooperate with the client in individual consultations and group counselling, know how to use dialogue in the field of career guidance, performs multicultural career counselling. In the *management of career services* - to be able to introduce and implement various career support models, methodologies and programs, to be able to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals, to know (office) policy and to be able to network.

Career counsellors must have *general competences* - the ability to be empathetic, communicate and listen, be flexible and tolerant, adhere to ethical standards, be aware and acknowledge cultural differences of clients, use various online tools in career counselling, feel good about their job duties, and be aware of their abilities (Network for Innovation..., 2016).

A career counsellor must be aware of several professional roles that make up his professional identity: as *a counsellor* - to help people understand their situation, solve problems to find solutions, make difficult career decisions and implement personal changes; as *an educator* - to help people develop their career management skills needed for career-related learning and development; as *an expert* in career evaluation and information - to help people get relevant information about themselves, the labour market and educational or vocational training opportunities, depending on their information needs; as *a social system intervenes* - support people and organizations in the development of suitable career paths; *as a career services manager* who provides quality service delivery (Network for Innovation ..., 2016). When providing services, a career counsellor must be able to both switch between these professional roles and sometimes combine them based on the unique needs of clients. In addition, performance tasks of career counsellors may, depending on the circumstances, offer advice and basic career support for immediate problem solutions, career support and advice for individuals and groups focusing on complex career issues, as well as specialized services related to with complex career challenges, career management, research and development (Network for Innovation..., 2016; International Competencies for Educational..., 2018).

Several signs show that the field of career guidance and counselling is becoming more and more versatile. Firstly, the provision of career guidance becomes more specific and precise in order to meet the needs of the specific target audience. Secondly, no single provider of career guidance service can meet the needs of different client groups at different levels of career guidance. Therefore, providing career guidance is the responsibility of inter-administrative and multi-professional networks (Nykänen et al., 2012). Thirdly, such a way of providing career guidance services as a one-stop agency concept is increasingly used, which combines multi-professional, low-threshold services for different client groups under one roof (Moreno da Fonseca, 2015). Fourthly, new technologies and skills intelligence and use of information to make better career choices. Success in developing ICT competence in career services requires a dynamic combination of cognitive, social, emotional and ethical factors in the work of a career counsellor (Kettunen et al., 2016). Another challenge for networking is the growing demand for transnational mobility, as labour shortages in certain sectors have led to international recruitment and the need for more comprehensive integration of career guidance services. This transition to group and collective activities is a process involving many stakeholders with different interests on several levels. This requires a greater emphasis on strategic competencies that enable practitioners to define their new roles and tasks in multi-professional networks, both within organizations and in the internal interactions of these service providers. Career counsellors must be able to cope with challenging situations and function properly in conflicting roles in order to receive support and possible sanctions related to active labour market measures (Ertelt et al., 2011). This versatility allows career counselling to be assessed within the social context itself, placing greater emphasis on how human resources are managed and used in life design.

Conclusions

Career counselling in human resources management focuses on:

- the person who is important to finding the right ways to realize their abilities and develop their potential throughout their life;
- the career as a self-directed regulatory activity and resource management process, which is organized and monitored by the individual himself, making and implementing meaningful decisions in the field of education, training, professional challenges and personal life;
- the broad field of activity of a career counsellor in a variety of educational, occupational and social settings to facilitate the career transition of individuals and organizations;
- the professional identity of a career counsellor to be competent in service management, providing counselling, informing, educating, evaluating and supporting individuals and organizations in the development of the most suitable career paths;
- the diverse context in which the career counsellor must promote all conditions so that the individual has the opportunity to develop both as a person, as a professional, and as a member of society.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.003

Is the Cold Friend or Enemy for Soldiers in Military Action?

Liana Plavina Dr.med;
Riga Stradins University of Latvia
liana.plavina@rsu.lv

Abstract: Cold has impact to every person as on allied forces as well on enemy forces. The topicality of the study is based on the analysis of the experience of military campaigns in cold environments in the history of war and the emphasis on the importance of preventive measures that reduce the influence of low temperature as a natural environmental factor on the tactical readiness of troops. The aim of the study was analyses of cold environment impact on outcome (personnel losses) of military campaign in historical aspect, characterized the main health problems of personnel. We provided theoretical analysis of military campaigns` from ancient time till nowadays. Results of our study showed that realisation of preventative measures as well as planning and providing troops` activities in low temperature environment is one of the greatest challenges for leaders and commanders of military operations; in case of failure environmental factors played crucial role to wars` outcomes, battles` results and could lead to great disaster for military units and armies. The most important conclusion is the temperature of surrounding condition is one of essential factor for combatant's survival, for activity of the personnel in low temperature surrounding, for combat capacity of military personnel and military unit. Timely identification of low-air temperature environment hazard slop down personnel losses in warfare. The most important conclusion stressed that assessment of cold weather, prevent and manage cold injuries allow keep combat capacity and fulfil the mission. Results of our study shown significance the effective program of military force health protection that included adequate logistic as well with nutritional supply. Commander authority in management personnel readiness is essential, physical preparedness, practical skills, and training of personnel in cold environment were important in pre-mission phase of campaign. Research results shown that cold (low temperature) impact as environmental risk factor must be identified and carefully assessed before military action.

Keywords: cold environment, cold injuries, preventive measure planning.

Introduction

The aim of the study was analyses of cold environment impact on outcome of military campaign in historical aspect. The low temperature as environmental factor played crucial role in wars outcomes, battles` results and could led to great disaster for military troops and armies (Pandolf et al., 2001). Human body is complicated biological system where various physiological, biochemical processes take place; the surrounding environment, low temperature could induce cold-weather injuries, that endanger physical health, working and combat capacity, and also recognize the danger of cold weather on activities of personnel in military environment, and operations (Burr, 1993). The low temperature forms general impact on physical health (hypothermia) as well local impact/ damage on periphery regions like foot, hands, ears, noise (Abel et al., 2006). The cold induces freezing and non-freezing injuries. One of the most common freezing cold injuries is frostbite that characterized with freezing all layers of skin as well muscle and bone; the frostnip is the first degree of frostbite, that characterized with superficial freezing of the skin and is a result of contact with cold object, or chilblain or trench foot. The immersion foot or trench foot is a non-freezing injury in wet environment that characterized with peripheral vascular disorders, damage of blood vessels and nerves, and as a consequence the other tissues (Sullivan-Kwantes et al., 2021). The lowering of physical health has negative effect on physical abilities and combat capacity of military personnel (Daanen et al., 2016). Factors that increased the risk of cold injuries in winter operations could divided into individual and common. There are numerous individual factors like old age, exhaustion, inadequate nutrition, tobacco-use, alcohol-use, dehydration, previous cold injuries poor hygiene inadequate or wet clothing, wet boots, constricting boots, chronic diseases etc. The common factors connected to commander authority: failure of preventing measure program, inadequate supply, deplete logistic, lack of training etc (Zwaag et al., 2022).

Methodology

The analysis of the influence of the cold environment on the outcome of the military campaign in a historical aspect was carried out by conducting a theoretical analysis of the outcome of the wars and the outcome of the battles that led to a major disaster for military units and armies in the history of wars. The main tasks were to investigate and describe the cold weather assessment performed or not performed for the prevention and management of cold injuries that would allow for the maintenance of combat capacity and successful mission execution.

Results and Discussion

Overview of experience warfare in ancient history done by Robert Pozos (2001) shown that the greatest epidemics of cold injury have occurred during Cyrus campaign into Asia Minor. At the Battle of Cunaxa (401 BCE), not far from Babylon, the Greeks won, and Cyrus was killed. Xenophon (434–355 BCE) was a young Athenian officer in an army of mixed Greek mercenaries, he was elected in position of the new leaders and became the main inspiration and driving force for troops. He conducted mountain campaign, he led 10.000 men on a 1.000-mile retreat through the mountains (now the territory of Armenia), in the depths of the winter of 401/400 BCE. The troops had extreme cold exposure, only 4,000 soldiers survived; most of the others died from exposure the cold and frostbite by Cyrus on a campaign into Asia Minor.

The low temperature is a factor that had influence the outcome of wars and battles in previous centuries as well the cold as a natural environmental factor has been one of the greatest challenges for forces in modern time. The cold (low temperature) as the environmental risk factor needs identification and assessment before military action. The low temperature form general impact on physical health (hypothermia) as well local impact/ damage on periphery regions foot, hands, ears, noise) as cold injuries (frostbite or chilblain or trench foot). The lowering of physical health has negative effect on physical abilities and combat capacity of military personnel (Roberto et al.,2001).

Overview of experience of battles in northern Italy in 218 BCE against Roman done by Robert Pozos (2001) shown that the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal, during the campaign led army of 38.000 infantry, 9.000 cavalry, and 80 elephants to the valley of the Rhone. The troops made the passage of the Alps in heavy snow had already fallen in the mountain valleys across the Alps. The extreme weather bitter cold, altitude provided dangerous impact to the forces, only 19.000 men survived, the half-starved and frozen. Cold weather decided the fate of armies, common and severe cold-weather injuries often caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, confounding plans, and turning victory into defeat. The lessons from historical experience of warfare shown that success of tactical operation depends on management of preparedness military personnel and appropriate surveillance and preventive measures for health support. Military operation is the challenge for military personnel in cold environment, when the temperature slop down below +4°C, especially if the duration of tactical operation is prolonged. The lessons learned from history shown that the low temperature has influence of physical health capacities and physical fitness the military personnel and was the leading and crucial factors in tactical operations. Failure to prevent cold injuries, incorrect decision of commanders concerning management, insufficient logistic, lack of theoretical knowledges and practical skill of survival in cold environment degraded personnel performance, result impermanent incapacity or death of soldiers, and have disastrous impact on mission.

Experience of the Great Northern War connected to Sweden King Charles XII, the Swedish troops leader activities in Norway. He decided to give battle in autumn 1718 against Norwegians, but he was killed at the beginning of invade at the beginning of December 1718. After that the main body of army in short time retreat and the northern part of army when it crossed highest ridge during severe storm in northern Norway lost half of man (3.700) died from hypothermia and frostbite (Godley, 1928)

The American war history shown action of General George Washington and Valley Forge during the winter 1777/1778, he led army with 11.000 men, troops had inadequate clothing and boots for wintertime, 2.000 men were without boot. There were severe medical problems of cold injury during the cold time with snow and temperature below freezing in valley Forge (Meier, 1991).

Overview of Napoleon campaign in Russia done by P. Segur in 1958, nominated it as one of the largest disasters in war history when the cold weather destroyed army. The campaign was planned as short-term invasion with one decisive battle. Napoleon army had logistic department that planned supplies, prepared of depots, formed transportation battalions. Commander did not account the winter weather condition during preparation phase. The Napoleon army reduced from 612.000 men in June 1812 till 110.000 men in October 1812. Decision of Napoleon to stared started force retreatment in October 1812 led to army failure. Weather conditions with temperature fallen above freezing, wet and snow, heavy rain, and after that bitter cold (-40°C) had dangerous effect on troops. The low temperature factors did not consider and did not control by commanders, cold weather degraded human performance and led to incapacitation and death of soldiers. Napoleon troops force sloped down till 50.000 men in one month later, prolonged impact of humidity, snow and cold weather decreased army capacity. The retreated Napoleon`s troops on their road met with natural obstacles as rivers and swamps, destroyed villages and towns there were no shelters, nutritional supply. Prolonged exposure of cold weather mud afflicted combatants by combination of cold injuries, as trench foot and as well frostbite. There were no exact data about numbers of cold injuries, soldiers suffered from wounds, that combined with cold exposure and health complaints. Napoleons` army had 100.000 men killed, 200.000 soldiers died from various cases, 50.000 casualties were in hospital, about 50.000 men deserted, and 100.000 were prisoners of war. Russian army personnel losses were about 250.000 casualties, who had wounds with combination of cold effect (Segur, 1958).

Preventive measures and health support of forces in cold environment should rest upon experience, practical skills, and knowledge. In the case of minimal support and depleted logistic and nutritional, troops morally degraded and lost their combat performance capacity. Commanders should assess preparedness of units for action in wintertime. The personnel should be trained to survive and continue military actions, but the personnel losses in such situation could be high. Preventive measures for combat health support should carry out and control before military action. Lessons from war history shown prolonged cold environment harmful impact on soldiers' health status and military campaign. Prolonged exposure of cold and wet are known when the temperature is above 0° C are known as non-freezing cold injury (trench foot or immersion foot), but when temperature is extreme low the cold caused on the periphery tissues of limbs, freezing cold injury (frostbites). These injuries combined to general cold exposure – hypothermia.

The non-freezing cold injuries are known for centuries in military actions, the Crimean war (1853-1856) between Osman impair and Great Britain, France from one side and Russia from another side shown harmful effect of low temperature and humidity of physical health, trench foot or immersion foot (Whitaker, 2016). The thousands of cold injuries (the trench foot) in British and French troops decreased combat fitness of troops. Logistic problems aggravated personnel loss; during the one winter season were fixed about 1.942 cold casualties in 50.000 men large army (Francis,1984).

The 1st World War is known as a trench warfare, soldiers spent weeks and months in trenches when the low temperature near freeze and humidity formed harmful effect of physical health. Exposure of cold and wet are known when the temperature is above 0° C are known as non-freezing cold injury (trench foot or immersion foot) but when temperature is extreme low the cold caused on the periphery tissues of limbs freezing cold injury (frostbites). These injuries combined to general cold exposure - hypothermia. Overview of experience warfare of the 1st World War shown British army reports that contained data about 115.000 cold injuries in four months of 1914/1915 (Gilbert, 1994). Extended cold, wet and low food supply, non-adequate clothes, and non-effective military equipment in low temperature surrounding were consequences of cold as aggravated environmental factor, that had impact on each side involved in war conflict. The health problems concern periphery part of the body (trench foot) as well on whole body (hypothermia). Low temperature has influence on combat capacity of troops. The question "Is the cold is ally or opponent in combat field? stay open. Russian side reported about 12.000 casualties with severe cold injuries and frostbites. Soldiers were unprepared and unequipped for cold weather. Even trained and prepared troops as Italian mountains troops had cold injuries – Italian authorities informed about 300 cases of cold injuries in mountains region during one campaign (Gilbert,1994). Lessons from 1st World War history shown prolonged cold weather exposure harmful impact on soldiers' health status in time of extended military campaign.

Cold weather exposure threat was reported from experience of the 2nd World War, that started on September 1939, at first it was planned as short military action, with conclusion in two months, but its duration extended till May 1945 with extremely high numbers casualties and dead as from injuries as well cold injuries, from both sides there were about 10 million were cold injuries, German side spread information about 250.000 casualties with cold injuries (Killian,1981). American side as well had large numbers of losses from cold injuries during first winter of their participance in 2nd World War. The Russian- Finnish war shown unpreparedness of Russian troops to struggle in winter condition, clothes and equipment were inadequate to use in low temperature environment, the numbers of losses from cold injuries during Russian-Finnish campaign were about 200.000 (Glantz et al.,1955).

The worse-case scenario shown the German military operation Barbarossa in winter 1941- 1942 with heavy losses of personnel and equipment, that indicated on unpreparedness of troops to extreme cold weather (Clark, 1965). The troops were inexperienced, were not equipped enough for battles activities in cold environment. Depleted logistic and lack of winter clothes for soldiers, low level of food provision in aggravated situation led to struggle with natural factors as well, and consequences of winter military actions were exhaustion of personnel and extremely large number of casualties in combination with cold injuries. Statistics on numbers of casualties were correlated with temperature outside, winter weather conditions, battle activities, action, as well logistic and supplies problems. Military technic (weapons) as well were affected by extreme cold. Lessons learn from experience shown that the troops needed adequate training in cold environment, proper equipment and nutrition, good discipline, and commander's awareness (weather, terrain, battle).

In nowadays military activity of troops in winter is a special kind of operation. US Army, Finland, Sweden have specialized troops that have been trained according had field manuals, transfer knowledges, in military schools and units to disseminate and transfer knowledges know-how. Articles, field manuals, conducted classes educational films, tests, as well development of equipment for actions in cold environment allow to prepare troops, protect troops against cold effect improve soldiers' skills and quality to fighting in cold un with cold.

The experience from war history shown that the meteorological factors, low temperature played crucial role and provided large influence on health status and mobility level of combat personnel, on troops` technical equipment, terrain, statement the roads (Burr, 1993; Francis, 1984). The winter weather conditions characterized by high humidity, formation of mud and aggravation of road status. The weather conditions in wintertime with the sub-zero temperature need special preparedness for personnel as well for technic, machines (engine, hydraulic fluids, fuel filters, water separator heater etc (Taylor,1992; Rav-Acha et al., 2004).

Lessons learn from warfare shown that, cold environment is a challenge for military operation. Combat tasks could be delayed due decreased physical abilities, low manoeuvre capacity of personnel. The troops needed additional clothes, equipment, food supply and logistic support, these factors had impact on military operation. Disregarding of cold environmental factors during preparation phase of military campaign could have disastrous influence on troops capability incapacitation or death of personnel (Heil et al., 2016).

Preventive measures for force health protection are extremely essential. Military personnel should have basically knowledge and practical skill how to survive and keep combat fitness in cold environment. In the case of minimal support, depleted logistic and inadequate supply, the risk of cold weather injuries for personnel increased (Lee et al., 2004; Oksa et al., 2006). The personnel losses in such situation could be high. The personnel should be trained to survive and continue military actions. Prepared equipment and adaptation military tactical activities to cold environment could form health support. Commanders' responsibility is to provide cold environment risk assessment, surveillance and managing prevention and control program for training and preparedness of personnel for action in low temperature weather.

Conclusions

Lessons from the history of war clearly demonstrated the harmful effects of long-term cold environments on the health of soldiers and the failure of military campaigns. Prolonged exposure of cold and wet with sub-zero temperature are known as non-freezing cold injury (trench foot or immersion foot), but when temperature is extreme low the cold caused on the periphery tissues of limbs freezing cold injury

(frostbites). These injuries combined to general cold exposure – hypothermia. War in wintertime need special preparedness, knowledges, practical skills. Non-experienced young soldiers had higher risk to get cold injuries then the soldiers from experienced older troops. Preventive measures for combat health support should carry out and control before military action. Commanders' responsibility is provided risk assessment in cold environment that included analyses of temperatures fluctuation intervals, personal equipment that include clothes, boots etc, and unit equipment, logistic support (shelters, nutrition, and individual health psychological status). One of the preventive measures to protect troops in cold weather is training with assessment of skills and experience in cold to keep combat capacities. All these components form force health support program.

Soldiers` individual cold protection depended on age, physical preparedness and fitness, body composition, alcohol and tobacco-use, dehydration and water consumption, depleted nutrition, low caloric intake, as well health status, chronic diseases, previous cold injuries skills, experience. Adequate individuals' equipment – clothes should protect body from heat losses, wind, and humidity. Essential for each soldier are to have knowledge about cold weather injuries (frostbites) that need active medical intervention, self-protection. The situational risk factors are low mobility, water immersion, constricting boots, wet clothes, and socks. Ignoring and disregarding of cold environment risks lead to cold injuries and illnesses that have disastrous effect to mission performance and could provoke failure of military operation.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.004

The Role and Importance of Viticulture-winemaking in Agritourism Activity (On the Example of Guria Region)

Murman Tsetskhladze[1] Candidate of Economic Sciences;
Salome Sulaberidze[2] Ph.D. Student
Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia
murman.tsetskhladze@bsu.edu.ge[1]; salome.sulaberidze1900@gmail.com[2]

Abstract: The article presents the history, existing condition and development trends of viticulture-winemaking in the Guria region. Winemaking is one of the directions of agritourism, which includes the following services: accommodating and feeding visitors in farmer's house, working in the vineyard, learning winemaking technology and participation in it, wine tasting. The diversity of the tour depends on the enthusiasm and capabilities of the farmer. Presented materials are based on the results of our research conducted in 2021. During the research, 12 winegrowers and one potter were identified in all three municipalities of Guria, who are engaged not only in wine production and pitcher making, but in agritourism activities as well. The aim of the research was to get to know the activities of local farmers, to identify problems and to determine the ways of their regulation. Relevant recommendations have been elaborated, which serve the development of the field, the growth of the farm's expansion possibilities, the creation of new tourist routes and refinement and perfection of the service quality. As a result of all this, the level of migration will decrease, the local population will be employed, and their social and economic situation will be improved. In the end, all these benefits will have a positive effect on the economic development of the region.

Keywords: agritourism, viticulture, winemaking, wine road, history of Chkhaveri

Introduction

In Georgia, over time, viticulture was developed, new varieties have appeared, and different winemaking methods were created. Over the centuries, the winemaking styles of Kakheti, Kartli, Imereti and other regions of Georgia were formed. In this respect, among the regions of Georgia, we should highlight Guria, located in western Georgia, on the Black Sea shore, where diverse types of farming, including viticulture, are spread. The technology of viticulture and winemaking itself, here were formed over centuries; nowadays, it is the regional originality and distinctiveness that has become the main feature that visitors are interested in.

Important works dedicated to agritourism are written by foreign scientists: S. Blanco, B. Bosk, A. Brochado, J. Karlsen, S. Filopoulos, J. Fountain, S. Charter, O. Guzel, A. Mathieson, F. Potevin, V. Santos, D. Senese, M. Tafel, and by others. Among the Georgian authors, the works of E. Kharaishvili, M. Metreveli, L. Qorghanashvili, I. Shalamberidze, G. Shanidze, L. Khartishvili, Ts. Tsetskhladze, N. Khakhubia, G. Sekhniashvili, M. Diasamidze, A. Devadze, Z. Mikashavidze, P. Chaganava, M. Gogelia and others should be noted.

However, the potential of tourism at the level of regions, especially in the direction of agritourism, is still less examined. The development of "wine tours" is especially promising for Georgia and exactly this reality has determined the goal of the paper to reveal the potential of wine tourism and the prospects of its development in Georgia, namely, in one of its regions - Guria, taking into account the experience of advanced touristic countries of the world.

Methodology

In the paper, based on the conceptual analysis of foreign and Georgian literature, we used the qualitative research method - documentary analysis. We carried out a synthetic analysis of the results obtained. We also used systematic approaches and comparative analysis. To obtain data, we conducted a survey. We have chosen this method of survey because there are no statistical data on tourism and agritourism in the Guria region.

Local farmers and winemakers participated in the survey, and it was revealed that most of them are involved in agritourism activities as well. A total of 12 wine-producing entrepreneur-farmers were identified. Of these, 7 in Ozurgeti municipality, 4 in Chokhatauri, 1 in Lanchkhuti. In the research process, scientific works of Georgian and foreign researcher-scientists, proceedings of scientific-practical conferences, data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia and the Georgian National Tourism Administration were used. Also, the data of the tourism administrations of Ozurgeti, Chokhatauri and Lanchkhuti municipalities of the Guria region were collected and analysed.

Results and Discussion

1. History of winemaking in Georgia

In Georgia, there has been a continuous tradition of viticulture and winemaking for millennia. It is the oldest wine center in the world. Georgia was also called the country of 8,000 vintages, because the oldest traces of cultivated vines in the world have been found here. Several decades ago, in Kvemo Kartli, to the south of Tbilisi, in the Marneuli valley, in the ruined house of the Dangreuli Gora, archaeologists found several grape-stones of the 6th-millennium (B.C.) vine and based on morphological and ampelographic features, they were attributed to the cultivated species of the vine, *Vitis Vinifera Sativa*.

Today, more than 530 varieties are known in Georgia. About 440 varieties among them, have survived to this day, gathered in collection plots, the rest are in the process of seeking out. Kakheti region is the most distinguished by the diversity of varieties, with 80 varieties confirmed. 75 varieties have been confirmed in Imereti, 72 in Kartli, 60 in Samegrelo, 58 in Abkhazia, 53 in Guria, 52 in Adjara, 50 in Racha-Lechkhum (Kharbedia, 2017).

Besides, from ancient times, in Georgia, the attention was paid to the making of wine vessels as well. The prototype vessel of the pitcher was created as early as the Neolithic Age. On the ancient clayware, which was found on the territory of Georgia - on the Great Hill of Khrami and belongs to the VI-V millennia, bunches of grapes are depicted. A number of early Bronze and middle Bronze Age pitchers have been found on the territory of our country.

Pitcher wine may be considered as the phenomenon of Georgian and world wine culture, which is the most archaic and rooted in the depths of centuries. Traditional Georgian pitcher wine technology has no analogues in the world today. The main advantage of the pitcher is that the wine storage temperature in the pitcher buried into the ground is almost unchanged throughout winter and summer. It is an excellent vessel for storing a wine, besides, it also participates in the technological process of wine. The fact that the wine during the storage period, before the first extraction, does not suffer from the negative influence of grape-stones, main stalk of bunch of grapes and *chacha* (*here: grape residue left after making wine*), and on the contrary, all of the three has a very positive effect, is conditioned by the conical shape of the pitcher. Grape-stones, main stalk of bunch of grapes and *chacha* are sunk, covered by sediment and wine and remain so for months, resulting in a wine rich in tannins, with a high shelf life.

Nowadays, pitchers are made in only a few villages of Georgia. In Kakheti, the village Vardisubani is famous to produce pitchers. In Zemo Imereti these are the villages of Kharagauli district - Makatubani and Shrosha, as well as Tqemlovana village of Chiaturi district, Atsana village in Guria. Over the centuries, pitchers from Racha-Lechkhumi, Kartli, Samegrelo, Samtskhe-Javakheti and other areas were also famous (Kharbedia, 2017).

All this was facilitated by the rich traditions of winemaking and the diversity of local grape varieties. In this regard, Guria is a very interesting region, because 58 local varieties of vines are spread here, among which, one variety - *Kordzala* is recognized as common variety of Guria and Adjara. Twenty among the listed varieties (*Atinauri, Chachietis Tetra, Chkhinkilouri, Dondgho, Kaknatela, Kakutura, Kamuri Tetri, Kapistoni Tsitsiliani, Katuri, Keshelavas Tetri, Khushia Tetri, Maisa, Mauri Tetri, Sakmiela, Saknatura, Samarkhi, Tetri Qurdzeni, Tkvlapa, Vatsitsvera*, and *Zenaturi*) are white grape varieties; 34 varieties (*Akido, Aladsturi, Bakhvis Qurdzeni, Berdzula, Chepeshi, Chkhaveri, Chumuta, Jani, Jani Nakashidzis, Jani Tsikhuri, Kamuri Shavi, Khemkhu, Khushia Shavi, Kikacha Shavi, Kordzala, Kotskhana, Kumusha, Maganakuri, Makhaturi, Mandikouri, Mtevandidi, Mtredispekha, Mtsvivani Guruli, Nasheneba, Ojaleshi Guriis, Opoura, Rtskhili, Samchkhavera, Saperavi Guriis, Shavchkhavera,*

Skhilatubani, Tsanapita, Tsivchkhavera, and *Vorona*) are red grape varieties; 3 (*Badagi, Tsitlani*, and *Tsivchkhavera Vardisperi*) are pink and 1 - *Tsisperula* is of gray colouring (Barisashvili, 2016).

Such a diversity of grape varieties indicates that in the recent past, viticulture and winemaking were strongly rooted in Guria (Barisashvili, 2016). Climatic and natural conditions also contribute to the development of viticulture. Guria is open from the side of the Black Sea and the Rion lowland and is influenced by the Black Sea, which is why the climate is favourable for the development of grape culture. Due to favourable natural conditions, viticulture is well developed in Chokhatauri district, the area of vineyards in other districts - Ozurgeti and Lanchkhuti is relatively small.

Chokhatauri municipality's vineyards are in the valleys of rivers - Supsa, Gubazouli and Khevistsqali. In the villages located on the right side of the Supsa river, there is *the viticulture zone of Dabaltsikhe village*, where favourable natural conditions make possible to produce high-quality table wines. In the same valley *the viticulture zone of Yanoul-Berezhouli* is important as well. Quality products can be produced in the villages located on both sides of Gubazouli river, up to the village of Kheva, above which the spread of vineyards is limited, because the grapes do not have enough time for ripening due to the lack of the sum of active temperatures.

Through the Guria-Imereti border passes the Khevistsqali river, which enters the Chokhatauri district. On the left side of this river, *the Kokhnar-Sachamiaseri zone* is important in terms of winemaking. The possibility of obtaining high-quality products in this zone is conditioned by the existence of humus-carbonate soils developed on marls *(an unconsolidated sedimentary rock or soil consisting of clay and lime, formerly used as fertilizer*), relatively less humidity due to the distance from the sea, and favourable conditions for the sum of active temperatures. In this district, Imeretian grape variety – *Tsolikouri* is the leading one, which has earned the fair sympathy of the population due to a number of positive qualities. From the Imeretian varieties, *Tsitska, Dzvelshavi* and *Mgaloblishvili* are also spread here on a small scale. In the district, local vine varieties are represented with one or two rootstocks. We think that it is an urgent task to study them and identify the best ones, which will expand the resources of quality wine production.

Ozurgeti municipality has mainly three zones in terms of viticulture-winemaking: *lowland, which is surrounded by low valleys of rivers and the Black Sea coastline; mountainside zone, which is mainly located on the slopes of valleys*, and *high mountain zone, which is adjoined to the Guria-Adjara Mountain range.*

In terms of winemaking, here, the mountainside zone of the valleys of the district is noteworthy. In this regard, *the valleys of Supsa, Bakhvistsqali and Natanebi* are important.

On the left side of the Supsa river valley, vineyards are planted in the form of low-trained vine, in the villages of Nagomari-Shroma zone: *Nagomari, Akhalsopeli, Baileti, Gurianta, Meria, Kakhuri, Konchkati, Zedobani, Shroma, Vake, Tkhinvali, Khrialeti, and Ompareti*. On the right side of the valley, the micro-districts of *Dzimiti, Silauri and Jumati* are noteworthy.

The valley of river Bakhvistsqali in Ozurgeti municipality is the most quality zone in terms of winemaking, the Askana-Bakhvi zone with villages: *Askana, Vaniskedi, Mtispiri, Zemo Bakhvi, Kvemo Bakhvi, Pampaleti and Nasakirali* is important here. The micro-districts of *Askana, Bakhvi and Nasakirali* are particularly distinguished by their high quality of wine. The high quality of wine in this area is conditioned by the sufficient amount of carbonates contained in the soil, the slope of the vineyards towards the south, the favourability of the sum of active temperatures. Precipitation is excessive, but as long as the vineyards are planted on the slope, it does not have an adverse effect on the production.

In the valleys of the Natanebi and Bzhuzhistsqali rivers, vineyards can be found in the following villages: Vakijvari, Bagdadi, Tskhemliskhidi, Uchkhubi, Dvabzu, Natanebi, Gomi, Shemokmedi, Makvaneti, Likhauri, Chanieti and others. Here stands out the viticulture zone of Baghdadi, where sufficiently high-quality wine is made from *Tsolikouri*.

Figure 1. **Georgia, Guria region (Guria, 2023)**

It should be noted that varieties of the local vine spread in the region are less examined, if we do not consider the fact that in the village of Bakhvi, 14 hectares of Chkhaveri plantations are cultivated, from which they make original, semi-sweet wine *Georgian Wine Chkhaveri*, which has obtained sufficiently high sympathy by consumers due to its originality.

Lanchkhuti municipality has vineyards, which are mainly spread on the northern and southern slopes of the Guria's mountain range, in the mountainside lane. Here, the vineyards located on the southern slopes are located on the right side of the Supsa river and follow the mountainside zone, where vineyards are found in the villages: *Chanchati, Kvemo Aketi and Zemo Aketi, Atsana, Mamati and Gaguri*.

In the northern part of the mountain range, in Lanchkhuti, there are massifs of vineyards above the railway track in the following villages of the Nigoiti-Shukhuti and Chibati-Chochkhati zones: *Kviani, Chqonagora, Cholobargi, Nigoiti, Shukhuti, Lashisghele, Lanchkhuti, Machkhvareti, Gvimbalauri, Zemo Chibati* and *Kvemo Chibati, Lesa, Ninoshvili, Nigvziani, Tabanati, Khoreti, Tsiteliubani, Guliani* and others.

The Black Sea has a great influence on this zone, atmospheric precipitation is large; Due to favourable natural conditions, table wines for mass consumption are made. But there are some villages where quite high-quality wines are produced. Such villages are: *Chqonagora, Cholobargi, Nigoiti, Zemo Shukhuti, Shromis Ubani, Moedani, Khoreti, Tsiteliubani* and *Guliani.*

In general, Gurians divide the vineyard and grape varieties into three categories:

1. *Chkhaveri* grape vineyard, the harvest of which is usually quickly sold or reserved for the family and used for making wine in small quantities for religious holidays.
2. *Adesa*, which is used for daily consumption. As a rule, the wine made from Adesa is drunk by family members or relatives. The history of Adesa's spreading begins in the second half of the 19th century, when, in Guria, many varieties of grapes died out due to disease. Then, new grape variety was introduced through the city of Odessa. The vine was named "Adesa". It is well spread in this region.
3. *Tsolikouri* and *Alaska*, the total number of which is certainly small; farmers who make wine from this variety of grapes usually host guests with this wine (Sepiskveradze, 2011).

2. Wine production and Wine Tourism in Georgia

The area of vineyards in Georgia is about 45 thousand hectares, which is much less than 30 years ago (almost 120 thousand ha) and is approximately equal to the index of the 30s of the XX century. Grapes are mainly used for wine production in Georgia. About 150-200 thousand tons of grapes are produced

in Georgia. From this, about 30-40 thousand tons are processed in wine companies, 15 thousand tons is consumed as table grapes, and the rest, more than 100 thousand tons are processed by unregistered private individuals to make "family wines".

The winemaking sector in Georgia is gradually developing and growing both in the local and foreign markets. In recent years, sales of bottled wine within the country have been increasing, on the international market new countries have appeared, where there are good opportunities for export growth (Lazariashvili et al., 2017). The export of Georgian wine is increasing, the positive dynamics is maintained in strategic markets as well, according to the data of the 6 months of 2021 (Figure 2).

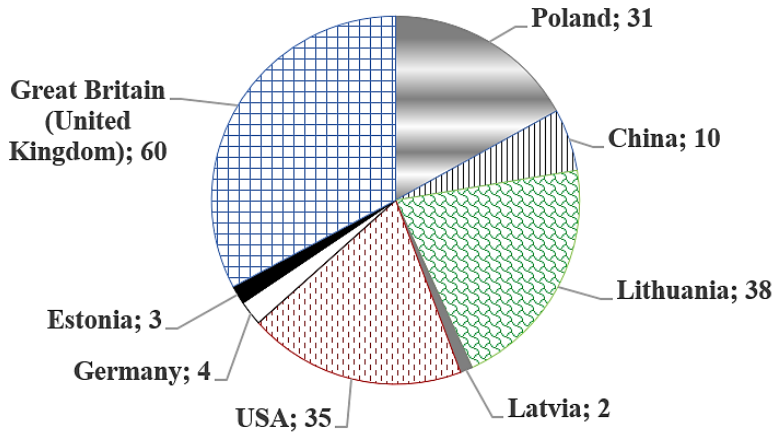

Figure 2. **Distribution of Georgian wine exports in 6 months of 2021 (Ghvinis Erovnuli Saagento, 2021)**

As can be seen from the diagram, the wine export figures are as follows: Poland – 31 %, China – 10 %, Lithuania – 38 %, Latvia – 2 %, USA – 35 %, Germany – 4 %, Estonia – 3 % and Great Britain – 60 %.

In 6 months of 2021, up to 46.4 million bottles (0.75 l) of wine were exported from Georgia to 56 countries of the world, which is 13 % more than the similar index of 2020. The income from exported wine reaches 104 million US dollars, which is 7 % more than the same data last year. This index also exceeds the data of pre-pandemic period, in 6 months of 2019, 40.5 million bottles of wine worth of 98 million US dollars were exported from Georgia. The export of wine, brandy, *chacha* (*here: grape distillate, or "Georgian Vodka"*), brandy spirit and bottling brand, resulted in earning 170 million USD, which is 13 % more than the figure of the same period last year (Ghvinis Erovnuli Saagento 2021).

For a long time, Georgian winemaking was mainly focused on export. However, over time, Georgian wine producers are becoming well aware of the importance of local market. Within the country, the largest amount of wine is consumed in catering establishments. Unfortunately, the restaurant chain is saturated with low-quality wine. Especially at parties, funeral reception luncheons and weddings, where at 400-500-person tables, often, drinks of unknown origin are consumed. This problem can be solved by supplying high-quality and relatively cheap wine to the market.

Georgian wine has several important preconditions, which can make it interesting for foreign buyers and visitors. First of all, unique local varieties, which promise many innovations to the modern consumer. Second, Georgia rightly earned the title of the homeland of wine. Ancient traces of cultural viticulture and winemaking have been found here. From this follows the third, also important precondition, which implies the traditional Georgian technology, the oldest in the world, fermentation and aging (*the technological process of brand wine processing, starts from the first wine extraction and ends with bottling*) of wine in pitcher (Kharbedia, 2017).

Our region-wide research in 2021 revealed that mainly 53 locals are employed in wine production, and several hundred additional workers are employed by the wine producers during the season (Figure 3).

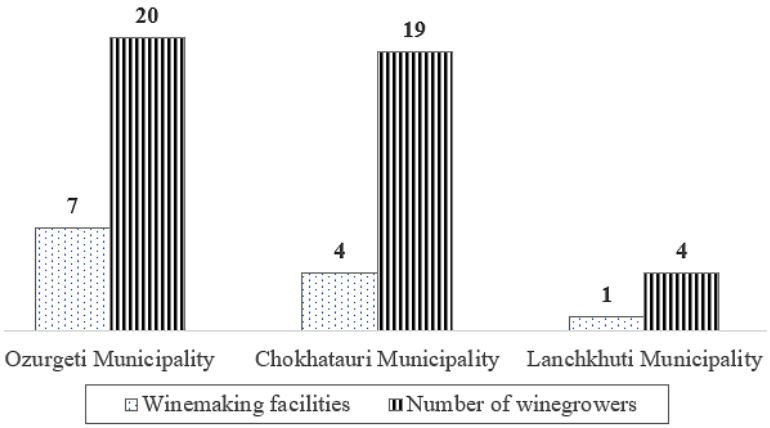

Figure 3. **Number of wine enterprises and employees in Municipalities**

Among the winemakers of the region, Andro Vashalomidze, Besarion Mzhavanadze, Besik Meparishvili, Davit Kobidze, Davit Khabeishvili, Valerian (Vako) Apkhazava, Zurab Chkhartishvili, Teimuraz Sharashidze, Ilia Chkhartishvili, Inga Dumbadze, Beka Menabde, Rezo Kotrikadze and Bichiko Chkhaidze are particularly noteworthy.

Andro Vashalomidze, individual entrepreneur, the field of activity - winemaking, lives in the village of Shemokmedi, Ozurgeti municipality. He has a small collection plot of old Gurian vines, where the following varieties are presented: *Chkhaveri, Mtevandidi, Jani, Sakmiela, Atinauri, Badagi, Aladasturi, Skhilatubani, Chumuta, Mtredispekha, Makhaturi, White and Black Kamuris,* and others. Nearby, a tasting corner is set up for guests, where visitors are told the history of Georgian vines and Gurian grape varieties. Visitors participate in the vintage; they are introduced to the winemaking technology.

In 2021, from one ton of grapes of the first plot 8,000 liters of wine were obtained. 6-7 tons from the second plot. They sell wine in the local market and have a chain of stores in Tbilisi. In the future, they are planning to set up a winery. In addition, Andro Vashalomidze is involved in the research of old Gurian grape varieties. He has already found 25 varieties of vines.

Besarion Mzhavanadze lives in Likhauri village, Ozurgeti municipality. He has a diverse farm: involving eleven species of old Gurian vines and thirty-two species of varieties common in different regions of Georgia. He also grows watermelon. He has a garden of citrus: lemon, mandarin, also a nut farm. He has set up a bamboo alley, which, in addition to being a good shade and aesthetically pleasing, it is also used as a material in shipbuilding and aircraft construction.

In addition, Besarion Mzhavanadze grows sunflower, feijoa, cucumber, tomato, potato, strawberry, and raspberry. He has a flower farm as well, with approximately 40-45 varieties. He shows the tourists and informs them about his agriculture. Visitors can enjoy natural products grown by him in his yard. He gives them possibility to prepare food themselves and engage in agricultural work.

Besik Meparishvili lives in Chokhatauri Municipality, in Zemo Partskhma village. In a small farm, he has grown Chkhaveri, Tsolikouri, Aladasturi, Sakmiela and different types of Gurian vine varieties. He has set up a family hotel and a winery. He offers visitors accommodation, meals, farm work, winery tour and wine tasting. In addition, he offers tours to interesting places in Chokhatauri municipality (tour to Bakhmaro, sightseeing of other interesting places and the like). Mostly, visitors are from Italy, America, Canada, Israel, locals - mainly from Tbilisi and Batumi. He plans to improve infrastructure and to expand buildings. He also wants to engage in the "Wine Road" project.

Davit Kobidze, individual entrepreneur, lives in Chokhatauri municipality, in the village of Erketi. Pursues winemaking. *Vineyard and winery of Kobidzes* is already 150 years old – here endemic old Gurian varieties of grapes has been sought out and life has been brought back to the collection plot. In 2014, winery of Kobidzes was renovated. In 2021, near the winery, a small building was built, in which, juice of pressed grape goes into pitchers with self-flow. The *winery of Kobidzes* currently produces 6 species of wine: *Chkhaveri* - white dry; *Chkhaveri* - pink dry; *Jani - Skhilatubani* - red dry; *Aladasturi* - red dry; *Sakmiela – Kamuri* - white dry; *Tsolikouri* - white dry.

In addition to wine, Davit Kobidze offers tourists to get to know the local cuisine and taste traditional dishes. Also, to learn the history of old varieties of Georgian wine and Gurian vine, to participate in vintage and wine tasting. He plans to engage visitors in wine tour and to set up family hotel.

Davit Khabeishvili lives in Chokhatauri municipality, in Dabaltsikhe village. He has a *Topuridze Winery*, where tourists can get to know the history of grapes and wine, wine making technology and to taste wine. Davit Khabeishvili has a restaurant where tourists are offered Gurian dishes. There is also a winery, which consists of several parts. In the main winery, thirteen pitchers, a cellar and stainless cisterns are located. In the small winery, there are seven small pitchers. There is a tasting corner near the winery. There are terraces in the yard, on which vines of the *Chkhaveri* variety are planted. In the farm, there are also represented Gurian vine varieties: *Chkhaveri*, *Kamuri*, *Tsolikouri*, and *Ojaleshi*. The French, Japanese, Italians, British, Canadians, Germans, among others, visit the winery every year. Also, people from Austria and Switzerland have been here.

Davit sells wine only in his own restaurant and winery. He also receives orders from various countries. During the year, about 300-300 bottles of wine of different brands are sent to Germany, Italy, France, Austria, and Great Britain. As Davit notes himself, in one of the best German laboratories in the world - "Eurofins", when testing several Georgian wine samples with microgram/kilogram accuracy (PPB) for more than 650 known poison-chemicals, as expected, in his natural wines, made with grapes of organic vineyards, have been found significantly less or no pesticides compared to the industrial ("factory") wines. The entrepreneur plans to expand the farm. His goal is to revive and develop the ancient traditions of making wine in pitcher, to produce natural wines made from unique local grapes and to gain a leadership position in this direction.

Valerian (Vako) Apkhazava lives in the Archeuli village of Nigvziani Community, Lanchkhuti Municipality. He pursues winemaking and viticulture. The wine enterprise *Co-operative "Archeuli 1920"* founded by him, produces various species of wine: *Chkhaveri*, *Tsolikouri*, *Aladasturi*, and *Saperavi*. The grapes obtained in the farm are not enough, so they buy additional ones from neighbouring winegrowers. He has a winery, where tourists and vacationers are welcomed and offered tasting as well.

Zurab Chkhartishvili lives in Mtispiri village, Ozurgeti municipality. He pursues viticulture and winemaking. He has planted *Chkhaveri Great Vineries - "Okroskedi Vineyards"*, under the municipal tourism project *History of Chkhaveri*. He offers tourists both an *agritour* and an Eco tour, visiting great vineries, getting to know the history of Georgian vines, observing the work process in the farm, tasting, and buying the wine, accommodation and meals in a family hotel. Also, they are offered tours, which include seeing and getting to know the history of Tamari Castle, tours to Bakhmaro, Gomismta and Ureki. Visitors mostly come from Italy, France, Russia and other countries. According to Zurab Chkhartishvili, Pelamushi (grape porridge) made with Chkhaveri juice earned special admiration among tourists.

Teimuraz Sharashidze is an individual entrepreneur, winemaker, and beekeeper. He lives in Chokhatauri municipality, in the village of Bukistsikhe. He has its own farm and winery and produces different species of wine: *Chkhaveri*, *Jani*, *Mtevandidi*, *Ojaleshi* and *Tsolikouri*. Besides, he has bee colonies (hives) and sells honey. Tourists are offered by him an accommodation, as well as food and tasting wine and honey. A winery decorated with traditional elements has been set up for them. There is a tasting and ethnographic corner with many interesting objects - traditional Georgian drinking vessels, working tools and so forth.

Ilia Chkhartishvili lives in Shemokmedi village of Ozurgeti municipality. Ilia Has a winery called *Ilia's Winery*. He is involved in the municipal tourism project *History of Chkhaveri*. The winery has a tasting corner and a café. During the year, he produces half a ton of grapes, and he plans to expand the farm and work in the direction of agritourism in the future.

Inga Dumbadze lives in Baghdati village of Ozurgeti municipality. She is engaged in the municipal tourism project *History of Chkhaveri*. Tourists are offered the services of the family hotel *Inga's Garden*, which can accommodate ten people at once. The service includes tasting natural village products, visiting the winery, and tasting wine, working in the farm and garden. Also, visitors are offered a tour, which includes getting to know the history of historical and modern Guria, wine road, Chkhaveri and tasting wine, combining wine tour and gastronomy. Nearby, there is the village of Satavado, with a

historical family house of Niko Mamasakhlisi, which can be visited and viewed by tourists. Visitors are mostly Germans, Italians, The French, Russians, among others.

Beka Menabde lives in Shemokmedi village of Ozurgeti municipality. He has a winery named *Menabde Winery* and he is engaged in the municipal tourism project *History of Chkhaveri*. Beka has Chkhaveri bio farming. In addition to the winery, it combines a vineyard, ethnographic yard, and hotel service. The century-old house has preserved the structure of ancient Gurian *Oda (a wooden one-story house elevated from the ground and standing on stone walls, also characterized by exterior supporting facilities; more modern versions of the Oda are two-storied, and the first floor is used as a basement)* - the rooms located around the fireplace built into the central wall are maintained with modern comfort. The hotel receives tourists from all over Georgia in five two-person hotel rooms. Here visitors are introduced to local wine history, traditions, ethnography, cuisine, they are offered wine tasting and tours to Gomismta, Ureki and Shekvetili beaches. Tourists mostly come from Spain, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Lithuania, Turkey, Tbilisi. Beka Menabde plans to expand the farm, build a hotel on Gomismta resort and organize tours (Sulaberidze et al., 2021).

Rezo Kotrikadze, an individual entrepreneur, lives in Goraberezhouli village of Chokhatauri municipality. He is a winemaker. On one hectare of his property, he has mainly planted *Tsolikouri* vines. Rezo has a winery.

In general, wine storage technology is important in wine production. In this regard, it is worthy also to note **Bichiko Chkhaidzes** pitchers and pottery manufacturing enterprise *Bichikos Pitchers* in Atsana village of Lanchkhuti municipality. It is often visited by visitors who view the object, attend the work process, get to know the technology of pottery - making pitchers and claywares. They buy pottery and pitchers at the place.

3. World Experience of Wine Tourism

Wine tourism should be considered as one of the types of agritourism. Tourists involved in a wine tour go to the vineyard with the farmers. In addition, they learn the technology of wine making, enjoy tasting different wines, get to know the history of wine and the culture of grapes. Farmers, in the case of properly using the above-mentioned possibility, can provide high quality products to visitors. For this, it is necessary to retrain them and to issue the appropriate licenses to improve the quality of service (Sekhniashvili et al., 2020).

Besides, emphasis should be placed on demonstrative and infrastructural measures. The possibility of visiting the ethnographic corner and the wine museum should also be considered, to make the tour more interesting and creative. Therefore, we think about the necessity of creating wine museums too, which we have only in Tbilisi, at this moment. The object of similar type should be in Guria as well, where ancient Gurian wine vessels and pitchers will be presented. It should include an *enoteca* (*a local wine shop with a range of high-quality wines*), where the old Gurian wine varieties also will be kept.

In addition to the *Chkhaveri History* and *Wine Road* project currently operating in the Guria region, other diverse routes should be elaborated, special events should be planned and arranged. These should include excursions, visits to vineyards and wineries, involvement of tourists in wine production, which will make the tour even more interesting. Tourists will take part not only in vineyard maintenance and vintage, but also in pressing and making the wine. In this regard, foreign experience is interesting. In modern conditions, regional wine tourism is gaining global importance. Discussing this in connection with the specific spatial, historical, and cultural peculiarities of individual places goes beyond the local significance of wine tourism and provides the opportunity to generalize the experience on the whole world scale (Fountain et al., 2020).

Let us briefly survey the experience of some countries.

France. There are approximately 5,000 wineries in France, but only eight regions of the country are officially open for tourists. Although we meet signboard with an inscription *Route du Vin* (Wine Road) at almost every highway, however, this does not necessarily mean that wine tasting is possible everywhere. The vineyards can only be visited from the road and the wine can only be tasted in the restaurant.

Spain. Large Cherez and Rioja wine houses have been welcoming guests from all over the world for a long time. Winemakers invite well-known architects and designers to make the infrastructure as modern and attractive as possible. Such businesses as *Finca Allende* in Rioja, which recently converted a 19th-century tower into a hotel, are mushrooming in Spain. Today, wine tourism in Spain is based on nineteen wine routes. Coordination is carried out by the organization *Acevin*, which is supported by the Spanish Ministry of Tourism and other national organizations.

Italians, unlike the French, meet wine tourists quite cheerfully. Agritourism is common here – which implies a hotel located in the vineyards. In Italy, everything is arranged in such a way that if you have spent several days in this type of hotel, you will not even want to visit other ones, because it offers all activities related to wine tourism. For example, Tuscan wine tours are designed to explore small villages surrounded by olive groves and vineyards. Perceiving the natural environment of the region, getting to know the viticulture activities, observing the process of wine making and tasting play an important role in the development of wine tourism (Senese et al., 2022). Like France and Spain, Italy also belongs to the oldest wine producing countries, where traditional methods of wine production are used. Wine tours are also important in this country (Marco-Lajara et al., 2023).

Canada competes with the above-mentioned countries, which is conditioned by high quality wine production (Okech et al., 2016). In this country, it is very popular to organize wine tasting festivals, which are conducted on international scale. Wine tourism is an integral part of rural development of the country. This helps them not only to improve tourism-related services, but also to raise the standard of living of the local population and the image of the region (Vesela et al., 2015).

German cities of Weimar, Leipzig and Dresden receive many tourists interested in wine. There, in addition to wine tours, beer tours are also popular (Tafel et al., 2020).

In the **United States of America**, like in Latin America, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, the socio-economic mobility emerging since the 16th century led to the birth of *New World of Wine*. Wine producers expand in consolidated wine consumption markets according to comparative advantage, which is based on experimentation, development, and innovation (García-Rodea et al., 2022).

Portugal attracts tourists with local wine. Local farmers are actively trying to offer tourists different and interesting wine tours. Both in Portugal and Georgia, visitors are interested in tasting local wine and in traditional wine-making technology, so that it should be available for them to buy wine in farms, enterprises, and local shops. In addition, they should have the opportunity to taste the wine at the place, for example, there should be tasting corner in wineries and farms. Tasting involves several processes related to sight and taste, as well as touch or smell (Brochado et al., 2019). In addition to wine tasting, visitors like to participate in entertainment events, to learn about local traditions and cuisine (Colombini et al., 2015). Moreover, it would be beneficial for wine producers to offer additional activities: for example, hiking tracks in the vineyards, and thematic night parties or live music (Gaetjens et al., 2023).

So, the wine tourism sector includes two types of economic activity: combination of different activities related to travel, in which the main motivation is to discover a new world of wine, and activities related to wine in a trip, which has not the wine as the main motivation (Potevin, 2020).

Wine tourism is a *complex phenomenon* and it does not end with visits to wineries, production sites and tasting, and is not related only to forms of rural tourism or agritourism. It includes various components (Guzel et al., 2016). Wine, food, tourism, and art form together the core elements of the wine tourism product and provide the touristic package towards which wine enthusiasts aspire (Carlsen et al., 2004). Especially, tourists want to taste a natural and high-quality product. The word "natural" implies the existence of bio farming.

A farmer engaged in viticulture must realize that the soil is developed, transformed and restored by its own fauna. Any pesticide is prohibited if we want to preserve its biological diversity. Biological viticulture does not directly try nourishing the fruit, but to maintain the fertility of the soil by increasing its biological activity. This is done with the aid of compost or green manure (clover, rye) or mineral fertilizers and no herbicide may be used to clean from parasites the surrounding area of the farm. The grass is either removed by harrowing or mowed.

Besides growing of natural products, farmers should take care to increase popularity of the region, to protect and to preserve natural and cultural values (Mathieson et al., 1982). This can only be achieved when tourism sites are managed responsibly. It can be difficult for businesses to organize and refine wine tours according to the principles of sustainability, therefore, a standard has been developed that aims to help farmers and entrepreneurs to focus on business, to improve their performance, to adapt their business management to environmental, socio-cultural and climate conditions (Sosa, 2022).

At the same time, *wine tours* should cover cultural, ecological, and economic areas. Emphasis should be placed on the wine consumption within the constraints of cultural and social norm. The tour should inspire its participants to lead a healthy lifestyle, in order to prevent and reduce alcohol abuse and related harm (Filopoulos et al., 2019). Besides carrying out the above mentioned measures in agricultural works, it is necessary to connect wine tourism with rural development. In order to get maximal benefit from tourism, it is necessary for the local population to understand and know the importance of agritourism.

Wine tourism brings many benefits to the local economy: job creation, revenue generation, tourist attraction and so forth (McClain, 2022). Therefore, wine companies want to develop organized wine tourism activities should carefully consider whether wine tourism (*enotourism*) is compatible with the organization's culture, values, and strategic goals, and they should determine how it will help them to fulfil their mission (Filopoulos et al., 2019). It is in accordance with the above mentioned viewpoint that they should plan and conduct tours, in order to get desired result for the development and popularisation of regional tourism (Santos et al., 2019).

Conclusions

The information provided by the farmer-winemakers helped us to understand better the current conditions in the Guria region. According to this information, it became obvious that, most of them, consider agritourism as a profitable and interesting activity, and they are involved in the activity more or less. The reason is in existing problems. Some of them are listed below.

- Underdevelopment of local production is a significant loss for farmers, which makes impossible to employ local residents and to offer local products to tourists.
- Managing agritourism and farming is farmer's job, but he does not know how to advertise his business: how to make a booklet, how to place it on the website, how to register on the websites and no one helps him in this.
- For the development of viticulture, it is necessary to have access to innovations in the field, to have new technologies and to achieve perfection of services in the field of agritourism. They are absolutely not trained or informed in this direction.
- Some farmers do not understand that it is necessary to observe agricultural rules – often, with chemical poisons and pesticide sprays, they harm the environment, and the soil becomes less productive for a long time.
- The lack of measures on the part of the state and local self-government for promoting the activities of entrepreneurs and farmers involved in agritourism, is a problem.
- The infrastructure leading to Agro Houses needs to be fixed, roads need to be built.
- Lack of agritourist objects, inaccessibility of financial resources, shortage of selling markets, is obvious.
- Seeking out the old Gurian grape varieties is a difficulty. In this regard, the national center for the production of vine and fruit tree planting material operates in Saguramo - Jighauri village. It was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, and on its basis the Agricultural Research Center was created. Thanks to this center, about 41-42 of the 64 types of old Gurian vines have been found, seeking out the remaining 20-21 varieties is still in process. Thus, effective steps are needed in this direction.

This is a small list of the problems, solutions to which, as we consider, are the following.

- The development of *winemaking* at the country level should be considered in close connection with tourism. It is important to involve young people in this direction, which will be useful and beneficial for them, and interesting and attractive for tourists. For this, it is necessary to raise their level of knowledge, they should understand well: “What is needed in the service process? How to satisfy visitors' interests?” and so forth.

- An organization should be created, for example *Agro Houses Union*, where farmers engaged in these activities will meet each other, share each other's experience. Also, they will have an advisor, field specialist, who will give instructions and knowledge, to work better.
- To develop the field, a fund should be created, or a grant should be attracted, which will financially help farmers in conducting their activities. The development of the field is also supported by the fact that there are many sights for tourists within a radius of 50-100 km near any destination in Guria. In particular: sea and mountain climates are combined; the air is clean and the water is delicious; nature is beautiful, there are canyons, sea, mountains, noteworthy and interesting places, diversity of plants, local farming, traditional cuisine, which, we think, should be given the opportunity to develop.
- Besides, financial assistance can be provided to farmers with cheap and accessible agrocredit, state support, tax breaks and incentives for entrepreneurs.
- The rural population should be provided with both - drinking water and household facilities, infrastructure.
- To preserve and protect the natural environment, waste management should be taken into account.
- Farmers should increase determination to make their activities interesting and qualitative for tourists. In this job, the good impression and satisfaction of even one guest means attracting other guests.
- The country's government and local self-government should strive to improve the conditions of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship and business development should be really simplified and supported and not only *on paper* - in the form of a document. For this, the local self-government should create special programs for developing the sector at the municipality level.
- Farmers, with the help and support of municipalities, should take care to increase the popularity of the region.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.005

Developing a Digital Strategy for the Digitalization and Implementation of Remote and Combined Training in Restoration and Construction

Natalja Vronska[1] Dr.paed.; **Jekaterina Smirnova**[2] Mg.sc.ing.
Faculty of Engineering, Institute of Education and Home Economics[1],
Faculty of Information Technologies[1,2], Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies
natalja.vronska@lbtu.lv[1]; jekaterina.smirnova@lbtu.lv[2]

Abstract: three organizations have been involved in developing the digital strategy: Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School, Panevezys vocational education and training centre and Slovakia secondary vocational school of construction. Two experts from the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (hereafter – LBTU) were involved in the creation of the digital state. The digital strategy contains the description of the current situation in person and distance learning process, and previous experience in the use of e-learning systems. According to analysis of needs an action plan was drawn up by each school. The plan includes description of distance and blended learning in various modules, and further adult education. Schools have developed guidelines for the development of teaching materials for teachers. All principles were united by a common idea - an educational institution should have a unified student-friendly and future-oriented approach. Structure of e-learning platform was developed. The schools have chosen the most convenient structure based on the structure of the educational institution, or on another structure preferred by the teachers and the administration. In the digital strategy, an analysis of the needs in the digital sphere was conducted. In developing these needs in the digital sphere, the schools based on the results of the survey. During the survey, participants were asked to rate virtual image of the school, digital competencies, IT equipment of education institution and the ability to organize the learning process remotely. SWOT analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each education institution. Despite the fact that distance learning in 2020 was an unplanned step, both teachers and students found both pros and cons in this process. Several IT tools and platforms have been mastered, but students do not have skills of self-directed learning, which could make the distance learning process more productive. The distance learning was the biggest challenge for profession teachers and students as to provide practical trainings of vocational subject online is very complicated or sometimes even impossible. The study aim is to introduce the creation of a digital strategy.

Keywords: digital strategies, blended learning, restoration, construction

Introduction

A digital strategy is a set of action plans to help achieve using technological resources the objectives set. Its design is not different from the system of a traditional strategy, but the main focus here is on the applicable digitalisation opportunities and their impact on processes and goals (The role of..., 2023).

The digital strategy contains the description of the current situation in person and distance learning process, and previous experience in the use of e-learning systems. Three organizations have been involved in developing the digital strategy: Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School from Latvia (Zaļenieku komerciālā un..., 2023), Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre from Lithuania (Vši Panevežio profesinio..., 2023), and Secondary Vocational School of Construction from Slovakia (SOS Technologii a remesiel, 2023). Two experts (Natalja Vronska and Jekaterina Smirnova) from the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (Latvia University of…, 2023) were involved in the creation of the digital state.

The first in person meeting of the Erasmus+ project "Smart School in restoration and construction industry" was held in Jelgava, at LBTU from August 25 to 27, 2021. Participants from three countries took part in it: Latvia - represented by Latvia University of Agriculture (now - Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies) and Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School; Lithuania – participants from Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre; Slovakia – representatives of Secondary Vocational School of Construction.

During the meeting, the partners introduced their educational institutions, as well as discussed about more important project guidelines, spoke about the stages and methodologies of developing a digital strategy; as well as took part in the training of teachers and administrative staff of partner schools, which was organized by LBTU. The training process was divided into two days and included the following topics: familiarization with the Moodle tool and its main functions, clarified what is an effective and meaningful virtual learning material. During the meeting, excursions were organized to the LBTU Technology and Knowledge Transfer Office (TEPEK, 2023) and the Scientific Institute of Plant Protection (Agrihorts, 2023).

During the first meeting, the first steps in the process of developing a digital strategy were made: the development of a digital strategy framework was started, and the seminar on the preparation of survey questionnaires for students, teachers, and entrepreneurs was organized. The project participants visited the Liepaja State Technical College (Liepājas Valsts tehnikums, 2023), where they could familiarize themselves with the good practice example of Moodle and the use of digital tools in distance learning in professional education.

Several trainings were organized for participants from Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. In the period from September 2021 to February 2022, participants were introduced to the following topics:

- digital marketing: branding and communication on digital platforms (Latvia);
- IT tools for creating digital learning materials: online IT tools (Lithuania);
- IT tools for creating digital learning materials: video and photo processing programs (Slovakia).

On March 29 and April 29, 2022, LBTU experts organized training for participants on digital hygiene, copyright, ergonomics, data security and network etiquette.

The next meeting was held at Lithuania, in Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre from April 20 to 22, 2022. The participants visited the international construction exhibition "Resta 2022" in the Lithuanian Exhibition and Congress Centre "Litexpo" (RESTA, 2022). At the exhibition it was possible to get acquainted with digital construction innovations, renewable energy resources and their application in private houses and renovation projects, possibilities of renovation of private houses and apartment buildings. Also, the activities implemented during the project and the results achieved were reviewed and summarized, as well as the upcoming activities of the project were planned and discussed.

Participants visited educational centres in Panevezys: STEAM Centre (Steam, 2023) and RoboLabs (RoboLabas, 2023), where students can familiarize themselves with the laws of nature, technology, engineering, mathematics and the latest inventions; they can experiment and create. Attractive educational activities help children and young people to be interested in complex sciences from an early age and then to choose related studies and careers, and the STEAM Centre will also provide opportunities for teachers to improve their qualifications.

The next meeting was held at Zalenieki Commercial and Craft school, where the conference "Craft. Digitization. Challenges" was organized to introduce smart solutions for the implementation of the learning process, developed e-learning materials. Guest lectures were organized on 1) virtual reality and artificial intelligence in the organization of distance learning, 2) restoration and reuse of resources, 3) opportunities provided by technology and knowledge in restoration processes. Jelgava Local Municipality held a transnational project meeting - work on project activities and overview of results.

The digital strategy consists of general information as well as mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, target audience and uniqueness of organization, strategic priorities in digitalization are defined, and examples of good practices are described here. The LBTU e-learning environment Moodle is taken as the basis (LBTU e-course categories, 2023). In the digital strategy are described results of VET (Vocational Education and Training) program revision. According to analysis of needs an action plan was drawn up by each organization. The plan includes plan and description of distance and blended learning in different VET programs, various modules, and further adult education. In the digital strategy were summarized common principles for creation of virtual training materials. Schools have developed guidelines for the development of teaching materials for teachers. All principles were united by a common idea - an educational institution should have a unified student-friendly and future-oriented approach. Structure of e-learning platform was developed. The schools have chosen the most convenient structure based on the structure of the educational institution, or on another structure preferred by the

teachers and the administration. In the digital strategy, an analysis of the needs in the digital sphere was conducted. In developing these needs in the digital sphere, the schools based on the results of the survey. SWOT analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each education institution. In the digital strategy the algorithm (as an infographic) for students' preparation for distance, self-directed or blended learning and a reminder of what must be considered during distance, self-directed or blended learning was created (Digital strategies - examples..., 2022).

The study aim is to introduce the creation of a digital strategy.

Methodology

Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School (Latvia): surveying adults - school teachers and employers (number of respondents - 14), as well as surveying students of educational programs included in the project (number of respondents - 38). Secondary Vocational School of Construction (Slovakia) distributed questionnaires to a representative sample of students of 3rd and 4th years (number of respondents - 16). With the teachers answers of 12 teachers of professional subjects were analysed and with partner companies the school received answers from 5 providers of practical training. In Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre (Lithuania) the questionnaires were distributed between Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre students, teachers and stakeholders. 118 students and 34 teachers had answered to the electronical questionnaires.

During the survey, participants were asked to rate virtual image of the school, IT equipment of education institution and the ability to organize the learning process remotely. The results of the survey were summarized, analysed and considered when developing a digital development plan. SWOT analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each education institution.

Data processing methods: 1) Mann – Whitney test (the null hypothesis - there is no statistically significant difference between the answers of students and teachers); 2) Chi-square test (the null hypothesis: the frequency oz respondent answers is the same). Statistical data were analysed with SPSS computer program.

Results and Discussion

Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School survey results

Answering questions about virtual image of the school - Web page, IG & FB, in the adult group the following results were obtained: 64% *like and following*, 29% *think it needs to be improved*, 7% *have not seen*. The following answers were received to the same question in a group of students: 55% *like and following*, 21% *think it needs to be improved*, 24% *have not seen*.

The authors consider that a large percentage of students did not visit the homepage and/or social media page. This percentage can be reduced by subtly obliging students to visit the school's pages, for example, by posting information to help complete assignments or creating contests on social networks. But the overall indicator of this question is good.

Top 3 responses received to a question "What kind of training would be most useful for you to develop digital competences?" among adults were as follows: 1) mentoring, 2) workplace learning, 3) peer learning & participation in master classes, seminars.

Answering the question about IT equipment, infrastructure in the school, among adults the following results were obtained: 14% are very satisfied, 40% satisfied, 32% basically satisfied, 14% dissatisfied. Students about IT equipment, infrastructure in the school answered as follows: 16% are very satisfied, 38% satisfied, 38% basically satisfied, 8% dissatisfied.

The Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School IT infrastructure is well equipped technically for both stationary and mobile work. The main task can be considered the maintenance of this infrastructure in a condition that meets the needs of the school.

The research authors consider that both teachers and students indicated that they would like newer computers. Perhaps the involvement of IT technologies in teaching is hampered by the lack of knowledge of teachers: the answers to the previous question show that teachers would like to gain

additional knowledge on certain IT topics. Basic knowledge of students can be developed in computer science lessons. To develop the basic knowledge of teachers, lifelong learning programs provided training courses can be used or such courses can be organized in the school.

The research question was: Could be part of training in a profession taught digitally or blended? Comparison of differences between two independent samples on this research question was statistically analysed using Mann-Whitney test.

Since the obtained p-value = 0.439 is higher than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis can't be rejected; there is no statistically significant difference between the answers of students and teachers.

The frequency of the respondent answers on the research question was statistically analysed using chi-square test (Table 1).

Table 1

Chi-square test statistics (training in a profession taught digitally or blended)

	Answers	
	teachers	**students**
Chi-Square	10.286	12.737
Df	1	1
Asymp.sig.	0.001	0.000

Since the p-value (obtained in the sample of teachers) = 0.001 is lower than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, and the p-value (obtained in the sample of students) = 0.000 is lower than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that the frequencies of respondents' answers are different. Statistically significant prevalence was for the answer *digitally or blended* in the sample Teachers (6.0) and in the sample Students (11.0).

Secondary Vocational School of Construction survey results

Answering questions about virtual image of the school - most of teachers like it, only 16.7% answered that the visual needs to be improved. 62.5% students think that the virtual image of the school needs to be improved, 25% like it and 12.5% students do not visit the school's web page or social media accounts at all.

The frequency of the respondent answers about the research question was statistically analysed using chi-square test (Table 2).

Table 2

Chi-square test statistics (virtual image of the school)

	Answers	
	teachers	**students**
Chi-Square	3.571	19.500
Df	1	2
Asymp.sig.	0.059	0.000

Since the p-value (teachers) = 0.059 is higher than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis can't be rejected - the frequency of respondents' (teachers) answers is the same. But the p-value (students) = 0.000 is lower than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Thus, can be concluded that the frequency of respondents' (students) answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was for the answer *the virtual image of the school needs to be improved* (14.0).

Based on the questions about rating digital skills it is possible to say that students consider themselves rather skilful in using digital tools on the Internet. They evaluated themselves the best in the category of searching information on the Internet and online communication.

Almost all asked teachers commented that they use IT tools in preparation of lessons and in lessons themselves. 83.3% of teachers expressed that part of training in a profession taught could be realized digitally or blended. Most of the students (68.8%) stated that they use digital tools in preparation for lessons or during their classes. 75% of asked students think that part of training in their profession cannot be realized digitally or blended.

The research authors consider that is a huge difference in opinions of teachers and students towards distance learning in practical education. Focus in the future should be more on students' experience. More tools for their feedback should be implemented with the process of education adapting to their needs.

Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre survey results

Answering questions about virtual image of the school most of teachers (70.59%) *like it and actively visit and follow*, only 6.78% answered that *the visual needs to be improved*. 48.3% students *like it*, 19.49% students think that the *virtual image of the school needs to be improved* and 32.2% students *had not seen* the school website and accounts on social networks.

The research authors consider that the main task is to push the student to visit the page for the first time. It is much easier to motivate a student to visit a school page by necessity, not by desire. The school can publish the necessary documents, addresses, contacts, changes: what will force the student to go to the page to get information. Once the first steps have been taken, the work may continue to generate interest.

About the ability to organize the learning process remotely: most of teachers (82.35%) answered that *the part of training in a profession taught digitally or blended*, only 17.65% answered that *don't taught digitally or blended*. 97.46% students think that *the part of training in a profession can learn digitally or blended*, only 2.54% answered that *can't learn digitally or blended*.

The frequency of the respondents' answers about the research question was statistically analysed using chi-square test (Table 3).

Table 3

Chi-square test statistics (training in a profession taught digitally or blended)

	Answers	
	teachers	**students**
Chi-Square	14.235	106.305
Df	1	1
Asymp.sig.	0.000	0.000

Since the p-value (teachers) = 0.000 is lower than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, and the p-value (students) = 0.000 is lower than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Thus, can be concluded that the frequency of respondents' answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was for the answer *digitally or blended* in the sample Teachers (11.0) and in the sample Students (56.0).

The research authors consider that in general, responses from teachers and students indicate their willingness to prepare materials and participate in remote or blended learning.

Self-directed learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975).

If a student can motivate himself / herself to learn, plan, analyse and evaluate his/ her learning results, he/ she has good self-directed learning skills (Veenman et al. 2004).

Learners need to be able to evaluate their own knowledge and skills compared to the demands of different tasks and problems and either employ their existing knowledge and skills needed to complete the tasks or solve the problems, or acquire new knowledge and skills based on the demands of the situation (Oswald et al., 2003).

SWOT analysis of Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School shows the digital strengths and weaknesses, possible improvements and factors that can negatively affect digital development (Table 4).

Table 4

Zalenieki Commercial and Craft School SWOT analysis

Strengths: • Implemented educational programs can be adapted to the digital environment - remotely and in combination. • Educators have free access to modern digital devices to support the work process. • In the learning process, educators have started to use the latest technologies, Internet resources and e-environment to support learners to acquire learning information independently. • The most active teachers regularly attend qualification courses in the field of IT. • The school has started systematic work on the development of the school's digital e-environment.	**Weaknesses:** • New IT technologies and e-environments could be used more in the learning process. • Insufficient level of digital competence skills of teachers and students • Relatively low overall motivation of students and teachers in the use of IT technologies • Partially negative attitude of teachers towards digitization in education
Opportunities: • To improve the digital skills of teachers and students • Measures to unite the team to increase motivation to work and achieve goals • Digitize the acquisition of learning content to provide an opportunity to learn part of the learning process remotely. • Upgrade social networking pages and websites to promote the school. • Regularly develop school IT equipment	**Threats:** • Increasing the average age of teachers • Teachers' "burnout" and resignation • As the use of digital devices increases, the quality of the Internet may decline. • Decrease in funding • Changing situations in the country and in the world

From the SWOT analysis it follows that the most urgent need of Secondary Vocational School of Construction are improvement of virtual image of the school, improvement of digital competences of students and teachers, enlargement of technical equipment of the school and also extension of online learning materials as well as searching for sources to finance these needs (Table 5).

Table 5

Secondary Vocational School of Construction SWOT analysis

Strengths: • History and tradition of school, good promotion of school. • Qualified pedagogical staff, good equipment of didactic technologies. • Sufficiently equipped premises and technical equipment of school. • Good employment of absolvents. • Cooperation with foreign schools.	**Weaknesses**: • Lack of online students' books and learning materials for students • Energy intensity of operation of school and workshops • Lack of the most modern digital technology • Weak motivation of teachers for further education in the area of digitalization

Opportunities: • Options to realize reskilling courses and training • Cooperation with Chamber of Commerce, professional organizations, construction companies and guilds at competitions and at reskilling of employees • Option to engage with grant programs of EU	**Threats**: • Declining population curse in Slovakia and in the region • Growing competition of other vocational school including private schools • Declining quality of candidate for a study • Weak financial and morale evaluation of pedagogical staff

From Panevezys Vocational Education and Training Centre SWOT analysis (Table 6) in the digitization of an educational institution follows that that the current situation is stable and even development is visible: contracts are concluded with new partners, the state is more interested in vocational schools, teachers and students master and apply new technologies in study process.

Table 6

Panevezys vocational education and training centre SWOT analysis

Strengths: • General education and vocational training classrooms are equipped with IT equipment. • Good image and recognition of PPRC in the regional community. • Attracting additional funds for project activities, continuing education of adults, activities of educational farms. • The supply of professions meets the needs of the regional labour market.	**Weaknesses**: • Insufficient foreign language and digital skills of employees. • Website of PPRC not mobile friendly. • Lacking of common visualization, publicity and branding of PPRC • Sceptical point of view of teachers towards the necessity of usage of digital methods in educational process.
Opportunities: • Take advantage of new EU funding opportunities. • Increasing state attention to vocational training, reduction of unemployment, career development of students. • Participation of social partners in the activities of PPRC. • Rapid IT and technology change. • Growing demand for skilled labour in the labour market. • Development of international relations with foreign social partners in pursuit of international experience. • Following of up to date needs of young generation on social media. Usage of popular apps. • Continuous development of teachers' digital skills and share of good practices of digital methods used in educational process.	**Threats**: • The aging contingent of teachers and the shortage of young teachers. • Insufficient funding of PPRC from the national budget and lack of posts. • Optimization of vocational training institutions without considering the interests of the community. • Rapid change in IT and technology (risk of failures and lack of resources). Data protection risks. • Deteriorating social situation and demographic trends of a part of the society. The growing number of students with special needs.

The switch from presence to distance learning was a great challenge for the educational system in Europe. All schools faced a real challenge in 2020, when it became impossible to continue full-time education and the vocational training process took place remotely. Educational institutions urgently needed to look for possible solutions and tools for organizing distance learning. Despite the fact that distance learning was an unplanned step, both teachers and students found both pros and cons in this

process. As the years go by, some schools are considering remote learning opportunities as part of the regular education process.

Conclusions

- Several IT tools and platforms have been mastered, but no common approach has been found, so it is difficult for students to navigate the teaching materials and each teacher's approach to e-learning environment solutions. Each teacher searches and uses the IT tools they deem appropriate to organize the distance learning process, so a good solution is to use the Moodle platform, where there are identical e-learning environment solutions.
- The biggest challenge for distance learning was for profession teachers and students as to provide practical online trainings of vocational subject is very complicated or sometimes even impossible, but both teachers (p-value (Latvia) = 0.001, p-value (Lithuania) = 0.000) and students (p-value (Latvia) = 0.000, p-value (Lithuania) = 0.000) are ready to work digitally or blended.
- It is necessary to improve and modernize the digital image of the school, especially towards students (p-value (Slovakia) =0.000), so it would be more attractive and they would be more interested in visiting the school's web page and its social media accounts.
- The digital strategy is valid and will be implemented in real educational institutions in the coming years. After the implementation of all plans and investments, digital strategy will be used to validate and evaluate the implemented changes, which will help to better evaluate the result. This means that the digital strategy can be used not only to plan for future changes and innovations, but also as a guideline for checking what has been done and what remains to be worked on.
- Both the framework for creating strategies and the examples of ready-made strategies created by schools can be used by other educational institutions to develop their own digital strategies, since it is very difficult to find clear information about the plan and steps for developing a digital strategy. In addition, ready-made examples greatly facilitate the completion of the framework and the interpretation of the required information. Expert comments will help to find strengths and weaknesses in digital strategies and understand the main focuses.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.006

Factors Affecting Labour Productivity in the Construction Sector

Krista Karlsone[1] Mg.oec.; **Antra Ozola**[2] Dr.sc.admin.
University of Latvia, Latvia
krista.karlsone@lu.lv[1]; antra.ozola@lu.lv[2]

Abstract: Labour is a key factor in increasing productivity, working more efficiently, and using available resources more rationally. The labour is influenced by the level of education, skills, and motivation to work more effectively to achieve the company's goals. This paper is a theoretical study to investigate the factors influencing productivity in the operation and development of a construction company. The aim of the study is to investigate the factors affecting labour productivity in the construction industry by exploring the concept of productivity and classifying the most important labour productivity factors. The authors provide an overview of the most important labour factors that can improve the productivity performance of a construction company. Analysing the concepts and approaches of different authors in classifying labour productivity factors, the authors have concluded that the most important productivity factors affecting the construction industry are labour factors, firm management factors and technological factors. Based on the theoretical study, it can be argued that time, cost, and quality are the key elements of labour productivity planning in construction. The labour productivity factors classified later in this paper can be used to carry out empirical research in construction companies.

Keywords: productivity, labour productivity, construction sector, skilled labour

Introduction

One of Latvia's development visions (priorities) by 2027 is a knowledge-based society, which is realised by fostering productivity based on the commercialisation of knowledge, creating a skilled labour that meets demand. Productivity is boosted by new knowledge and technologies, extensive learning opportunities, investment in human capital to turn knowledge into higher value-added products (National Development Plan…, 2020). Higher value added to products can be achieved by increasing productivity (Saulāja et al., 2016).

With increasing globalisation, labour productivity is becoming an increasingly important factor in the rational use of public, municipal and private resources. Labour productivity can be an important source of savings in public, municipal and private resources, leading to better and higher quality services for customers.

Construction in Latvia is a labour-intensive sector and depends on the skills of its workforce. This is also explained by the fact that labour costs account for 30-50% of total direct construction costs (Gupta et al., 2014). For industry and business to thrive, the potential of the labour force must be fully exploited, and the rational use of other productive resources must be promoted, since the skills of the labour force depend to a large extent on the use of other productive resources (Purmalis, 2011).

The impact of productivity on industry and company performance has been studied by both Latvian and foreign researchers, and the labour has been cited as a key factor in increasing productivity (Znotiņa, et al., 2011; Marshall, 2012).

The aim of this article is to investigate the factors affecting labour productivity in the construction industry.

The following **tasks** are advanced to achieve the set aim:

1. to analyse the concepts of productivity and labour productivity;

2. to identify the factors affecting labour productivity in the construction industry.

Methodology

The article is based on theoretical research. It is based on an analysis of the literature on labour productivity factors (Shashank et al., 2014; Karim et al., 2013; Goel et al., 2017; Almamlook et al., 2019; Hickson et al., 2013). The literature reviewed includes scientific sources on the interpretation of the concept of productivity and the analysis of labour productivity factors relevant to the construction sector. The study focuses on the assessment of labour productivity factors in construction companies.

Results and Discussion

The concept of productivity

Productivity enables businesses to be competitive, achieve their objectives and add value to products and services. At industry level, productivity enables you to keep customers satisfied, raise investment, and contribute to national economic growth and prosperity (Durdyev et al., 2011).

Productivity is the concept of how well resources are used to achieve certain company objectives or results. The definition includes different perspectives such as creativity and innovation, where the aim is to achieve more results with less input, by redesigning production methods or service delivery processes and optimising the use of resources (Durdyev et al., 2011).

The value of productivity is measured based on efficiency and effectiveness to achieve an accurate and true value. In the case where productivity improvement is only driven by increasing output in quantitative terms, this may lead to an increase in the share of low-quality products and services (Roghanian et al., 2012). It is therefore essential to assess the contribution of each factor of production involved.

R. Pritchard (1995) highlights two approaches to improving productivity in a company - changing the technology used or changing the way employees work.

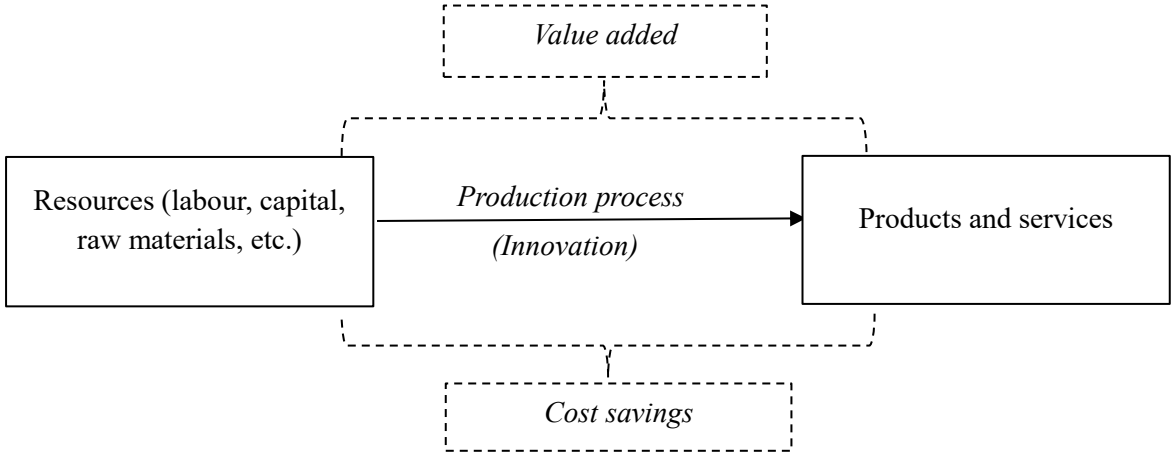

Figure 1. **Productivity characteristics**

Summarising the authors' (Shashank et al., 2014; Karim et al., 2013, Goel et al., 2017) explanation of productivity, it can be concluded that the concept of productivity includes inputs such as labour, capital, materials, and technology (Figure 1). Productivity can be defined as the amount of value added by each input used in the production process, such as labour or technology. The added value of each input is significant. By using different inputs (labour, capital, raw materials, etc.) in the production process, entrepreneurs can use different innovations to produce goods and services with higher added value. By adopting innovative techniques, consumers can also receive goods and services with higher quality and added value, which can lead to significant cost reductions.

According to A. Harberger (1998), productivity can be a source of cost savings in the production process. Despite the explanations given by various authors, there is no single classification of productivity factors.

According to V. Goel, R. Agrawal and V. Sharma, both internal and external factors influence productivity (Table 1). Internal factors include labour-related productivity factors and firm-related

factors that are within the control of both the individual and the firm. External productivity factors, on the other hand, cannot be influenced but can be anticipated in advance and, as a result, preventive measures can be taken to mitigate their negative effects.

Table 1

Analysis of productivity factors

Productivity factor category		Breakdown of productivity factors
Internal factors	Labour actors	Motivation and enthusiasm Employee education Employee attitudes, values, skills Employees' physical and mental well-being
	Company factors	Working conditions Salary Working environment Company structure, culture Company Human Resource policy Adoption of technology
External factors	Industry factors	Number of competitors in the sector Presence of a regulatory authority in the sector
	National factors	National macroeconomics Government regulatory environment and policy developments
	International factors	Migration of skilled workers between countries Technological development World macroeconomics

Source: made by the authors according to Goel et al.,2017; Enshassi et al., 2007, Hickson et al., 2013

Productivity is linked to labour factors such as motivation, education and skills, physical and mental well-being. Company factors that can influence productivity are working conditions, the wage system, the working environment, the company structure, personnel policies, and the introduction of technology into the production process.

External factors affecting productivity are factors at industry, national and international level that are external to the enterprise and beyond the direct control and influence of the enterprise.

Labour productivity can be used to monitor the impact of labour market policies, to understand the impact of wages on inflation, to enhance understanding of how the labour market affects living standards (Key Indicators of..., 2016).

Labour productivity in construction sector

In construction, productivity is closely linked to labour productivity, the units of work done or produced per man-hour. Productivity is the ratio of output to all inputs used in the production of output (Attar et al., 2012).

Several academic studies (Loganathan et al., 2018; Mahamid, 2020; Liu et al., 2008; Joseph et al., 2017) have recognised that the construction workforce has a significant impact on total output. Various labour factors such as education level, qualifications, skills, and competences of workers are important factors influencing the construction labour (Muhammad et al., 2015; Bound et al., 2019).

The concept of labour productivity encompasses a number of variables that can be grouped together and that can affect labour productivity at enterprise level.

P.R. Ghate, A.B. More and P.R. Minde (2016) highlight that there are three key planning elements in construction projects: time, cost, and quality. These elements are intrinsically linked to labour productivity. The main elements influencing labour productivity in construction are: 1) skilled labour; 2) availability of materials on site; 3) availability of machinery on site; 4) construction methods; 5) leadership skills of the project manager; 6) communication between the construction manager and the workforce; 7) training of the workforce.

B. Hickson and A. Ellis classify labour productivity factors into 4 groups: management factors, technology factors, human resources/labour factors, and external factors (Hickson et al., 2013). The company's management factors include lack of supervision, work planning and expectations of workforce performance, lack of leadership by the work manager, payment delays, lack of communication between the work manager and workers, lack of training for workers, etc. The most important technological factors affecting labour productivity in construction are delays in information requests, overworked workers, changes in order volumes, lack of clarity in technical specifications, etc. Lack of experienced workforce, insufficient qualification and motivation of labourers, and physical fatigue of the workforce were cited as the most important human resource factors. External factors on labour productivity were weather conditions during the construction process (Hickson et al., 2013).

According to W. Alaghbari, A.A. Al-Sakkaf and B. Sultan (2017), five key factors are identified as having the most significant impact on productivity in construction: 1) experience and skills of workers; 2) availability of construction equipment on site; 3) site management; 4) availability of construction materials on site; 5) political and security situation.

Productivity depends mainly on the effort and performance of the labour force. Low productivity is one of the main reasons for time and cost overruns in construction projects (Akbar et al., 2021). The main finding of the study on what affects construction productivity is that unskilled and inexperienced construction labour produces less output, so the project is more likely to be unable to recoup the investment within the expected timeframe, which reduces the possibility of raising funds for the site, and therefore threatens the project's viability. Lack of employee experience forces management to spend extra time training employees, which in turn affects productivity.

R. Almamlook, M. Bzizi, T. Ali, M. Al-Kbisbeh and E. Almajiri (2019) classify productivity factors into three main categories: 1) management; 2) technology; and 3) human/work. The main factors affecting productivity in the construction sector are (1) lack of labour supervision; (2) labour experience and skills; (3) construction technology; (4) coordination between construction sector disciplines; (5) errors in project drawings.

Productivity growth is constrained by skills shortages and the mismatch between skills available on the labour market and labour market demand (Barānova et al., 2019).

According to A. Enshassi, S. Mohamed, Z. Mustafa and P. Mayer (2007), productivity factors in construction can be divided into three groups: labour factors, management factors and motivational factors. Labour factors affecting labour productivity in the construction sector include lack of work experience, disloyalty of employees, employee dissatisfaction, lack of competition, increasing age of employees, absenteeism of employees, personal problems of employees. Factors mentioned by the management group include lack of supervision, misunderstandings between employer and employee, lack of work meetings. Motivational factors are late payment, lack of a financial incentive system, failure to provide transport, failure to provide meals and rest facilities.

Summarising the theoretical framework on labour productivity factors in the construction sector and using Drewin's Open Conversion System (DOCS) (Assbeihat et al., 2015), which describes the overall process of a construction system, from internal factors such as employees, capital, materials, equipment and many external factors such as government, economic conditions, environmental factors, etc., the authors divided productivity factors into three major groups: (1) employee productivity factors; (2) company management factors; and (3) technological factors (Figure 2).

The total productivity factors that determine the productivity of construction enterprises can be divided into factors that directly affect each indicator in the group of productivity factors and factors that have an indirect impact on productivity. Directly influencing factors can be determined, changed, and adjusted by the worker and the enterprise, while indirect influencing factors are beyond the control of the enterprise and the worker, but can have a significant impact on the quality of the products or services produced.

Labour factors that affect construction productivity can be viewed from the individual level, such as the education, experience and skills of workers, the qualifications acquired by workers, motivation, and attitudes. These factors are developed on an individual basis for each worker. At company level, the employer can adapt and change various employee-related factors that can increase the overall

productivity of the company. For example, incentive and bonus systems, remuneration systems, on-the-job training, and matching employees with the right experience and age for the job.

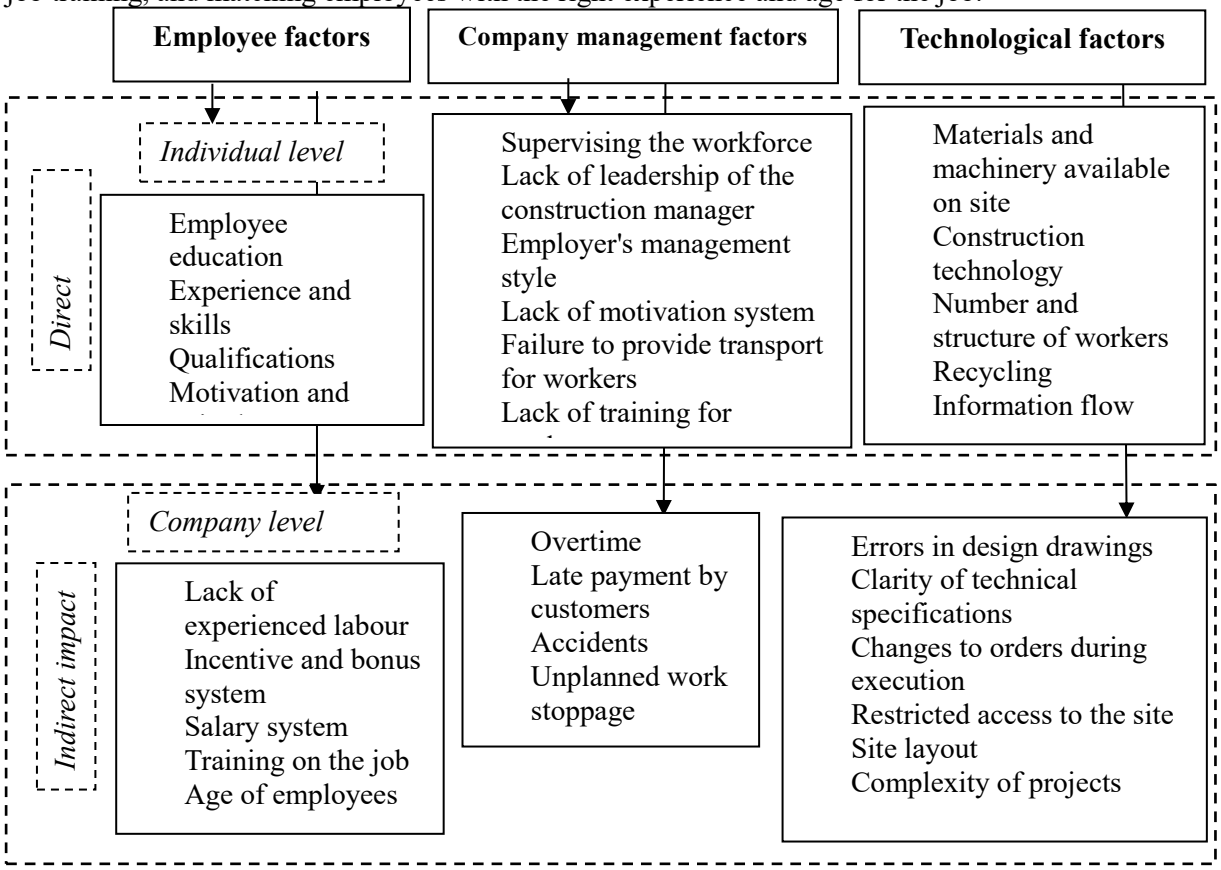

Figure 2. **Classification of labour productivity factors for construction enterprises**

The determinants of the management of the enterprise that have a direct impact on the productivity of the construction workforce are the supervision of the workforce, the lack of leadership of the construction manager, the management style of the employer, the lack of a motivation system, the lack of transport for workers, and the lack of training for workers. These factors can be directly influenced by the entrepreneur to boost productivity. Indirect influences include overtime, late payment by clients, accidents on site and unplanned work stoppages.

The most important technological factors that have a direct impact on the productivity of construction companies are the materials and machinery available on site, the construction technology, the number and composition of workers on site, the processing of construction work, and the flow of information between the client and the contractor. Indirect impacts are classified as errors in design drawings, clarity of the technical specification, changes to the order and design, limited access to the site, site location, complexity of project construction.

Conclusions

In today's competitive environment, companies need to be able to produce products with high added value, to leverage innovations in the production process that can significantly increase productivity, which in turn would be a major source of savings at both company and consumer level.

Productivity factors are determined by internal (labour, enterprise) and external (industry, national and international) level factors. One of the most important factors affecting productivity is labour.

In the construction sector, labour productivity is also a key factor affecting productivity, as productivity in construction is closely linked to the skills and performance of workers. Workers with inexperience require management to find additional resources to perform specific tasks.

The labour productivity factors affecting construction companies can be classified into three major groups: employee factors, company management factors and technological factors.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.007

Career Counselling During Hard Times

Anna Bičkovska, Mg.ed.
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvia
annabickovska@gmail.com

Abstract: Topicality of the research is given by migration processes that are going on in 2022 in Europe. Over 7 million of Ukrainian refugees registered in Europe since the war started in February 2022. All of these people have different situations and needs, but at some point, part of the refugees will face employment problem. The aim of the study was to try to understand how Ukrainian refugees in Latvia are trying to solve their employment situation, what they are hoping for, how they are comparing employment possibilities in Latvia and in Ukraine. Methodology includes theoretical research on the topic and small qualitative research which consists of four questions. The questions covering respondents plans towards job hunting, their view on comparison of job opportunities at home and in Latvia, their satisfaction with previous job. The results show that Ukrainian refugees are quite optimistic on their opportunities in job searching in Latvia. Theoretical research shows that refugees might have some problems with career adaptability and that is the case where career counsellor service might be needed.

Keywords: career counselling, career adaptability, resettlement, refugees, displaced persons, adult education

Introduction

2022 was the year that brought us a lot of uncertainty, broke our plans (again!); millions of people in Europe were displaced and were pushed to solve different problems that appeared in one night. Of course, career counselling is not a top priority when we speak about the possibility of losing life, needing shelter, food and safety. The First period of crisis will pass sooner or later and individuals (especially women with children, disabled people) will find it in a new place, will get access to some resources and will start to think how to move forward in life.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, about 1% of all people have been forcibly displaced from their homes by persecution or war. Russian-Ukrainian crisis, unfortunately, is not first and last, so, we, as European community, should be able to provide help to people in need.

According to UNHCR more than 7 million refugees from Ukraine registered in Europe (as for September 2022) (UNHCR, 2022). All of these people need to find their place (temporary or permanent); we welcomed almost 40 thousand refugees (September 2022) which for small country like Latvia is quite a big number of people in Latvia.

Neither there was a top question about career counselling for those people – shelter, food, social security was first problems need to be solved. After some time, when all of us realised that it is going to last people (who were physically abled) started to look for a job in Latvia.

The Author of the article is working with Ukrainian refugees since early March 2022 as provider of social services in Riga Refugee Help center and is able to speak with clients about career topics as well. The Author decided to compare practical experience with theory and parts of conversations with refugees.

Ukrainian refugee crisis is not the first one and, probably, not the last one. Circumstances make all the difference every time. For Europe it was (and still is) challenging to help all the people in need. According to Latvia, then definitely, the country was not ready and had no previous experience in that topic but tried its best and mobilized all the possibilities and ways to help.

According to today's rapidly changing work and career possibilities should motivate individuals be ready to anything and still survive (Arthur et al., 1996), but you can't be ready to leave all your life in one night and just go search for a safer place.

It means that all of the refugees are dealing with some sort of trauma – more or less, but it is important to take it into consideration that some of the refugees won't be able to deal with it by themselves and before any kind of career counselling they need to get therapy. According to C.W. Rudolph it is important to maintain positive mindset that helps individuals to adapt into new reality (Rudolph et al, 2017) – that might be a key to career counselling – help to maintain positive mindset and motivate to accept changes.

Speaking about career, refuges and displaced people we definitely come across such terms as career adaptability and subjective resettlement success.

According to Savickas *career adaptability* is "the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions" (Savickas, 1997).

What we often see among refugees (especially during big waves) that it is harder for them to adapt, mostly because during all these people were not planning to leave their homeland at least in those circumstances. They are not ready for changes, and everything depends on their individual capability to adapt and defend stress.

Resettlement success is a very subjective topic, but shortly and very simply it can be described as "back to normal" comparing with previous non-refugee life (Colic-Peisker at al., 2003). However, objective resettlement success is defined as the status of a current job relative to previous employment (also called occupational mobility, (Chiswick et al., 2005), pay, and opportunities for host country language growth. Research has consistently demonstrated that host country language ability is critical to career development and wage increases over time (Chiswick et al., 2002; Shields et al., 2002).

Speaking about employment for refugees in general, not particularly about Ukrainian, there are employers that need to be taken into consideration. Refuges, as any other vulnerable group, depend upon many obstacles, such as economic situation, political, employers' attitude and general society's attitude towards that national minority.

After the break down of the USSR quite a big diaspora of the Ukrainians stayed in Latvia. According to the data of Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia before war there have been around 60 000 of Ukrainians living in Latvia, around 30 000 particularly in Riga (Embassy of Ukraine, 2022). Incoming refugees might have some connection with Latvia due to friends and relatives living here and receive additional assistance and support from local Ukrainians.

In Latvia's case almost all Ukrainians (some specific situation when person has double citizenship or other country issued visas were denied) that obtained to humanitarian visa got it together with the right to work without any restrictions. According to the August 2022 data 31257 refugees received that type of visa (Over 36.000 Ukrainian…, 2022). More than 30 thousand of refugees are living in Riga, so that should bring serious impact on job market in Latvia (Ukraine Response 2022…, 2022). According to International Organization for Migration report on displaced persons in Latvia situation is the following - most of the refugees in Latvia are women in age gap from 30 to 39 years (36%). According to employment situation more than half of respondents reported they were employed (60%) in Ukraine, 12 per cent were self-employed and 11 per cent were retired. Among respondents who were unemployed in Ukraine, five per cent were looking for a job while four per cent were not. In Latvia, respondents who were unemployed and looking for a job made up the biggest share (36%), followed by those employed (22%). Six per cent of respondents reported they were students in Ukraine; in Latvia, this dropped to 3 per cent (Ukraine Response 2022…, 2022).

Living in Latvia, obviously, asks for non-nationals to speak Latvian to be able to work, but for this crisis there were exception made and Ukrainian refugees were allowed to be employed without knowing the language. Many of them speaks Russian and many Latvian inhabitants speak Russian as well, so that was the primarily solution in order to allow refugees to start work faster and not to rely on social benefits.

Analysing waves of Ukrainian refugees there are some statements that between all the refugees, only about 50%-70% are able to work, but Latvian job market is not going to be emptied by Ukrainians. By

the end of July only 6000 of war replaced Ukrainians started their jobs in Latvia which is only 0.7% from all employed persons in Latvia (Grāvītis, 2022).

Conclusion can be made that there are enough job opportunities for Ukrainian refugees in Latvia, their special needs (according to language) are recognised and accepted. All refugees are provided with 120 days free housing opportunities, first three months they receive social benefits not taking into consideration their previous income and savings, they are provided with free language training, numerous amounts of humanitarian help (clothes, food, household items etc).

Methodology

The aim of the author was to understand how Ukrainian refugees in Latvia are trying to solve their employment problems and to move forward with their careers – get their feedback in order to realise what kind of services they might need or what kind of service we should improve.

A survey developed by the author consists of 4 questions which represent respondents' attitude toward themselves, their opportunities and reasons to get employed or staying unemployed and how they can measure and compare their new possible job to previous one. They were also asked to specify their gender, age, period of unemployment and level of education.

Questions respondents were asked to answer:

1. Are you planning to get a job in Latvia?
2. Were you satisfied with your job in Ukraine?
3. Were you planning to immigrate (before war started)?
4. According to your feelings – is this job going to be (is) better than your previous in Ukraine?

The current empirical research was carried out in Riga Help center for Ukrainian refugees between June and November 2022. 38 refugees from Ukraine took part in this research. The participants of research were the following: 38 females between the age of 22 to 62 (Mean (M) = 42.105, Standard Deviation (SD) =11.36).

Results and Discussion

All conversations with refugees took part in Riga refugee help center, that is now located on Amatu street 4 (previously Riga Congress Hall and Kalku street 1). All of the respondents were women, mostly because the main wave of refugees are women, women with kids, seniors and persons with disabilities. All refugees were asked four questions, but conversation was carried out not in a strict manner in order to create more friendly atmosphere. Refugees were in different parts of their stages, but all of them already got their visa (permanent resident permit) and have been living in Latvia for at least three months, so the first shock should be gone by now and people should start to think and plan their future, arrange some income possibilities for themselves.

Replying to the first question all of the respondents mentioned that they would like to find a job in Latvia. There were a few most common reasons mentioned – it's not possible to live on social benefits (16), want to work, want to fulfil their day (12), need to help relatives that stayed in Ukraine (9), wish to be independent and to rely on benefits, state (8).

"*I'm here [in Latvia] for almost five months, tried to work in Drogas [store chain] for one month, but the salary was so small, and they asked me to learn Latvian. I'm attending courses, but the language is very difficult. I have never been into languages. I used to have badge on my t-shirt that I'm from Ukraine and all customers were speaking Russian with me, sometimes they were negative. I don't know what to do – at home I've been a store manager, but here I need to start from the bottom and the salary is small, but I need to pay such a big rent and utilities. I think I will try for a few more months and if nothing works, I choose to go back home. I'm from Kiev.*" Galina, 36.

Galina's case is quite common. Most of the refugees I have been speaking with were very active and positive while speaking about job possibilities, but much more pragmatic when they faced reality – even

if salary is not very small it is very hard to pay rent, utilities, buy food and cover all basic needs. Minimal wage in Latvia for 2022 was 500 euro, in 2023 it is 620 euro (Latvia National Minimum…, 2022).

First three months of their stay in Latvia refugees get full coverage on their rent and utilities, after three months, in case they wish to continue to receive social benefits they need to prove that their level of income is not enough to cover their needs. Basically, the more you earn the less you receive from the state. It is thought that during the first three months refugee is able to manage their basic functioning and start to be more independent.

Speaking about the second question *"Were you satisfied with your job in Ukraine?"* – 29 persons replied positively, 6 were not employed before in Ukraine (at least 6 months before 24th February of 2022) and three persons were not happy with their previous job (one of them sale assistant in grocery store, second manager in veterinary clinic and third one sale representative of coffee and warm beverages). Most of the respondents were satisfied, so it gives them previous positive experience in employment in general and gives a good start to find a job in Latvia, at least they should feel what they do like about working and what will be not acceptable in terms of employment.

"*At home [in Ukraine] it felt different, even if a job was not so good – low salary, long hours it still was at home. Everything around is known, people, system, language. Family close, friends. It felt different. Now my job is "better" comparing with Ukrainian one, but it is not home and things are hard today*." Alla, 45.

Replying to the third question *"Were you planning to immigrate (before the war started)?"* only one person replied that she and her family were considering moving to Latvia, because some of the close relatives did it before and their experience was successful. Other 37 respondents replied that they were not thinking about migration before the war.

It is not possible to compare immigration and being a refugee, but people who, at least, considered moving might be more ready to accept challenges.

There might be some differences between skills and education of refugees. For example, very successful case of medical workers that have been employed in Latvia passed required professional certification. So, that might be the case that highly skilled individuals are required by the market more

than not educated and skilled enough (Mehra et al., 2022).

Last question *"According to your feelings – is this job going to be (is) better than your previous in Ukraine?"* is quite controversial because it is hard to measure feeling and for everyone *better* might be very different, but respondents were really active answering this question and willing to discuss and compare.

"*At home [in Ukraine] a lot of people are thinking that when you leave in Europe you are fully covered. Let's say, somehow people considering that everything is better, grass is greener, sun shines warmer, but it's not. Maybe salaries are higher, but it comes together with higher prices for everything – food, transportation, utilities. I'm working as sales assistant, my salary "on paper*" *is 900 euro. After taxes I receive around 650. It is quite a lot for Ukraine, for similar job in Ukraine my salary was 500 "on paper". I'm living with my sister, who was living here before the war, so I don't need to pay for rent and that it is ok for me. I, even, send 150 euro to my mom in Ukraine*." Olena, 32.

As we know everything is relative, for one person 900 is a descent amount of money for the other it is not enough. Speaking with respondents from time to time there was that idea from them – in Europe life is better, everything is better. Again, in some ways probably it is better, but you need to work hard to get it, especially, when you are a refugee and need to start from the begging being not so young anymore, not having enough resources, help and many other factors.

Economy and employment market can rise because of skilled immigration, which is not the case for 2022 in Europe since many of the refugees are disabled, seniors, women with young kids. So Latvian market is taking what it can from this situation. Anyhow, huge waves of immigration always give a shock to the local systems and slowly change them in a way (Mazzotta, 2022).

That's why it is important to provide decent amount of service and assistance for refugees in order to avoid their constant presence in receiving social benefits. Many Ukrainian refugees are migrating between EU countries in order to find the best place for living and working or trying to return back home if in their region situation becomes safe.

"*It is horrible how war impacted all of us. I was never thinking about leaving home, because I have two kids. We left Kiev on 25th of February, because I was too afraid to stay. My friend helped us, we were together in her car. Driving for 4 days. My friend's brother is living in Riga, so I came here as well because I have no friends or relatives abroad. It is 8 months now. My kids both are in pre-school, it is fine, they like it. We are renting, getting a bit of help from social service. I'm a pharmacist, working in local drugstore. It is hard, especially language. I'm not into languages at all, but I try. I hope the war will end and we will be able to come back. Riga is nice, Latvians are treating us good, but it is not home.*" Hanna, 36.

In every system there might be a gap and it is not possible to create services that will meet all the needs, there will be always some problems, but, definitely, one thing that can't be solved that refugees want to come home and try to continue to live their life as closest it can be to previous version as possible.

Generally, all respondents were quite optimistic about their job (even in case they haven't got one yet) and hoping that job will be better than the previous one or were planning to get a better job (in case they are already employed, but not satisfied). It is needed to be mentioned, that 17 respondents are planning to return home as soon as possible.

Conclusions

- Europe is facing another refugee crisis in 2022, but for Latvia it is the first-time experience when huge amount of people is entering the country and are in need of shelter, food, assistance;
- Most of the refugees are women, women (alone or with children/s), senior and disabled persons. The most vulnerable group of people who face difficulties with employment and social security even during the times of peace;
- All of the respondents were optimistic about their future employment possibilities – all respondents are willing to find a job, because it is not possible to survive only with social benefits and they want to fulfil themselves by working, earning money and giving back to society that helped them;
- Most of the respondents (29) were satisfied with their job in Ukraine, six were not employed and three were not satisfied. As one of the respondents mentioned that at home everything feels different, but you can recognize and appreciate it only losing it;
- Only one respondent was planning immigration before the war started, so for the rest of the respondents it was a double shock, since they weren't considering even an idea of moving abroad;
- Respondents are hoping for their better and brighter future in Latvia, even if it is hard to maintain their usual life, create safe space for themselves and relatives, they are not giving up and trying their best to achieve their desired level of life, but still want to go back home to Ukraine whenever it will be possible.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.008

Model for Long-Term Unemployed Social Benefits Recipients Career Management Improvement

Anna Bičkovska, Mg.ed.
Latvia University of Life Sciences and technologies, Jelgava, Latvia
annabickovska@gmail.com

Abstract: the topicality of the research is that in Latvia in the beginning of 2023 labour market offers variety of job possibilities for people of different education and level of experience, but there is still a significant amount of long-term unemployed people who tend to use social benefits system but not trying to start an independent life. This group of society is not motivated to change their life, they are misusing public services and need help. Main changes that might be achieved are changes in consciousness. The aim of the study was to develop, characterize and justify model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement. Monographic method has been used for this study in the theoretical research section. The author created a model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement as a part of her PHD research. In the article theoretical basis of this model and how it can be used and what kind of changes are possible to achieve while using model is shown. During the empirical research, an expert survey was conducted on the suitability of the model developed by the author and the program based on it; the Friedman test was used in the statistical processing of the data. Results of the study confirm the assumption that the implementation of the model and program developed by the author in career support can improve the career management of long-term unemployed social benefit recipients; differences between experts' assessments are not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Keywords: career counselling, career management, long-term unemployed, adult pedagogy.

Introduction

The level of unemployment in Latvia by the end of January 2023 was 6.3% (NVA, 2023). The level of unemployment is relatively low, but still there are people who cannot enter the labour market for 12 months or more and are considered long-term unemployed. There is no statistical data about how many long-term unemployed are in these 6.3% of general unemployment rate in Latvia, but in 2021 in United Kingdom research was conducted in *Learning and work institute* and they came up with information, that in 2021 in UK there were about 1 -1.5 million long-term unemployed. This is the highest rate from 1980s (Learning and work…, 2021).

Being unemployed for many months and even years in a row makes significant changes not only in financial situation, but also changes personality dramatically. In order to return to labour market it is important not only to find a job but also be able to hold it for a significant amount of time.

The long-term unemployed social benefits recipients are still managing their career but in a destructive way – not looking for a way to become independent, but relying on social benefits system, not participating in creating new products or services for society, but just using what society can offer.

Trying to get back into labour market and "socially accepted" life in general is important but hard work, since most of them are not motivated to change. So, the main result what career counsellor can achieve is a change in their way of seeing the situation and starting to wish for changes in their life.

The aim of the study was to develop, characterize and justify model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement. The author created a model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement as part of PHD research.

Methodology

Monographic method has been used for this study. Available literature (printed and online versions) about career, career management and unemployment persons were used. The author used sources in Latvian, English and Russian. Previous research in the field related to the theme

of article was used. Statistical data from State Employment Agency was used in order to represent the current level of unemployment in Latvia. During the empirical research, an expert survey was conducted on the suitability of the model developed by the author and the program based on it; the Friedman test was used in the statistical processing of the data.

Results and Discussion

The term *career* is widely used in different media, but under career we often understand only a small part of it. Up to the end of the 20th century career was qualified very traditionally as change of job positions from smallest to biggest ones. D. Super in 1980 considered career as successive occupation, positions and jobs held or perform during individual lifetime (Super et al., 1996).

Starting form the end of 1980 career started to appear as we know it now. This idea started by S. Wolfe and D. Kolb – the development of career consists not only of employment, but a human life context in general and person's as well. The environment restrictions and restrictions are connected to family, relatives and social paradigms. The responsibility for kids, parents – that are all the points that need to be taken into consideration while doing career counselling (Wolfe et al., 1980).

That means that not only the technical part of a job searching like looking for a position, putting together CV, letter of application, is important. Especially for long-term unemployed who have been out of labour for more than 12 months in a row (SKDS, 2006). It is important to be healthy, mentally stable and ready to get and, most important, keep a job, to understand all issues that comes with employment. This is the place where career counsellor can start to work.

For model theoretical base are important D. Kolb ideas about learning and creating knowledge through transforming own experience (Kolb, 1984).

Working with the long-term unemployed social benefits recipients it is important for them to accept who they are – sometimes with negative experience, the lack of formal education, substance abuse and other obstacles that most likely are not going to help them develop into independent, employed personality. In case career counselor truly accept it, he/she will be able to show them their best parts, show them how to use their experience for good. The main idea is not to change them into a perfect human being, but help to change negative to positive, show new opportunities and ways how to deal with problems, show that they can change their future and create it brighter than they expect it to be. New information, knowledge that individual come across in positive, helpful environment can change their way of thinking and seeing society and their place in it (Brooks et al., 1999).

That's why a personal contact that career counselor builds with client is one of the keys in the whole process. The client feels and sees that career counselor is truly interested in helping him/her, he/she feels worthy. Career counselor will help to look at a situation from a different point of view but will remind a client that he/she is responsible for decision making. During the whole cooperation time with a career counselor's client has plenty of time to reflect on his own thoughts, emotions, ideas, he is able to see clearly with what he really wants and how he can achieve it, he has time to get over it and make a right choice just by his own, not being impacted by other people around.

Ideas from learning theory where used while creating described model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients. Learning "here and now", than analyse available data and, finally, reflection on new experience.

Jean Piaget in his theory described that adult learning and development main prepositions are experience, reflection and action. J. Piaget claims that human development happens only while interacting with surrounding environment (Piaget, 1972). Interaction itself is important, but doesn't do its job without adequate reflection and it is point where career counselor can offer support during sessions a help to maintain individual practice.

While working with adults it is important to emphasize the role of mind in decision making process, impact it and convince the client. According to this scientific way cognitive learning theory was used because it emphasizes all mind related processes; learning is focused on the successful problem-solving technics (Motschnig-Pitrik et al., 2002). In this way of learning individual relationship with environment are not included, but the author uses it as part of model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement. While creating a model for long-term unemployed social

benefits recipients career management improvement the author used some ideas from cognitive theory, but also included the ideas from other theories that fit into idea of this model.

Analysing adult learning process it is important to include J. Mezirow transformative learning theory where the main place takes the idea of "perspective". All of us are having different perspectives that depend on our age, education, sex, experience, and social situation. J. Mezirow splits learning into three fields:

- instrumental learning – taking over direct information, raising efficiency in a certain activity;
- dialogic learning – meets normal, everyday interests and develops a level of common communication;
- liberating learning – development of self-awareness, understanding of one's place in the world and one's identity (Mezirow, 1991).

J. Mezirow considers that traditional education looks for "what?" and "how?" answers, but it is more important to know "why?". When education focuses on transformation it prepares an individual for different stages of life, helps to be flexible. During the learning process new experience is gained that allows to interact with environment in a new quality (Mezirow, 1991).

Creating transforming learning model J. Mezirow was inspired by J. Habermas idea about comunicative action. Learning in different groups, clubs and activities might be considered the best option where individuals can meet different people, share experience and get knowledge from real people – that's important to modern democratic community (Mezirow, 1991).

For created model life-coaching ides are important – individual is able to take an active part in changing his own situation, be ready to take action and fully take responsibility for life (Kimsey-House et al., 2021). In general, holistic approach is used in the model – individual life is seen in general, as a whole picture, not only in employment context.

Counselors do not have and cannot have primary task of changing of life-style of long-term unemployed social benefits recipients during few sessions if the individual has not worked for several years, but survived on social benefits. In this case the main task is to develop cognitive dissonance – to show the difference between existing level and quality of life and what individual could achieve, to show that it is possible.

The founder of the theory of cognitive dissonance is Leon Festinger whose main insight is based on the idea that when individual form perceptions, ideas, thoughts that conflict with the environment, new information it creates internal discomfort in the individual, which as a result motivates the individual to change and move in the direction of eliminating discomfort (Festinger, 1985).

How to understand that you are experiencing cognitive dissonance:

- feeling uncomfortable before doing something or making decision;
- attempts to rationalize or justify their decisions;
- feeling embarrassed about actions of even feel ashamed and try to hide it from other people;
- regrets actions or something done in the past;
- do something because of social pressure or fear of missing out even if it is not what really desires (Cherry, 2020).

L. Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory is specific interpretation of problematic situation. That's why it is important to understand in what cases adaptive behaviour develops in order to get free from dissonances. Such strategy can be unsuccessfull and contribute to the reinforcement of dissonance and the formation of the new frustrations (Newby-Clark et al., 2002).

The author admits that working with long-term unemployed social benefits recipients it is especially important, because cognitive dissonance is the only thing that can be achieved doing consultative work. It would be too optimistic to hope for real result (found and hold a job), when individual is unemployed for years, but changes in way of seeing and thinking and being not satisfied with situation is the best possible results that could be achieved.

The career counsellor's cooperation with the long-term unemployed - social benefits recipients should be based on a scheme of cooperation between the career counsellor and the client, understanding each next step and considering the possible outcomes (Figure 1).

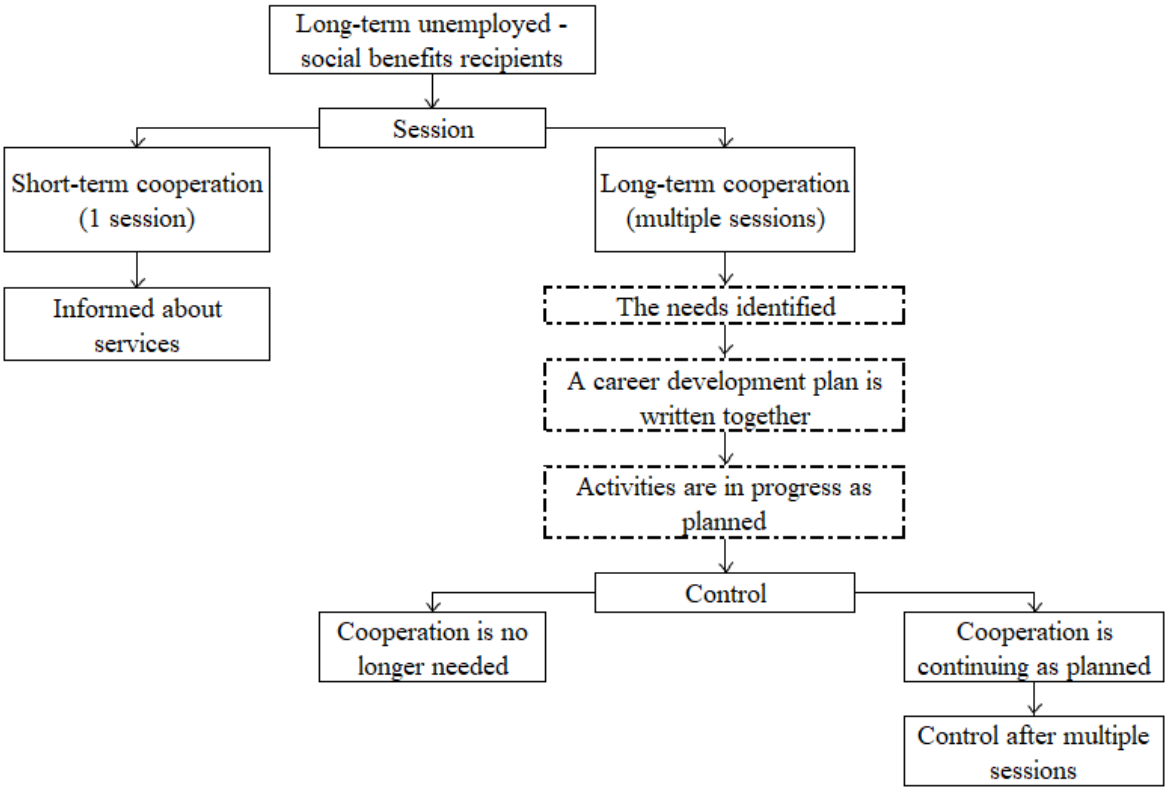

Figure 1. **Cooperation scheme between career counsellor and long-term unemployed person**

Career management improvement model (Figure 2) consist of three parts. Different knowledge and skills are developed in every part. Every part consists of different stages that allow participants to prepare for changes and future development.

- In the preparation stage, the situation the client is in today is analysed (individually and together with career counsellor). A participant is prepared for career management improvement programme using the model, a participant gets to know future activities, is informed about what level of involvement is needed in order to get the best possible result. The main idea of this part is to help a participant understand and accept his problem, to try to understand why it is not solved yet and what is possible to do. A participant needs to realize that he needs to try to solve his problem with new tools since old ones didn't give a positive result. A participant needs to understand that he needs help, and he will change. That can be named as a motivation of participant. The main changes supposed to happen in the mind of participant. In case everything goes well career counsellor prepares individual career development plan with a goal and tasks that will help to achieve the mentioned goal. In negative case nothing changes in participant's mind, participant doesn't realize his problem and is not willing to change.
- Development. At this point individual is working according to a personal development plan. He is motivated to use his previous experience, from his failures, use his own resources, strong parts of personality. Individual is regularly invited to career counsellor sessions in order to discuss a process, ask questions and receive support. Career counsellor controls the process, development of individual, follows accomplishment of tasks. In negative case, when individual is not motivated to do anything career counsellor is more involved and tries to find a way how to make this process more desirable for individual. Career counsellor asks the individual to reflect on the process, thoughts, reactions, emotions. The main possible results is changes in individual's attitude and way of seeing the situation. In positive case individual understands that he is able to change the situation, he understands how to achieve it and where to seek for help.
- Conclusion is the last stage of cooperation when work that has been done is analyzed, checked if the goal is achieved or not, what stopped a person from achieving the goal. Career counsellor

helps an individual to create personal development future plan allowing individual to move forward. The main aim of this stage for individual is to realize that he is able to work and develop alone, assistance of career counsellor is not the key. At this stage analytical skills develops, that allows to plan and achieve goals, reflect on it.

Before starting cooperation with a career counsellor long-term unemployed social benefits recipients need to understand that this whole process is not a guarantee for a successful employment in the end or any positive change in general. This is a tool that can be used to solve some problems. Career counsellors need to be very clear about the message of this model. That's why it is important to create a development plan that is connected with reality where long-term unemployed social benefits recipients live. The plan needs to be real, with achievable goals and tasks so it can result in happy and pleased long-term unemployed social benefits recipients who understand that he achieved the goal or understand what they need to do to achieve it.

It is important to realize that for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients there is no pill that will solve their problems. All different type of programmes, models, support, educational activities are not a guarantee for employment. The main result that can be achieved is changes in consciousness, in the way how a person sees himself, believe in his own strengths, new friends and new perspective on situation.

The model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement will be used in Riga Social Service as a part of PHD project. Working with a model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement cooperation is split into three levels.

Level 1 – the beginning of cooperation (defining goal and tasks).

Level 2 – the continuing of cooperation (correction of goal and tasks if needed; continue to cooperate with career counsellor or interrupt cooperation – according to goal and individual motivation).

Level 3 – the end of cooperation (the last evaluation of goal and tasks; giving feedback to each other).

Career counsellor defines and coordinate cooperation as well as determines the level of cooperation and work according to the developed model for career management improvement of long-term unemployed social benefits recipients.

Following indicators are taken into consideration when analysing changes in individual situation.

Indicator 1 – client is emotionally unstable – radical changes of mood – highly negative or positive.

Indicator 2 – client avoids straight answers, misses sessions, doesn't reply on phone calls.

Indicator 3 – client is not fulfilling the plan, avoids cooperation.

In cases when following indicators are met career counsellor arranges sessions with long-term unemployed social benefits recipients to discuss the following, try to define reasons and possible ways how to support the client if possible and needed. In case long-term social benefits recipients are not willing to find a way how to deal with situation and are not motivated to accept assistance cooperation with long-term unemployed social benefits recipients will be interrupted.

According to the author professional experience working with long-term unemployed - social benefits recipients criteria were created. Criteria describe long-term unemployed social benefits recipients' possibility to interrupt cooperation with career counsellor (in case in positive and negative outcome) are as follows:

1. criterion - client confidently expresses his opinion about situation;

2. criterion - client understands and is aware of his next steps in career development;

3. criterion - client is satisfied with the achieved result;

4. criterion - client is ready to continue his job search independently or to maintain already found job.

In case long-term unemployed - social benefits recipients meet several criteria (before or after evaluation) career counsellor is allowed to interrupt cooperation (the goal is achieved – client is ready to continue his life independently) (see Figure 2).

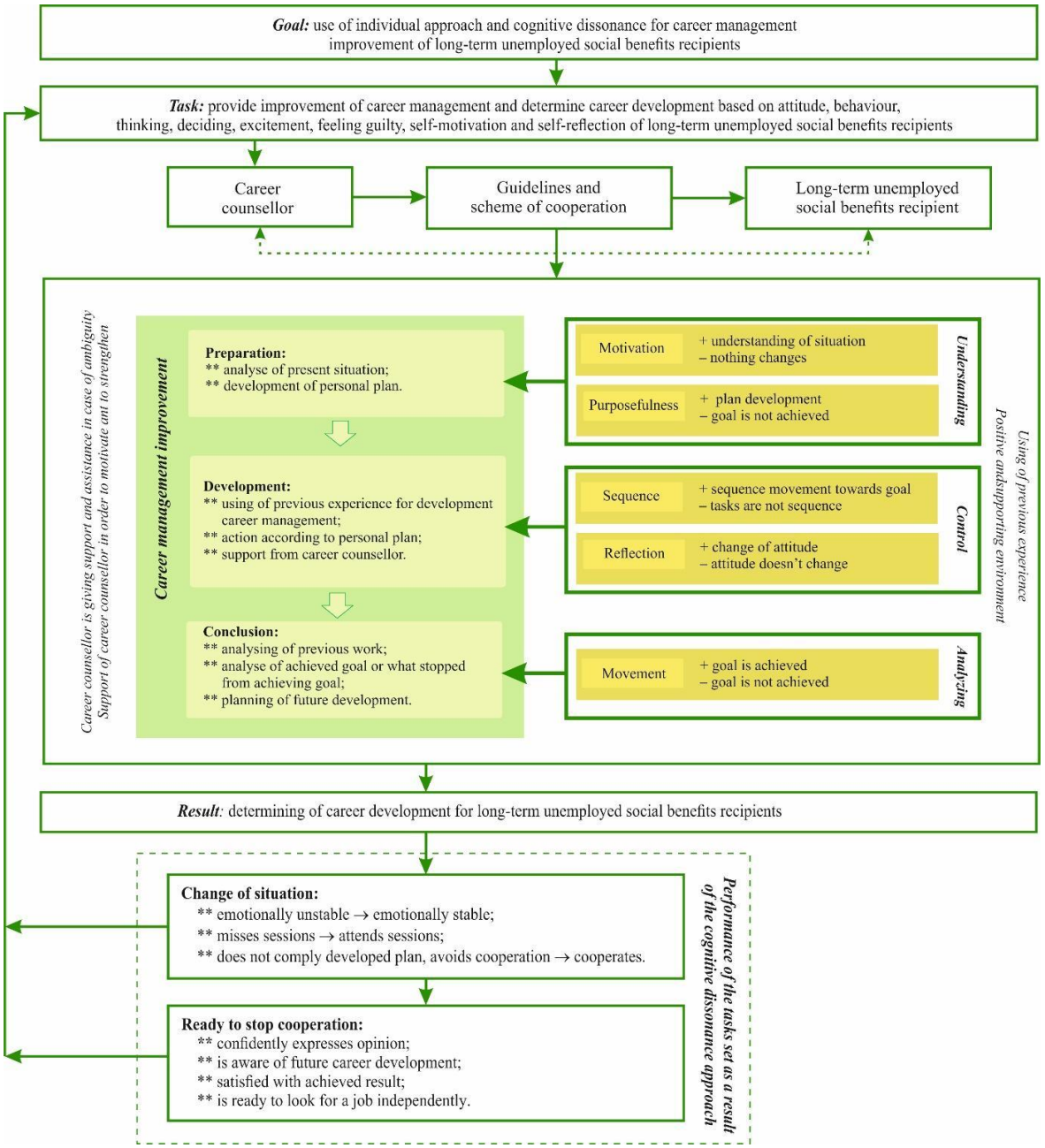

Figure 2. **Model for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients career management improvement**

Based on the model above the author created a programme for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients that was used in Riga Social Service, but also can be used in any other institution as well. The programme's **goal** is to improve career management skills for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients and to motivate them to change their attitude towards employment. All participants are taking part in the program on their free will, they are informed about the process and rules before joining the program.

Short annotation of the programme. By participating in the program, long-term unemployed social benefits recipients will have an opportunity to develop career management skills, to reflect about their situation, resources and plans; as a result the cognitive dissonance in participants should develop.

Tasks of participants

- Learn career management improvement programme.
- Promote motivation.
- Learn career management improvement skills.

Expected results

- Participants reflect on their previous employment experience.
- Cognitive dissonance develops in participants between reality and what they could achieve.
- Participants develop inner motivation to change their situation.

Course of action. The programme consists of 10 sessions, each 60 minutes long with additional 15 minutes for homework presentation for participants. Methods used – discussion, individual work, meditation, information search.

Qualification of the programme coach. Programme can be carried out by a social worker, career counsellor, teacher. During the research programme was held by social worker with career counsellor qualification.

Before starting the programme, expert survey was conducted. Following experts took part:

State employment agency career counsellor – experience with unemployed for 3 years;

Riga social service social worker who worked with unemployed (nowadays there is no special social worker for unemployed) – experience with long-term unemployed social benefits recipients for 8 years;

Lecturer with qualification in employment and career management – theoretical knowledge about job searching and career counselling for 11 years;

Riga Welfare Department staff member who works in a new social service invention in Riga – about possible use of the programme in Riga Social Service (work experience 5 years).

Four criteria were created to help experts to review the programme:

K1 – Does created programme develops long-term unemployed - social benefits recipients' interest in job searching?

K2 – Is created programme an effective tool for work with long-term unemployed - social benefits recipients?

K3 – Is created programme able to develop change of career management indicators?

K4 – Does created programme motivates long-term unemployed - social benefits recipients to look for a job?

To analyse experts' assessments and compare them following scale was created:

5 – the developed program meets the set criteria fully;

4 - the developed program meets the set criteria partly;

3 – no opinion about the created programme;

2 - the developed program does not match the set criteria partly;

1 - the developed program does not match the set criteria fully.

The author of the paper interprets the assessment obtained by the experts and concludes the following:

- The first expert, State Employment Agency career counsellor, highly appreciated career management development programme. The highest mark was given to the third criterion that means that the expert considers the programme can definitely develop and improve career management, as wells as motivate the long-term unemployed social benefits recipients to look

for a job. In all other criteria - the same result achieved – created programme partly meets set criteria.

- The second expert, Riga Social Service social worker, evaluated the programme from his professional point of view and considers that the programme is not able to develop additional interest in job searching for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients. Social worker considers that programme can improve career management indicators.
- The third expert - lecturer considers that programme can improve career management competences and motivate long-term unemployed social benefits recipients to look for a job. Programme can develop in depth interest in job searching and programme is an effective tool in work with target group.
- The fourth expert – Riga Welfare department employee indicates that the programme could possibly improve career management in long-term unemployed social benefits recipients, but the expert is worried about the problems the author of programme can face – low level of motivation and interest from participants. The expert considers it might be quite hard to motivate long-term unemployed social benefits recipients to look for a job within the programme.

The results of data analysis are shown in Table 1. To determine whether the consensus of experts is statistically significant Friedman test was used (Paura et al., 2002). Two statistical hypotheses were developed as follows:

H_0: there is no statistically significant difference between expert assessments;

H_1: there is statistically significant difference between expert assessments.

Table 1

Results of Friedman test on experts' assessments

	Answers
Number	4
χ^2 actual value	6.652
Number of freedom degrees	3
p-value	0.084

P-value = 0.084 > 0.05, then the null hypothesis cannot be rejected with a probability of 95%, which means that there is no statistically significant difference between the experts' assessments, or there is a consensus between the experts' assessments.

Conclusions

In case when it is relatively easy to find a job and a labour market offers a lot of different possibilities for people with different background long-term unemployed social benefits recipients need extra support.

- Long-term unemployed social benefits recipients need additional support and attention in order to change their social status.
- Long-term unemployed social benefits recipients need additional motivation to start independent way into labour market.
- There is no service, programme, model or any other activity that can guarantee that long-term unemployed social benefits recipients in the end will be willing to work and live independently – best possible result of participating in any of that type activities are changes in way of seeing the problem and thinking about it.
- Services for long-term unemployed should include more motivating and mind changing activities.
- There is a consensus between experts review on career management improvement programme for long-term unemployed social benefits recipients.

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Education for a Changing World

DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.009

Implementation of Innovative Teaching Topics in Vocational Agricultural Education

Karel Tomsik[1] doc. Ing. Ph.D.; **Katerina Tomsikova**[2] Ing. Ph.D.; **Karel Nemejc**[3] Ing. Ph.D.; **Karel Tomšík**[4] jr. Ing.
Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Faculty of Economics and Management[1,4], Institute of Education and Communication[2,3], Czech Republic
tomsik@pef.czu.cz[1]; tomsikova@ivp.czu.cz[2];nemejc@ivp.czu.cz[3]; tomsikk@pef.czu.cz[4]

Abstract: The main task of secondary agricultural schools, which have the character of vocational schools, is to give students theoretical information and information for current and future practice needs. The main educational document of the Czech Republic, the Strategy of the Education Policy of the Czech Republic 2030 + with its emphasis on environmental issues, innovation and education, confirms this task, especially for secondary schools focused on agricultural education. Circular economy, as a relatively new and innovative discipline, can be an example of whether secondary agricultural schools are willing and able to implement progressive disciplines in their teaching programs. The aim of this article is to assess whether secondary agricultural schools provide space in their educational programs for the inclusion of innovative topics in vocational education, with an emphasis on the circular economy. The investigation included qualitative research in the form of in-depth individual interviews with management representatives of selected secondary agricultural schools. The survey shows that schools are trying to use all available ways to increase their attractiveness and consider introducing innovations and new teaching topics as very important. On the other hand, they are bound by many obstacles that do not favour innovation or other attractive activities of schools.

Keywords: circular economy, agricultural education, innovation

Introduction

The primary mission of secondary vocational schools is to give students theoretical information and information for the needs of the practice, in particular for the needs of current practice, as well as the needs of practice in the future. In addition, secondary agricultural schools are connected with an important function of the state - the population's livelihood. In the Czech education system, secondary agricultural schools have the longest tradition, and their role is irreplaceable.

The current turbulent environment places considerable demands on all society groups because of the need to adapt to sudden and unexpected changes in the established climate. Economic crisis, escalating environmental problems, growing social tension in society and the rapidly deteriorating global political climate present humanity with challenges it has never faced before. The field of education is not left out either. On the contrary, the effectiveness of the education system will play a key role in whether society can deal with these challenges.

Therefore, the educational system at all levels must respond to emerging challenges, including implementing new disciplines and scientific approaches. This can be achieved in a knowledge society. As defined by UNESCO (2005): "knowledge societies are about capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use the information to build and apply knowledge for human development". And in "emerging knowledge societies, there is a need for a deeper understanding of knowledge itself" (Hall et al., 2014). As evident from the above, the quality of the education system and its ability to respond to specific challenges is a cornerstone for sustainable development.

The idea of the need for a change in thinking and implementing new innovative practices is by no means new. As already mentioned in the groundbreaking publication The Limits to Growth, modern society's central and long-term problems can be understood as "arms race, environmental deterioration, the population explosion and economic stagnation" (Meadows, 1972). Fifty years later, it is obvious that the mentioned problems still persist, and in some cases, humanity has not been able to prevent their escalation. However, it cannot be said that nothing happened for half a century. In addition to the vast number of scientific projects and publications, global institutions such as the United Nations have also become involved in solving the problem, which has defined sustainability with reference to the need for intergenerational responsibility (UN, 1987). The topics also resonated at the national and European

levels. The question remains whether the progress in science and research has also been adequately reflected in the innovation of educational systems. K. Taber (2017), for instance, argues that "in many countries, school science tends to focus on areas of well-established science, where scientific knowledge appears firm and not currently under debate". Whether in individual countries or at different educational levels, the transfer of new knowledge and approaches to educational systems deserves key attention.

However, fundamental challenges have brought significant progress in the development of new disciplines and approaches in recent years, especially those that accent sustainability. Among such disciplines can be counted, for instance, bioeconomy or circular economy. In particular, the circular economy is becoming a discipline that has the potential to combine both the economic aspects of local economic development and contribute to the fulfilment of environmental goals. R. Gwang-Nam et al. (2022) see the circular economy that is currently attracting great attention from many countries and regions as an alternative for sustainable development. The fact that this topic should not appear in educational systems only in higher education is evidenced by many authors. Education for sustainability at the level of "adult learning and education, vocational education and training and organisational training for sustainability" is emphasised by Ch. Scalabrino et al. (2022); achieving sustainability is also put into context with innovations in the educational process of vocational education by E. Bezvikonnaya et al. (2020). A research study elaborated by M. Cyrankowska et al. (2019) also comes to the conclusion that teachers who know the foundation of sustainable development focus students' attention on sustainability issues and look for solutions.

The mission of secondary education, especially secondary agricultural schools, is in the Czech Republic immediately emphasised in the Education Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic 2030+. The fundamental question is whether secondary agricultural schools (hereafter SAS) in their School Education Programmes (hereafter SEP) take into account the fact that it is necessary to familiarise students with new topics. Teaching process, which was originally performed according to mandatory teaching documents, was replaced by much more flexible teaching in accordance with the SEP in 2004, which each school designed on the basis of the Framework Educational Programme (FEP). The FEP sets individual educational areas for schools and defines the target requirements for graduates' competencies once they have been mastered. For schools, only compliance with the minimum time allowance for educational areas is binding. Schools are thus given a lot of space to exercise autonomy in deciding on taught subjects and their contents and, above all, the possibility of considering how to use the disposable hours.

Contemporary practice in the Czech Republic rather indicates that teaching, which is determined by the available number of hours, does not favour such innovations. This is due to the fact that, in connection with the introduction of the state matriculation exam, there is a tendency to increase the number of hours of matriculation subjects at the expense of vocational ones. Specific and unique information that can be shared within vocational subjects would strengthen the abilities of agricultural experts to reflect on current development trends. Therefore, vocational subjects should have their place in the educational process. Ultimately, they have the capacity to affect such strategic goals as food security, self-sufficiency or sustainable development.

Considering the above-mentioned facts, the circular economy can be an example of a discipline that should be implemented among vocational subjects at SAS in the Czech Republic. According to Oxford Language Dictionary (2022), the circular economy is "an economic system based on the reuse and regeneration of materials or products, especially as a means of continuing production in a sustainable or environmentally friendly way". However, the advantage of the circular economy consists not only in saving resources; the concept has the potential to encourage local economies due to eliminating long transportation and reusing materials within specific areas. It also contributes to a more closed circulation of financial flows if the local actors are capable of implementing circular economy ideas into their local activities. Therefore, the authors decided to investigate if secondary agricultural schools in rural areas in the Czech Republic are open to including such innovative disciplines, like the circular economy, in their educational programmes.

The aim of this article is to assess whether secondary agricultural schools provide space in their educational programs for the inclusion of innovative topics in vocational education, with an emphasis on the circular economy.

Methodology

The main method of the primary research was represented by in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of selected secondary vocational schools teaching in study field 41 (agriculture). The list of these schools was generated from the Registry of Schools and Educational Facilities. From the complete set of secondary schools on the territory of the Czech Republic, which represents 1,285 secondary schools and vocational schools, 179 schools offer a group of study programmes 41 Agriculture and Forestry, of which 37 are secondary schools and vocational schools where the agricultural study programmes prevail (11 offer only study programme of the group 41, 26 at the same time study programme 41 and 1-2 related study programmes). 142 secondary schools offer agricultural study programmes together with others (40 offer study programmes of group 41 and another 3-5 study programmes, 102 with more than 6 other groups of study programmes).

The first selection step was a choice of schools with predominance or equivalence of agricultural study programmes (88 in total). The second selection criterion was the location of a particular educational facility in a municipality of up to 5,000 inhabitants (27 in total). Therefore, 27 semi-structured interviews with 67 respondents (directors, deputy directors, and teaching staff members) were realised. The questions mainly aimed at their opinion on introducing innovations in teaching. Data collection and processing took place in 2021-2022.

Within the secondary research, the main method was the analysis of documents. The primary document was the Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+ (referred to as "Strategy 2030+"). The essence of this document is represented by two strategic objectives and four strategic lines. The first strategic objective is defined as the educational focus on increasing the level of key competencies and literacy of pupils, students, and citizens. The second strategic objective is formulated as reducing inequality in access to quality education and enabling the maximum development of the potential of pupils and students. One of the main implementing documents of Strategy 2030+ is the Long-Term Intention of Education and Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic for the Period 2019-2023 (referred to as "Long-Term Intention 2023). It contains three key objectives: 1. more money for the quality work of teachers, 2. completion of the curriculum review and support for the implementation of the innovative FEP into schools, 3. improving the management of schools and school facilities by streamlining the cooperation between the centre and the middle link of the management (regional authorities). The Long-Term Intention 2023 also includes a chapter Education for Sustainable Development (referred to as "ESD"). Among its goals belong the creation of a functional environment for further education which will enable the acquisition of knowledge and competencies in the field of sustainable development and which will systematically offer updated educational programmes for educators, public administration, business sphere, and non-governmental non-profit organisations aimed at the practical application of sustainable development and will ensure availability of ESD to the public equally in the Czech Republic. The issues of ESD are also discussed abroad. The University of Seville conducted the research "Inclusion of Sustainable Development Security Elements into Teaching" within the course "Education for Sustainability", which was intended for secondary school teachers (Solís-Espallargas et al., 2015). There are also critical views that environmental sustainability is still on the fringes of the curriculum in most countries (Gough, 2016).

Among other documents analysed (because it is related to the topic) belongs Strategy of the Regional Development of the Czech Republic 21+ (referred to as "SRD Czech Republic 21+). Its purpose is to realise adequate interventions in various regions of the Czech Republic to fulfil the fundamental goal of the regional policy, which is lowering disparities among those regions and supporting sustainable development, which stands on three pillars – social, economic, and environmental.

Results and Discussion

Opinion on the possible need to change traditional practices in agricultural activities and preparation for them

- Innovative topics are important, and schools implement them (25), although they are not included in SEP (5).
- Environmental issues are topical (7).
- Education in families is important to understand environmental issues (2).

- Innovative topics should be implemented only marginally (1).
- Not topical for technical fields (1).

As part of the interviews, the opinion on the need to change traditional practices in agricultural activities was ascertained. The majority of school management representatives (25) agreed on the importance of introducing new topics, especially environmental ones. Five of them emphasised that they do this already, even though it is not included in the SEP. The schools focus mainly on environmental issues, especially the issue of drought and lack of water (in 7 cases), which, according to their findings, can also be observed (and therefore practically illustrated) on the school grounds (e.g. on the racetrack, vineyards, school grounds). The circular economy is perceived as a discipline that is strongly linked to environmental topics, as recycling, less burden on resources and support of the local economy are ultimately one of the ways of environmental sustainability. Schools also note an active approach of students. Some students ask about the environmental issues themselves (mentioned five times), and schools encourage them in their interests. Two school representatives also emphasise the importance of education in the family, which is needed to make students aware of the responsibility for environmental problems. Only one respondent mentioned that topics focused on environmental issues, including the circular economy, should be included in the teaching only marginally as part of the diversification and enrichment of study programmes. One respondent stated that this issue is not so topical in technical fields.

Obstacles in the implementation of innovative topics

- Lack of disposable hours in SEP (7).
- Lack of teachers (3).
- Low students' interest (9).
- No obstacles (10).

Although the answers to the previous question show that the majority of schools consider the inclusion of innovative topics to be important, school management sees that their practical implementation runs into barriers of an organisational nature. These barriers consist of the lack of available hours in SEP (confirmed in 7 cases), the fact that there is a general lack of teachers (in 3 cases), and generally low interest of students, although some students (as mentioned above) are actively interested in these current topics (in 9 cases). On the contrary, 10 of the interviewed schools do not see any problem in introducing this important information into teaching. That is almost a third of those interviewed.

Disposable teaching time for innovation implementation

- Lack of disposable hours due to strengthening classes of subjects related to the common part of the matriculation at the expense of vocational subjects (11).
- Satisfaction with disposable hours (5).
- Not topical, the school implements the curriculum without the matriculation exam (8).

The answers to these questions were primarily oriented towards the current issue of introducing and implementing the state matriculation examination. School management representatives agreed in 11 cases that already in the past, in relation to the introduction of the state matriculation exam, they had to strengthen the classes of subjects related to the common part of the matriculation. Strengthening compulsory subjects, therefore, removes the space for introducing new topics into teaching. In five cases, there is satisfaction with the number of available hours. Eight schools do not solve the problem of available hours because they only implement the curriculum without the matriculation exam. It can be concluded that the curriculum of agricultural schools is more or less oriented towards general education subjects and does not offer sufficient space for teaching subjects focused on current trends significant for agricultural practice. The circular economy can be an example of a discipline for which there is not enough space left in the available hours. This poses a danger that graduates of vocational schools will not have sufficient professional competencies, which may make it difficult for them to enter tertiary education. The same opinion is held by Birzina et al. (2021). Insufficient or outdated professional competence and fixation on traditional topics also reduce their ability to competently and effectively engage in the practice.

Conclusions

The investigation focuses the research on agricultural schools located in rural areas, which are characterised by many specifics. Rural space plays an important role in sustainability issues, not only from an environmental point of view (the role of natural space, agriculture and other specific activities in rural areas) but also from an economic (viable local economy) and social perspective. The above-mentioned characteristic represents the so-called internal potential, which can facilitate a good embedding of secondary agricultural schools in such an environment. Agricultural schools are often the only secondary schools in rural localities and small towns, but this fact in itself does not affect their attractiveness). The opportunity to increase their attractiveness is mainly given by the decentralisation of regional education. However, there are also other factors that can increase the attractiveness of rural SAS, like the flexibility of the SEP, socio-political proclamations on the creation of multifunctional integrated educational facilities, Education for Sustainability (part of the Long-term Plan of the Education System) or innovation of educational programmes and methods. Teaching topical issues can ultimately affect the fulfilment of such strategic goals as, for example, sustainable development.

Among the main tasks that (not only) secondary agricultural schools will have to solve is the innovation of SEP and FEP depending on the demands of the labour market but also on the need to introduce innovations into teaching and respond to new challenges. As the research concluded, agricultural schools are interested in doing this. The authors ask the same question as Birzina et al. (2021): “will schools offer a sufficient number of lessons with topics that will support the development of students' science literacy?” The answer may be that they can, if they make maximum use of the mentioned "freedom" provided by the FEP, abandon the inertia in teaching some subjects and give more space to interdisciplinary relationships.

Topics related to circular economy issues can become part of existing educational areas (given by the FEP) within those subjects already taught at secondary agricultural schools. By completing teaching subjects covering these topics, students will acquire new target competencies that will appropriately complement the competencies given by the FEP. There is also possible to create a specific subject, "Circular economy", using available hours. It is also possible to use other forms of teaching, e.g. excursions to a company practising a circular economy approach. Another way is to apply activation methods in teaching, e. g. discussion with experts, heuristic interviews or creating a project method for students on the topic "circular economy".

An effective way how to implement attractive and innovative topics could also lies in offering such subjects to hobby groups or as a leisure activity, and to strengthen their effectiveness, offering participation to parents or other family members and citizens. This proposal could be particularly suitable in the conditions of a small town, where "teachers have a closer relationship with pupils and are more involved in their lives, including extracurricular activities", which is also confirmed by surveys from Russia and Latvia (Jermolajeva et al., 2019). Teaching new, innovative and interesting topics such as the circular economy also brings a challenge in the form of greater application of activation methods, such as projects that will be connected with the practice. In this regard, the authors agree with Cakula (2021) that "all forms of education are equally important and complement each other, thus enriching the culture of education and general experience of the learning individuals".

The circular economy is currently the topic of many scientific studies and conferences. However, for this concept to contribute to sustainability in the real world, the idea must not be limited to an academic environment. Secondary agricultural schools in rural areas are ideal places for transferring innovative thinking to those who will influence the sustainability of further development in practice.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.010

Employability of University Students as Prospective Specialists in the Context of Their Competitiveness

Marina Troshkova[1] Ph.D Candidate; **Irena Katane**[2] Dr. paed.
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvia
marina.troshkova@gmail.com[1]; irena.katane@inbox.lv[2]

Abstract: In light of globalisation, internationalisation, digitisation, the Covid-19 epidemic, geopolitical instability, and migration, the issue of employability is becoming increasingly important for individuals, universities, and companies. From the point of view of the social sciences, including education sciences and education management sciences, employability can be understood as a set of many different qualities possessed by a specialist. Additionally, employability is the ability to move freely and flexibly within the labour market and to adapt to its changing conditions, ensuring professional development and mobility. These qualities are included in the structure of the specialist's competitiveness, and they indicate the specialist's competitiveness which is influenced by a number of internal and external factors. The aim of the study is to develop a theoretical basis for the assessment and development of the employability of students as prospective specialists in the context of their competitiveness in current conditions, taking into account the recent developments and trends in the social sciences. The authors use the theoretical research methods that include desk study, as well as the evaluation and analysis of numerous documents and scientific literature. As a result, the most essential employability skills of students as prospective specialists have been identified.

Keywords: competitiveness**,** employability, employment, marketability, prospective specialists, university students.

Introduction

The topic of employability and employment is becoming relevant for individuals, universities, and companies because of globalisation, internationalisation, digitalisation, the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical crisis, and migration. Perspectives from the social sciences are applied to the concept of employability; these include the fields of education sciences and education management sciences.

Employability as a component of competitiveness is of interest to researchers from various fields (Bertagni et al, 2015; Grebennikova & Rybkin, 2017; Holmes, 2013; Katane & Troskova, 2020; Katane & Troskova, 2022; Kinash et al, 2015; Teichler, 2007; Tomlinson, 2012). With a globally interconnected labour market and the benefits of global sales, the social sciences examine a company's or a state's competitiveness as its ability to sell and supply products and services on the labour market (European Commission, 2019). Experts agree that a company's competitiveness is affected by a wide range of variables, such as labour costs, regulatory burden, productivity, skills, innovation, and infrastructure. The level of competitiveness between specialists, such as students with career goals in the field, and the level of competitiveness between companies may be compared.

The study aim is to develop a theoretical basis for the assessment and development of the employability of students as prospective specialists in the context of their competitiveness in the current conditions, taking into account the most recent developments and trends in the social sciences.

Methodology

The authors use the theoretical research methods, which include desk study, analysis, and evaluation of scientific literature and materials. The employability of a student as a prospective specialist was analysed from two perspectives. First, employability is viewed as the ability to secure and retain a fulfilling position that matches one's skills and professional knowledge and is fairly appreciated and compensated by the employer (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Katane & Troskova, 2020). The importance and impact of the internal and external components for employability are emphasized (Grebennikova & Rybkin, 2017; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; McQuaid & Lindsa, 2005). Another approach observed in the literature is that employability is viewed as an individual's set of qualities or skills (Holmes, 2013; Tomlinson, 2012), or an individual's set of previously acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, experiences, and

other qualifications that support their ability to be a reliable source of efficiency, innovation, and productivity for an organisation (Smaldone et al, 2022). Numerous scientific publications (Hora, et al, 2020; Katane & Troskova, 2020; Kinash et al, 2015; Lowden et al, 2011; Mahmud & Wong, 2022; Mohan et al, 2018; OECD, 2018; Reimers, 2009; Teichler, 2007) on the employability skills of students as prospective specialists show the relevance of the topic. The study took place in 2022.

Results and Discussion

Literature review indicates that employability is closely related to work and the ability to be employed (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Employability can be viewed as a single structure with internal and external components, where an individual's knowledge, skills, and competencies comprise the internal component, but the labour market or environment affect how the external component operates (Grebennikova & Rybkin, 2017).

Similarly to the above mentioned, the researchers (McQuaid & Lindsa, 2005) use a broad understanding of employability based on a combination of both individual and external factors that are equally important and are continually interacting with one another. Individual factors, personal circumstances, and external factors are the three main connected aspects that affect the employability of an individual, according to the holistic framework of employability. The employability skills and attributes are assessed individually, based on factors such as core qualities, personal competencies, various types of transferable skills, qualifications and educational attainment, work experience, and connections with the labour market. Personal circumstances can affect one's ability, willingness, or resistance to social pressure to accept a job opportunity. These factors include things such as social and household situations. External factors include elements that affect demand, such as the local labour market, macroeconomic conditions, vacancy characteristics, and recruitment practices (McQuaid & Lindsa, 2005).

Employability encompasses the ability to find their first job after graduation, the ability to retain that job, the ability to move from one job to another within the same organisation, taking up new responsibilities, and, if necessary, the ability to obtain a job with a different organisation to ensure career development (Grebennikova & Rybkin, 2017; Hillage & Pollard, 1998). If the compensation is below average in the field or below the person's expectations, or the position is found in the field where there are low requirements for particular specialists, it is considered undesirable or unsustainable for the individual's professional development. To put it differently, employability is the ability to secure and retain a rewarding position that matches one's skills and professional knowledge and is fairly appreciated and compensated by the employer (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Katane & Troskova, 2020).

According to the authors (Katane & Troskova, 2020), employability is also the ability to move freely and flexibly within the labour market and adapt to its changing conditions, which ensures career development and mobility. Discourses on graduates' employability have a tendency to emphasise both their economic role and the university's capability to prepare them for the labour market which can be explained by graduates playing an essential role in the economy. In an economy that requires more advanced skill sets and technological expertise, it is believed that graduates can play a crucial role in the drive toward developing products and services with added value (Tomlinson, 2012).

Employability can be confused with employment, although in reality it is a different concept. Employment is a contractual relationship between an employer and employee in which labour is exchanged for remuneration, according to government and market economy laws (Budd & Bhave, 2010).

Graduate full-time employment rates are becoming an indicator for graduate employability that is used to measure graduate employability. In both Australia and the UK, the government places a strong emphasis on initial graduate employment, jobs obtained within a few months of graduation. As a consequence of this, universities in both nations are under significant financial pressure to guarantee that their graduates will secure permanent employment as soon as possible after graduation (Bridgstock, 2009).

The term employability capital is used to refer to the personal resources that support the employability of a person (Peeters et al., 2017). The employability capital is understood as the capacity to find and

keep a job. The four types of capital - human, social, cultural, and psychological - are related to employability and career changes. The psychological capital, self-efficacy for job hunting, and ambition have the most effects on employability. Social capital, networking, human capital, knowledge, and skills, as well as the work culture of cultural capital, come next, and then personal circumstances of cultural capital. Knowledge, skills, networking, work culture, personal circumstances, and self-efficacy for job searching are factors of employability capital relevant to university students. In this study, capital is defined as a set of human (knowledge and skills), social (networking), cultural (work culture and personal circumstances) and psychological (ambition and self-efficacy for job searching) assets an individual acquires through formal and informal experiences. In other words, university students who do not identify their own human capital will not be able to show initiative and self-management abilities when it comes time to look for employment. This implies that initiatives in education may change how people view university students. The components of knowledge and skills form a basis of the human capital. This suggests that investing in education may improve the perception of university students' chances of finding a suitable job (Caballero et al, 2020).

The terms marketability and employability frequently take the place of competitiveness in various scientific papers (Īriste, 2018; Katane, 2011; Katane & Īriste, 2013; Katane et al, 2017). Both marketability and employability are significant competitiveness indicators and its manifestations (Katane & Troskova, 2020). Maintaining and enhancing an individual's attractiveness in the labour market (Parker, 2008) is the primary objective of a specialist in today's dynamic economy, which no longer offers stable and long-term employment opportunities. This, in turn, ensures the marketability of the specialist as a professional.

The researchers in the publications (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007) demonstrate their concerns regarding the employability and marketability of graduate students on the labour market after obtaining their higher education and professional qualifications. According to K. Lowden, St. Hall, D. Dr. Elliot, and J. Lewin's (Lowden et al, 2011) hypothesis, businesses and universities ought to collaborate in order to improve the marketability of graduates. This is something that can be accomplished if the development of employability skills is incorporated as a desired learning outcome into the curriculum of university study programs.

When comparing the marketability of goods to the marketability of a specialist, we can say that marketability determines how quickly and easily products can be sold, and in the case of marketability of a specialist, it similarly refers to an individual's capacity to keep the employment and, if necessary, quickly find a new position (Parker, 2008). As a result of this, employability and marketability are two concepts that are closely related to one another.

A specialist's marketability can be analysed through two perspectives: a specialist's marketability as a person and as a specialist in the field, and the marketability that comes from the labour market environment. Every professional has an environmentally determined marketability due to changes of the external environment, i.e., in the case of a reduction in the number of jobs for such a specialist, their marketability is reduced. These results can also be explained by students' marketability as an indicator of competitiveness (Katane & Īriste, 2013; Katane & Troskova, 2020).

Another approach to employability is that it creates a balance between supply and demand in the labour market (Smaldone et al, 2022) where employability is viewed as a set of qualities or skills of individuals (Holmes, 2013; Tomlinson, 2012), or an individual's set of previously acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, experiences, and other qualifications that support their ability to be a reliable source of efficiency, innovation, and productivity for an employer (Smaldone et al, 2022).

The need for young people to be innovative, responsible and aware has been highlighted by the OECD (OECD, 2018) in its report on the Transformative Competencies of Young People for the 21st Century. The report underpins the competencies that students need to thrive in the future: adaptability, creativity, curiosity and open-mindedness; these are the required skills for students to create new values. In a world of interdependency and conflict, people will secure their well-being only by developing the capacity to understand the needs and desires of others. Innovation emerges as a result of individuals cooperating and collaborating with one another to build on existing knowledge. Besides learning to resolve conflicts, tensions, and dilemmas, students must learn to deal with compromises and adjust to change, diversity, ambiguity, and uncertainty. In addition to critical thinking, it requires self-awareness, self-regulation,

reflective thinking, and learning skills. A person's ability to deal with novelty, change, diversity and ambiguity assumes that individuals can think for themselves and work with others. Creativity and problem-solving require the capacity to consider the future consequences of one's actions and to be able to evaluate risk and reward.

The changing nature of work has long been used as a justification for developing soft skills, primarily because it is argued that given the special human potential for empathy or creative problem-solving, the skills that cannot be replaced by robots (Hora, et al, 2020).

Having global competence (Reimers, 2009), means having the ability to comprehend current events on a global scale and to react accordingly. People who participate in international educational experiences are capable of forming a positive attitude toward different cultural traditions and develop a deeper understanding of the cultures of others. The ability to speak, understand, and think in multiple languages is one of the benefits that comes from having international experience. People, who have travelled extensively, have expanded their horizons and gained knowledge in a wide range of areas because of their experiences abroad.

The scientist U. Teichler (Teichler, 2007) suggests focusing on increasing the professional relevance of studies rather than graduate employability, whereas the Austrian scientists (Unger & Zaussinger, 2010) reach the controversial conclusion that higher education should not be based on current labour market demands because professional skills can quickly become outdated. Instead, universities must teach transdisciplinary skills and abilities, also referred to as key competencies, which are essential for long term employment.

The employability of graduates (Lowden et al, 2011) is viewed as a complex set of interrelated knowledge, skills and competences which help individuals to become both safely and well-employed. There is also the opinion that employers particularly value general skills, analytical abilities and abilities that promote flexibility and adaptability. Employers highly value graduates being able to adapt to the organisational culture of the workplace, using their abilities and skills to develop in the organisation and to work with the new team. Graduates and specialists in general are expected to be proactive, to be able to use advanced skills, including analysis and critical thinking.

In addition to the generic skills needed to perform in a work environment, employability skills also encompass career management skills, divided into two categories: self-management and career building. Knowledge and skills related to career management are essential to employability since they determine which, to what extent, and in what manner generic and discipline-specific skills are acquired, displayed, and utilised (e.g. in job applications) (Kinash et al, 2015).

Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings that a university community agrees its students will desire to acquire during their time at the institution (Bowden et al, 2000). These qualities, skills, and understandings shape the contributions students can make to their profession and their community.

The scientists (Mohan et al, 2018) in their substantiation of employability, describe various employability manifestations, particularly highlighting those qualities, skills and abilities of a competitive specialist that are most valued by employers and which can be considered competitive advantages. For example, the ability to work in a team; ability to solve problems; communication; computer skills; analytical thinking; leadership; time management; interaction and organisational skills; interaction, including cooperation, skills; the ability to solve problems is valued highest. Specialists need these qualities, skills and abilities for work in all industries and at all levels of the organisational hierarchy. Critical thinking, digital literacy, and creativity are also defined as the three most important skills for employment (Mahmud & Wong, 2022). According to the findings of another study, one of the most important skills for employers is the ability to work well in a team (Katane & Troskova, 2020).

The study results organised by the Finnish researchers (Räty et al., 2019) revealed that the perceived proximity to graduation and the working life was discovered to be connected with the perception of employability, independent of the topic of study. Additionally, a number of self-attributed abilities, including extroversion, ambitious competition, mental toughness, and the qualities of a good employee, were linked to students' assessments of employability; conversely, the attribution of academic abilities

had the opposite impact. It was shown that the formation of students' optimism about their employability includes both self-representational and live-historical positions.

In accordance with another study (Hora, et al, 2020), universities should work to make their students more employable by focusing on personal responsibility and in-demand skills in their skills discourse. The discourse which is driven by three fundamental assumptions: the human capital theory, the ideology of personal responsibility, and the notion that soft skills are commodities with market value, is based on the relationship between capital, labour, and education.

According to the human capital theory (Becker, 1962), a person's skills and knowledge are a kind of capital that have the potential to generate returns in the form of increased productivity and wages. The view of social mobility assumes that, in education, whether it be as a first credential for a university graduate or an up-skilling of existing workers, it is crucial to go ahead. The only way of being competitive in today's economy is to be proactive and to take responsibility for your own life on your own time and budget, go to school, earn a degree, diploma, or another credential, and then you will succeed (Hora, et al, 2020).

According to Coursera Campus Skills Report 2022 (Coursera Campus Skills Report 2022, 2022), business students are considering a variety of jobs, including marketing specialist and entrepreneur. Data analyst and financial analyst feature among their top job choices. This finding may reflect the growing overlaps between business and data skills. Higher education institutions can foreground data fluency as an essential aspect of business curricula.

The concept of employability is seen as being relative and dependent on the norms that govern the labour market. In the scenario when there were more people looking for jobs than there were openings, it would be highly likely that every single candidate who is qualified and skilled would be hired. On the other hand, this does not reflect the actual state of the labour market. One's standing in a particular career hierarchy can have a significant impact on whether or not he/ she is able to find work, in addition to a person's ability to fulfil the requirements of a particular job. Therefore, the employability of a single person can be influenced by the employability of other people (Brown et al, 2002). A person's employability can be affected by factors related to society, institutions, and the economy (Sin & Amaral, 2017). Besides having a set of attributes, the employability centres how the knowledge, skills and competences are used and presented to employers and directly depend on the presentation skills (Hillage & Pollard, 1998).

The relationship between an individual's mental health and their employment is one that cannot be ignored, and the amount of emphasis given to this topic has increased since the epidemic first started. When a person's mental state is healthy, they are in a better position to successfully perform, study, and work, and as a result, they are able to realise their full potential. On the other hand, if they suffer from mental diseases, it's possible that they will not be able to carry out the responsibilities of their jobs, which will impede their ability to advance in their careers (World mental health report …, 2022).

Developing skills, know-how, and personal attributes that make people more likely gain employment, or change occupations, and to be successful, thereby benefiting themselves, the workplace, the community and the economy. The employability of a person is determined by the knowledge, skills, and abilities he or she possesses. This refers to one's ability to gain and maintain productive work over the course of their working lives. Employability is also related to the institutional environment in which he or she operates and which he or she contributes to (Bertagni et al, 2015).

Employability and work readiness are ideas that are gaining importance across the globe in the workplace and in universities. Another term that is frequently used interchangeably with employability is work readiness, which emphasises a person's potential to obtain desired employment (Chigbu & Nekhwevha, 2022). People who are already competitive often choose careers that involve a higher level of competition for themselves, which can cause them to become even more competitive over time (Valenti, 2006).

According to the findings of the study (Lo Presti & Gamboa, 2021), based on employment measures, there is an indirect link between career competencies and subjective career success (Subjective Career Success - SCS), where academic satisfaction plays an important part in the connection. Besides providing useful insights into the graduates' transition to the labour market, it also includes employment

opportunities and activities, as well as additional information about their past events, and career competencies, which are an important resource that graduates can develop in the transition from education to the labour market.

Conclusions

- Employability can be viewed from two different perspectives. It encompasses the ability to find their first job after graduation, the ability to retain that job, the ability to move from one job to another within the same organisation, taking up new responsibilities, and, if necessary, the ability to obtain a job with a different organisation to ensure career development. An individual's knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, experiences, and other qualifications that support their capacity to be a dependable source of efficiency, innovation, and productivity for an employer are analysed as the employability of an individual, which is defined as a set of personal qualities or skills.
- Certain set of employability skills have been identified as needed for students as prospective specialists. They include such skills as adaptability, open-mindedness, creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, proactive and responsible behaviour, self-awareness, self-regulation, reflective thinking, and learning skills are among the skills that students need to succeed in the future and that employers require. Employability is dependent not only on acquiring a set of talents but also on how those abilities, together with knowledge and competences, are utilised and presented to potential employers. Employability is strongly tied to presentation skills. Employers place a high value on employees who are able to collaborate well within a group setting and value this skill. When it comes to a person's employability, having a global mindset and being in good mental health are both very important factors.
- Given the above-mentioned, it is possible to conclude that the employability of a specialist is composed of a set of qualities that make up an individual's competitive structure and serves as an indicator of the competitiveness of that specialist, which in turn is influenced by various internal and external factors.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.011

Peculiarities of Pupils' Learning to Learn: Insights of Music Teachers

Asta Rauduvaitė, Prof. Dr.; **Greta Šarkovaitė**, MA student
Vilnius Magnus University, Lithuania
asta.rauduvaite@vdu.lt; greta.sarkovaite@vdu.lt

Abstract: The mission of schools today is not only to develop experts in various professions, but also to cultivate autonomous lifelong learners. Learning to learn is recognised as an essential prerequisite for continuous learning to educate and develop individuals, who are motivated, self-confident and able to evaluate own capacity, to critically reflect, to make decisions and self-assess. The advantage of a music lesson is its attractiveness and complexity, so purposefully strategized musical activities influence the development of learning abilities. The aim of the study is to reveal the peculiarities of the context of learning to learn during music lessons of fifth and sixth formers in basic education from the teachers' point of view. During the semi-structured interview, attention was paid to the insights of music teachers (sixteen teachers) while reflecting on the peculiarities of pupils' learning to learn during music lessons. The research results disclosed that teachers see learning to learn as the basis for pupils' successful learning and seek to find appropriate ways of fostering the development of this competence in musical activities they organise. Educational activities that are planned and organised in a targeted way, involving the learner's experience, based on appropriate learning strategies, positive emotions and cooperation, comprise a significant factor in changing the situation of pupils' learning to learn music, and an important opportunity for improving their ability to learn.

Keywords: learning to learn, music education.

Introduction

In the context of lifelong learning, the significance of learning to learn has been increasingly emphasised. Active engagement of learners and their striving for improvement and ability to manage their learning result in successful overall development. Learning to learn is a key factor for success in education, work, individual and social life (Vainikainen et al., 2020; Visentin, 2017).

The analysis of the role of learning to learn discloses the multifaceted nature of this concept. In the work of A. Kazlauskienė et al. (2012), the concepts "*learning to learn*" and "*learning to learn competence*" are presented as synonymous and are assigned the same definition. V. Lukošūnienė et al. (2013) also state that these concepts vary in educational literature and this proves the complexity of the phenomenon in question. Analysing learning to learn, C. Stringher (2006) notices that the current understanding of learning to learn is a combination of different concepts: metacognitive, social constructivist, socio-cognitive and socio-historical approaches, lifelong learning and assessment studies. According to K. Waeytens et al. (2002), teachers apply this concept in a wide variety of meanings and describe learning to learn in terms of their individual perception of it.

Authors (Chisholm et al., 2009) emphasise that understanding of learning to learn as a competence leads to a narrower concept of learning how to use but there is no evidence that namely *learning how to learn* is more important than learning what to learn, why to learn and when to learn, etc. In the theoretical literature, learning to learn is usually defined as both a process and an outcome. P. Candy (1990) makes attempts to separate the process and the outcome defining *learning competence* and *learning competence development* to determine the process and results of learning to learn. V. Lukošūnienė (2014) suggests using the concept of learning to learn competence to define the results of learning to learn, whereas learning to learn can be used to characterise the process. However, there is a clear emphasis on the position that pupils' learning to learn is developed through the process of their active learning.

A. Moreno et al. (2007) distinguish metacognition, learning strategies and learning to think as essential components of learning to learn. Learning to learn is based on a principle characterised by cooperation, perseverance and integrity. P. Hofmann (2008) stresses the importance of setting learning goals, choosing the most appropriate learning approaches and working together. Observing how others learn, reflection, challenges, and learning in teams support the process of knowing and create opportunities for

further development of learning to learn competence. (Stonkuvienė, 2018; Sala et al., 2020; Caena, 2019).

Pedagogical aspects of learning to learn. Music education is considered to be a stimulating factor in human intelligence. Music education is multifaceted, it not only cultivates culture, but also develops pupils' abilities, improves social skills, and broadens their horizons. According to Z. Grigienė et al. (2012), singing develops musical thinking, memory, imagination and creativity, concentration, focus and listening skills. J. Trainor et al. (2012) also emphasise that playing music in the classroom strengthens involvement and collaboration in learners' groups of all ages. According to R. Kirliauskienė (2017), self-regulation is of particular importance for musical activities. Self-regulation is defined by the author as the ability to have a positive attitude towards learning and to control thoughts. Active participation in music lessons and opportunities for self-expression increase self-confidence, resulting in a positive attitude towards the learning process itself and an adequate response to failures.

In today's music culture, with the emergence of music computer technologies, the development of music listening and musicianship skills is becoming a necessity for a changing society. It is relevant to the development of a personality with sound self-control skills and a sense of emotional sensitivity and subtlety to the sounds of music. In music education pupils learn to learn and cooperate, discuss, and formulate questions (Hoskins et al., 2008).

General Curriculum of Basic Education (2008) emphasises that art education evokes positive emotions, helps to overcome tension, and facilitates communication, thus creating conditions conducive to mental activity. It is noted that learning in a musical environment is more engaging, faster-paced and longer-lasting. A music lesson creates an environment suitable for the joy of learning, satisfaction of experiencing and development of self-confidence. In the general curriculum musical expression is defined as an activity in which pupils come up with ideas and address issues of expression on the basis of their own experience, imagination and use of a variety of means, methods and techniques. The creative process enables pupils to discover the most effective ways of organising their learning. Thus, music education awakens the cornerstones of learning to learn – motivation, positive attitudes towards learning, organising learning and choosing the most appropriate learning strategies.

The role of the music teacher in planning pupils' learning to learn. The role of the teacher in general education is increasingly discussed. According to G. M. Linkaitytė et al. (2005), teachers have a particularly important role to play in fulfilling educational goals: to create a learning process that encourages pupils' learning and gives them the prospect of lifelong learning. J. A. Hatch (2010) states that the goal of teaching is to organise the process in a way that every pupil gets an opportunity to invent and discover. Successful development of competence in learning requires from pupils abilities: to discuss with their teacher and classmates the relevance and meaningfulness of learning tasks, and the possibility of transferring their learning to other contexts; to set individual learning tasks, and discuss them with others; to clarify their existing experiences; to discuss their new experiences and knowledge; to apply a range of learning strategies and methods appropriately; to reflect on and evaluate their own learning activities and achievements and those of other people; to experience success (Munna et al., 2021). It can be stated that the collaboration mode of music teaching classroom has great flexibility and wit in teaching skills and methods. Music activities help the teaching and learning process to proceed smoothly. Classroom interaction is of utmost significance in the process of teaching and learning. By using classroom interaction, the learners' engagement in the learning process can be strengthened.

According to R. Žukauskienė (2012), the 5th-6th forms is the transition period from middle childhood to early adolescence, that is, the first stage of adulthood. This means that the child develops the ability to solve problems logically and rationally. In adolescence, pupils focus more on the overview of possibilities than on reality. This sequence of thinking is manifested in the search for a strategy to solve a problem or for new, alternative solutions. The author notes that due to the newly opened possibilities of thinking, adolescents are able to discuss more freely with adults or peers and to argue their ideas better. Thus, for pupils in 5th-6th forms, during music lessons it is particularly important to learn to understand music, both by playing music and by listening to it, reflecting on it, evaluating and discussing their own learning activities (General Curriculum of Basic Education, 2008). Pupils learn to appreciate themselves and others as important and full participants in individual or group music performing, to express their opinions in a tolerant manner, and to respect the musical culture of their own country.

During the lesson pupils are encouraged to reflect and their ability to properly evaluate own potential is also developed.

The study aims to reveal the peculiarities of the context of learning to learn during music lessons of fifth and sixth formers in basic education from the teachers' point of view.

Methodology

Participants. During this research music teachers, who deliver music lessons for fifth forms in basic education, were interviewed. The interviews were conducted with 16 music teachers of different ages and teaching experience (14 women and 2 men). Their qualification category ranged from the senior teacher to the expert teacher. Ethical principles were followed during the observation: oral consent of the research participants was obtained, anonymity (the real names of the research participants were coded) and data confidentiality were guaranteed. Sixteen teachers from nine schools expressed their willingness to take part in the study. The schools are of different types and located in one of the Lithuanian cities.

Materials or Measures. A qualitative study was conducted to reveal music teachers' insights into the characteristics of music learning during music lessons for 5th-6fth formers. Qualitative research explains how a person observes, understands, interprets and makes meaning of the specific phenomenon under study in the natural environment (Neuman, 2011). The collected qualitative research data reveal the person's accumulated experience. The research raises the following questions: Why is it important for pupils to develop learning to learn competence? How is it manifested during music lessons? How to plan music teaching and learning?

Analysis of scientific literature was used to define the concept and meaning of learning to learn in basic music education. *Semi-structured interview.* In order to reveal a deeper analysis of music teachers' attitudes towards pupils' learning in music lessons, semi-structured interviews were conducted. A semi-structured interview is similar to a structured interview in that the questions to be asked and the topics covered in both types of interviews are planned in advance. However, instead of closed-ended questions, open-ended questions form the basis of such an interview (Yin, 2017). A semi-structured interview is defined as a standardised interview in which the interviewer formulates targeted questions and seeks answers that can be interpreted in a qualitative way.

Procedure. The interview process was designed and conducted following the steps of semi-structured interviews suggested by M. DeJonckheere et al. (2019): determining the purpose and scope of the study; identifying participants; considering ethical issues; planning logistical aspects; developing the interview guide; establishing trust and rapport; conducting the interview; memoing and reflecting; analysing the data; demonstrating the trustworthiness of the research; presenting findings in a paper or report. Qualitative content analysis was used as a research method to analyse the text data. This method focuses on the characteristics of the communication process conveyed by the language, emphasizing the content itself or the meaning of a text conditioned by a particular context (Erlingsson et al. 2017). Ph. Mayring (2021) states that content analysis procedures are significantly superior to other methods of text analysis, as they can rely on research from other communication sciences. Content analysis is not a standardized instrument, which is always the same. It should be tailored to the particular object or material in question and designed for the specific problem. Therefore, a research data analysis strategy was developed in the first phase of semi-structured interview planning. The transcription of the interviews in separate extracts was applied to identify the information that is of utmost significance for the study. The interview text was analysed applying content analysis in three stages: text compression → text coding → division into categories. The first stage aimed to shorten the text and divide it into separate parts according to the meaning. In the second stage, the codes were assigned to the systemized parts of the text, allowing the essence of the extract to be extended to several words. During the second stage, the codes were assigned to systemized parts of the text, which generalized the essence of the extract in one or two words. In the third stage, the codes were categorised.

Results and Discussion

The interviewees consider music education in 5th - 6th forms to be particularly important because these forms (especially 5th one) represent a new stage of learning. For this reason, 5th form is a bridging form

aimed both to revise the content of the previous forms and to acquire new learning skills. According to M. Radovan (2019), learning skills can be acquired at any age, but are most effectively developed in early adolescence. Therefore, music teachers were asked what factors influence pupils' success in learning and the development of lifelong learning. They identified pupils' self-knowledge, independence, ability to select and organise information, and the important role of the teacher as key factors (Table 1).

Table 1

Success aspects of learning to learn

Category	Subcategory	Statements of informants
Success aspects of learning to learn	Self-cognition	*"It is essential for children to discover themselves first, to learn to be independent and to be able to answer questions from an early age: what they want, why they want it, how to set goals, how to achieve them"(T15); "It's important to notice your weaknesses. If you see what you lack, you can motivate yourself to keep learning." (T1)*
	Independence	*"In many families, parents learn rather than their children. Mother sings together and completes tasks together. The child loses self-dependence." (T3); "You must be able to learn independently, to have a plan and schedule." (T9); "You have to dedicate time for learning, to work productively and consistently, to take an interest in everything." (T5); "You have to know how to plan, to feel responsibility for learning." (T11)*
	Selection and organisation of information	*"You must know how to find information here and now, use information technology, organise information by topic and apply it." (T1)*
	The role of the teacher	*"To evoke learner interest. To teach through a favourite activity and after interest is aroused, to move to what is important" (T16); "Teachers should encourage critical thinking, not put everything 'on a plate' and let pupils do their own research, and provide them with more creative tasks." (T2); "It's important to make a pupil feel safe - to praise, to listen to as many opinions as possible. If the pupils want, they should have the right to express themselves."(T3); "From the very first lesson, the teacher should clarify what he/she wants to achieve: to be a teacher who only demonstrates things, or to develop pupils' creativity and autonomy." (T6)*

The research participants state that it is important for pupils to know themselves - to understand what they want to achieve and why (Table 1). Teachers stressed the importance of the pupil's awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses as a motivation for setting learning goals. The pupil should be aware of what learning means to him or her. Some teachers stressed the importance of autonomy, knowing how to set goals and how to achieve them. By allowing children to be independent, we give them the opportunity to discover themselves. The informants state that independent learners need to make a learning plan, work consistently and productively. An independent learner is able to motivate himself or herself, take an interest in his/her own inclinations and take responsibility for his/her own learning. Pupils should know how to search for information and how to put their knowledge into practice, as well as how to select and organise the information they find. During the interviews, teachers identified their own role as an important aspect of pupils' learning success. According to the research participants, the most important task of a teacher is to keep pupils interested. Teachers can have a significant impact on learners' motivation and attitudes towards learning. The interviewed teachers point out that a teacher must be able to communicate with pupils, because only when pupils feel support from their teacher will they be able to confidently raise discussions and share ideas. It is important for the teacher to understand pupils' needs, praise their progress and encourage independence. E. Bala et al. (2018) argues that pupils should get acquainted with the learning strategies to make the learning process more efficient and enable pupils to learn autonomously. Thus, they will explore new ways of learning, be more efficient and become satisfied with their own efforts rather than just depend on the teacher-centred system or teaching.

During the interview, it was important to find out how teachers describe a learner with an inclination for learning. Participants have similar views on this issue, with learning being influenced by a pupil's personal qualities, his or her ability to do the relevant activities (Table 2).

Table 2

Attitude towards learning

Category	Subcategory	Statements of informants
Pupil's attitude towards learning	Pupil's personal qualities	*"Diligence is important. It is important that the pupil wants to work and is used to working." (T12); "The pupil is confident, knows what he/she wants and is not afraid to answer." (T7); "The pupil is interested in all questions." (T5); "Being able to answer questions such as: what they want, why they want it, how to set goals, how to achieve them. Feeling free to express their own opinions." (T13); "An independent and critically thinking learner." (T2); "He/she responsibly delivers completed tasks on time." (T14)*
	Pupil's ability to plan his/her learning	*"A pupil has a goal and knows why he/she needs this." (T13); "It is very important to complete the work started and explain why learning is important." (T7); "You need to see your weaknesses. If you can see what you lack, where you are weak, you can motivate yourself to continue learning further." (T11); "He/she is able to plan own day, plan own tasks and manage time." (T1); "When learning a song, they know that they need to learn the words, then the melody, and the third step is the performing music." (T3)*

As it can be seen from the table (Table 2), the informants highlight the importance of pupils' diligence. A pupil who knows how to learn is inquisitive, productive and confident. He/she should be responsible, perform assigned tasks on time, and not procrastinate. Teachers identified an inquisitive desire to learn as the most important factor in learning. Other researchers have also noted this. Pupils must be aware of what information means to them, identify their needs and make changes in their behaviour in that direction, and self-dedicate themselves to achievement of their goals (Isman et al., 2013; Meral, 2019).

The teachers consider the most important elements of learning to be related to pupils' knowledge, attitudes and skills. After summarizing the answers, the ability to learn can be treated as the ability to set learning goals and know how to achieve learning goals, the ability to learn independently, the ability to find and apply information, the ability to take responsibility for own learning, the desire to learn, etc. Concentration, focus, planning and self-directed work are important for learning to learn, autonomy being most important for this competence. In this context, pupils' motivation to learn is known to be one of the key components of learning to learn. The importance of verbal praise and good marks, the role of individual attention and the teacher's personality, the variety and differentiation of tasks, the presentation of relevant examples in the classroom were also emphasised by the research participants (Table 3). D. L. Rodriguez et al. (2022) argues that the management of motivational learning strategies enables the pupil to maintain a state conducive to learning by optimizing concentration, reducing anxiety, directing attention, organizing activities and study time. In the same way, they can vary depending on factors, both personal and contextual, allowing for strategic learning.

Table 3

Promoting pupils' motivation

Category	Subcategory	Statements of informants
Promoting pupils' motivation	Verbal insentives and marks	*"Rewarding. When you reward your pupils, they do their best." (T15); "Don't spare marks." (T6); "I try to see what learners do best and give them as much praise and recognition as possible." (T14); "Never say to pupils it's bad. Encourage them not to be afraid to try." (T2)*
	Individual attention to the pupil	*"To evoke interest through the attitude towards them and attention to them." (T16); "It's a psychological thing. It's about seeing what the child lacks, assessing his/her potential and trying to help him/her succeed." (T1); "I try to get to know my pupils and give them opportunities to fulfil themselves." (T10)*
	The personality of the teacher	*"Our task is not to 'fail them' but to try to make them learn something." (T12); "Your pupils need to see that the teacher is genuinely trying to help them and wants them to succeed." (T10); "If you work yoursel a lot, are energetic, have ideas, the child will follow the teacher's example." (T5)*

	A variety and difersification of tasks	*"Differentiation of tasks. Trying to keep them interested." (T13); "Through presentations of all kinds, with visuals and animations." (T14); "If the pupil is not motivated at all, I let him/her present what he/she likes, for example rap music. It doesn't matter that this is off-topic." (T8); "If there are highly unmotivated learners in the class who often disturb the classwork, I give them special tasks. If we all sing, such a pupil is the only one I give an instrument to, and then he/she listens very attentively, takes an interest and participates actively in the lesson." (T9)*
	Presented relevant examples	*"I talk to pupils, explain why all musical activities are necessary." (T4); "If the pupils don't want to sing or don't see the point, I explain that we don't sing to become singers, but when we perform we gain courage, confidence, in the future we won't be afraid to present our work, our project, we will be free to communicate with strangers, we won't be afraid to speak our mind." (T16)*

According to the research participants, to motivate learners it is necessary to know them. They must be motivated from the very first lesson and it is vital to set assignments that help the pupil to set learning goals and for the teacher to get to know their learners better. As it can be seen from the table (Table 3), the teachers have observed the impact of praise and good marks on pupils' motivation in their practice. Each pupil is an individual and therefore has different needs, abilities and motivational factors. Learner motivation is influenced by the differentiation and application of assignments according to pupils' interests. It is pointed out that there is no need to ask pupils to do something for which they are not yet sufficiently motivated. It is more important to involve the pupil in the learning process in small steps, with assignments that are clear and relevant to personal interests. As the pupil becomes more motivated, a deeper learning process can be organised. The interviewed teachers noted that before any task during music lessons it is very important to explain to the pupils the possibilities of its application and the benefits for further learning.

The interviews discussed how to help pupils develop the ability to set learning goals, plan a learning process to achieve the goal, find the information they need (Table 4).

Table 4

Planning/organising the learning process

Category	Subcategory	Statements of informants
Organising the learning process	Setting learning goals	*"We do projects in groups. We organise creative contests. This year, a rap competition is held. They have to create their own lyrics, choose a beat from the internet and record it."(T11); "Teaching to notice the nearest achievable goal." (T2);"It is essential to start with small goals." (T9)*
	Planning the process for achievement of the goal	*"If the teacher teaches to do this with examples, pupils will develop this skill." (T1); "Pupils should get used to the usual learning sequence: learning a piece of music starts with note-taking, then analysing the rhythm, then learning how to play the notes on the instrument." (T9); "Creative works help a lot " (T12)*
	Search for information	*"We make slide presentations. learners have to choose one of several topics, find information on the internet and prepare a presentation." (T4); "If the topic of the lesson is related to the history of music, I encourage them to find a few musical examples for the next lesson on that topic." (T7)*

According to the research participants, the fifth form usually includes pupils who do not always know how to set goals or organize their learning, so it is essential to develop these abilities. Fifth formers find it harder to set learning goals, which is why discussion and mutual understanding between pupils and teacher are crucial (Table 4). The teachers highlight the importance of cooperative learning, as learners

can discuss and find the best solution together. The research participants attach great importance to the search, selection and systematisation of information.

The interviews raised the question of what promotes reflection in the classroom (Table 5).

Table 5

Learning reflection

Category	Subcategory	Statements of informants
Learning reflection	Self-analysis	*"At the end of the lesson, we talk about who did their best, where they could have done better." (T5); "It is important to compare yourself against others. When a pupil knows how to compare his or her own work with that of others, there are no more questions about why some marks are better than others." (T10); "I encourage pupls to observe their own progress. We learn how to apply what we've learnt in different activities - if a task is difficult, the pupil sees what he/she hasn't learnt in the previous lesson." (T2)*
	Argumentation	*"The assignments have a self-evaluation component. We recommend that you rate yourself on a ten-point scale and justify why." (T3); "We play music in groups. After one group has played a composition, another group evaluates it and expresses opinions." (T1); "It is important to teach a child to express his or her thoughts and explain why he/she has made a particular decision." (T16)*

According to the informants, pupils like to reflect in the classroom, but they tend to underestimate themselves when self-assessing. The table shows (Table 5) that teachers often encourage reflection in music lessons - analysing lesson work through discussion, written reflection, written self-assessment used to review longer stages of learning. The teachers point out that it is important for learners to evaluate others as well as themselves in the classroom, as this helps them to better understand their environment and the people in it. J. Velzen (2016) refers to similar activities, when teachers are suggested encouraging learners to perform critical reflection on the work of other learners by comparing their own work with that of peers, and by indicating the limitations of evaluated works. Such activities can contribute to pupils better understanding of the essence of learning and to increasing their meta-cognitive knowledge.

The pupils' learning to learn determines the success of a music lesson, so it is relevant to learn about pedagogical situations when teachers experience success or failure, positive or negative feelings in the lesson. The informants stated that negative attitudes before a lesson can negatively affect it, so they try to enter the classroom in a good mood and have a positive attitude. Unsuccessful teacher experiences show learners' reluctance to learn and lack of positive attitudes towards learnings. Negative attitudes lead to discipline and irresponsibility problems that undermine the learning process. Positive experiences of music teachers show that a positive attitude towards learning is a key to a successful lesson. Positive attitudes motivate pupils to improve through active learning. It is interesting to note that, across countries, music teachers' experiences of success or failure in music lessons are quite similar. The research, which was conducted together with music educators from Lithuania, reveals how pupils describe music lessons they like. They want to perform more with friends and in groups. The learners want to choose repertoire, create their own music in groups, use technology, and listen to popular music. In general, they indicate their wish for more practical, hands-on musical activities during music lessons at school. It is obvious from their answers that the pupils in the study strongly feel the need for their voice, perspective, and opinion to be heard and taken into account when their teachers plan music lessons (Economidou Stavrou et al., 2020).

Conclusions

An analysis of the scientific literature suggests that learning to learn is a complex phenomenon. The use of "competence" and "ability" with this concept highlights its problematic nature. However, the authors agree that ability/skills are at the core of this phenomenon and that learning to learn is often seen as a set of abilities consisting of motivated activities that depend on a positive attitude towards learning and awareness of the meaning of learning. Semi-structured interviews with music teachers reveal that pupils' learning to learn is key to successful learning. It must to be fostered by creating as many pedagogical situations as possible in the music classroom in which pupils can experience success and self-confidence

through music playing or discussions. They would not only share the subject knowledge but would also develop their learning skills during music lessons in basic education. Motivation, positive attitude towards learning, the role of the teacher, the use of information sources and learning tools, the organisation of the learning process, and cooperation are important for learning to learn. It is important to underline that according to this research, pupils' attitude towards learning is not based only on personal qualities, but also on the ability to plan their learning, which can be learned in the process of music education. It can be done in a few different ways, such as setting learning goals, planning the process for goal achievement and/or searching for information. Furthermore, motyvation in music education can also be promoted applying various methods, such as verbal insentives and marks, individual attention, a variety and difersification of tasks or/and the relevance of the topic. Cognitive and creative learning skills are revealed in the process of creative, independent, and group musical activities, while social and personal skills are most evident when discussing the learning process and its outcomes.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.012

Early adolescents' beliefs about the development of their moral character: The case of Latvia

Manuel Joaquín Fernández González[1] Dr. paed.; Svetlana Surikova[2] Dr.paed.
University of Latvia, Latvia
manuels.fernandezs@lu.lv[1]; svetlana.surikova@lu.lv[2]

Abstract: Moral education at school is a topical debate among policy makers, academics, and practitioners. As early adolescence is a crucial period of moral growth, this study aims at capturing early adolescents' beliefs about the development of their moral character in Latvia. In Spring 2022, 1465 pupils studying in Year 5 (11-12 years old) and Year 7 (13-14 years old) in 90 classrooms at 56 different schools in Latvia participated in the study. The questionnaire used to collect data contained 35 scale items and 3 open answer items which captured the four components of the moral growth process (i.e., understanding, purposefulness, moral crafting, and moral identity). Quantitative data were processed and analysed in MS Excel and SPSS using descriptive statistics: absolute values and percentage frequencies, central tendency indicators (arithmetic mean and mode), and dispersion indicators (standard deviation). The qualitative data (1158 statements from Year 5 pupils and 1284 statements from Year 7 pupils) were analysed and used to illustrate the main trends in respondents' answers. The results revealed that Latvian pupils have: a high level of understanding of the process of moral character development; a certain maturity in their decision of becoming better persons, which needs to be supported both in the family and at school; a mitigated practical involvement in their own moral development; and a quite strong emerging moral identity. This article offers a unique perspective on Latvian early adolescents' views on their moral growth. These findings can be particularly useful for parents, teachers, and school leaders who would wish to support pupils' moral development, and they are also an important contribution to the development and strengthening of moral education in the Latvian education system.

Keywords: early adolescence, moral character, moral education, moral growth, school education.

Introduction

Early adolescence as a socially constructed reality can be defined as a stage of life between the ages of 10 and 15 years, in which young teenagers undergo rapid multiple physical, cognitive, affective, moral, and social changes (Hansen et al., 2021; Urdan & Klein, 1998). These changes are usually undergone during the lower secondary education stage or in mid-school. This is a key developmental stage in which critical learning opportunities appear, including an increased sensitivity to social influences, identity formation, and social-emotional skills (Hansen et al., 2021, preface). It is a unique sensitive period of complex transformations "that brings both multiple stressors and new possibilities for growth" (Urdan & Klein, 1998, p. 1) and a crucial period for developing moral identity (Doering, 2013; Sengsavang, 2018).

Moral education at school is a topical debate among policy makers, academics, and practitioners (e.g., OECD, 2021; ICFE, 2021; for an overview of recent academic discussions, see Kristjánsson, 2021). Different models of moral development have been proposed from different perspectives, based, for example, on Kohlbergian moral development theory (Kohlberg, 1984), neo-Aristotelian virtue theory (e.g., Sanderse, 2015), and personalist anthropology (e.g., Biesta, 2021; Pérez Guerrero, 2022). For addressing pupils' moral growth, this study relies on this last trend, and particularly on the theory of the relational self of virtue (Fernández González, 2019a, 2019b), which captures the relevance of the person's fundamental disposition to engage in moral growth together with others. This approach was operationalised in a processual model for the development of pupils' moral character with four components: (1) understanding (cognitive-emotional perception of the process of moral character development); (2) purposefulness (freely and consciously committing to virtue development); (3) moral crafting (phronesis-guided practical involvement in moral growth); and (4) moral identity (the joy and support experienced in the process of moral development).

In Spring 2022, a research team from the University of Latvia started to implement a longitudinal study on school pupils' moral growth (Fernández González & Surikova, 2022). The study is carried out in the

context of recent Latvian legislation: the article 10.1 "Education and Virtue" of the Law of Education (Saeima, 1998) and the Guidelines on moral education (LR Ministru kabinets, 2016), taking into account also the guidelines on values and virtues in the new educational content (Skola2030, 2017). The study aims at capturing early adolescents' beliefs about the development of their moral character in Latvia.

Methodology

The research questions addressed in this study were: How do pupils understand what moral growth is and how it happens? Are they interested and willing to engage in their own moral growth? What is their experience (motivations, barriers, strategies) in enacting and practising the virtues in their daily lives? Do they feel satisfied and supported in their moral growth, thus strengthening their moral identity?

Participants: in total 1465 pupils from 90 classes in 56 schools participated in the study (Table 1). The respondents in Year 5 were predominantly 11-12 years old (95%), while those in Year 7 were 13-14 years old (97%). 51% of respondents were girls. The majority of respondents were from Riga and the Near Riga region (26%) and from Zemgale (21%), but all regions of Latvia were represented in this study.

Table 1

Characteristics of the research sample

Category of analysis	Year 5	Year 7	Total
Number of respondents	644	821	1465
Number of classes	39	51	90
Number of schools	31	37	56*

Note. *Number of unique schools (12 schools participated with classes from both Year 5 and Year 7).

The study is representative at the level of the Latvian education system. Given that in the 2020-2021 school year there were 17910 and 20743 pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 in 634 Latvian general education institutions (excluding special education institutions) implementing general basic and secondary education programmes (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2021), a representative sample of Year 5 and Year 7 pupils was obtained for the 2021-2022 school year, which allows generalisation of results to the 634 schools with less than 3 % error (Fisher et al., 1995).

Materials or measures: a theoretically grounded and practically validated questionnaire was used to collect data, which contained 35 scale items and 3 open answer items grouped in four sections that captured the four components of the moral growth process.

Section A used the character growth understanding and mind-set scale (adapted from Dweck, 2000) for addressing pupils' beliefs about character growth. Six statements to be rated in a 7-point Liker scale were provided in both positive and negative form for avoiding desirability bias. They addressed several key points of character growth: its improvement during the whole life, its relationship with freedom, its emotional component, the role of moral reasoning, the necessity of training, and the importance of joy for growing in virtue.

Section B was based on identity status theory (Marcia, 2002): respondents were asked to choose the statement they identified with the most form a list of five levels of maturity in the decision of becoming a better person: not interested, never thought about it (*diffusion*), have doubts about engaging (*moratorium*), engaged since childhood (*foreclosure*), and engaged after overcoming a moral crisis (*achievement*).

Section C was based on the virtue grit scale (adapted from Duckworth, 2016) and the brief moral resilience scale (adapted from Smith et al., 2008): pupils assessed their practical involvement in moral growth in everyday life by rating in a 5-point scale two sets of assertions. The first set "My character growth experience" included 10 grit items (some of them reversed) which were analysed under 4 headings: *personal interest* (e.g., "My interest in virtue growth changes from year to year"), *goal orientation* (e.g., "When I decide to acquire a good habit, I never give up till I acquire it"), *overcoming difficulties* (e.g., "I have overcome setbacks to conquer a virtuous character"), and *regular practice* (e.g.,

"I work hard to acquire virtues"). And the second set "My involvement in moral growth" included two parts: the sub-set 2-a "Strategic involvement" contained 7 utterances regarding pupils' use of free time, avoiding places, persons and events that incite to bad moral behaviour, as well as websites, social networks, etc., meeting with friends who give good moral example, reading about or listening to moral exemplars, and asking for advice to relevant adults; and the sub-set 2-b "Practical activities for moral growth" contained 6 statements about involvement at school (lessons and homework), in the family, in humanitarian activities, in sport and open-air activities, in artistic or cultural activities, and in religious or spiritual activities.

Finally, in section D, which was based on expectancy motivation theory (Vroom, 1964), respondents rated in a 5-point scale five items that captured moral identity development in its internal (self-assessment of involvement and experienced joy in moral growth) and external dimensions (perceived support and recognition from friends, family, and school).

The questionnaire, developed in English in 2018, was translated into Latvian, and tailored to the respondents' age group, using appropriate vocabulary. The internal consistency of the closed-ended questions (by sections and as a whole) and the reliability of the data were good (α = .830) (Table 2).

Table 2

Reliability test results for scale items

Moral growth category	Cronbach's alpha
Section A – Understanding	.746 (6 items, 7-point Likert scale)
Section B – Purposefulness	N/A (1 item, 5-point Likert scale)
Section C – Moral crafting	.782 (23 items, 5-point Likert scale)
Section D – Moral identity	.646 (5 items, 5-point Likert scale)
Sections A, B, C, & D	.830 (35 items)

Procedure: the data collection took place both on paper and online in Spring 2022 in cooperation with 90 class teachers in 56 schools in all regions of Latvia. A total of 1465 pupils' questionnaires were received. Quantitative data were processed and analysed in MS Excel and SPSS using descriptive statistics: absolute values and percentage frequencies, central tendency indicators (arithmetic mean and mode), and dispersion indicators (standard deviation). Qualitative data (pupils' statements) were used to illustrate the main trends in respondents' answers. The analysis covered 1158 statements (7691 words) from Year 5 pupils and 1284 statements (8700 words) from Year 7 pupils.

Results

First, the average of each component was ranked (Table 3) for getting a global picture of results, and then, the most significant results for each component were looked for.

Table 3

Ranking results

Ranking	Moral growth category	Arithmetic mean *(M)* / min.-max.
1st	A – Understanding	5.18 / 1-7
2nd	B – Purposefulness	3.45 / 1-5
3rd	D – Moral identity	3.33 / 1-5
4th	C – Moral crafting	3.11 / 1-5

The ranking results show that understanding the moral development process is the highest of the four indicators, maturity of decision to engage in one's own moral development comes second, pupils' practical engagement in their own moral development is the lowest, and pupils' moral identity comes third. The detail of the results for each component are presented below.

A – Pupils' understanding of the process of developing moral character: about 3/4 of pupils had a good understanding of what moral character is, and that it is possible to develop it over a lifetime and how to do so. Looking in more detail, 69 % agreed that developing moral character brings joy (M_o = 7 in a 7-point scale), 77 % agreed that moral growth happens throughout life (M_o = 6), and 72 % agreed that managing one's emotions is part of that process (M_o = 6). However, about 2/5 pupils did not yet have a clear understanding that freedom increases with character development (M_o = 4, M = 4.92, SD = 1.527 and that practicing is necessary to develop one's moral character (M_o = 6, M = 4.96, SD = 1.579).

B - Pupils' purposefulness towards developing their moral character: more than half of the respondents (54 %) had a strong interest and desire to involve in their own moral development (M_o = 5 in a 5-point scale, M = 3.45, SD = 1.398). While 1/5 of pupils (20 %) strived since childhood to become better people by developing their moral character, about 1/3 of pupils (34 %) admitted that they engaged in their moral development rather after a personal moral conversion, by evaluating their previous moral behaviour. As a pupil in Year 5 commented, "*I recently realised that my behaviour and attitude towards everything was lax, so I am trying to improve it*". A Year 7 pupil also commented: "*Looking back, I have realised that I did not like how I used to be. I wanted to improve and so I started to develop my moral character*". However, about 1/4 of the pupils (26 %) had never thought about developing good character, as illustrated in the following remark by a pupil in Year 5: "*This is the first time I thought about developing moral character and the first time I heard that character can be developed!*". Very few pupils (9 %) were not interested in their own moral development.

C - Pupils' moral character development in daily life: as indicated above (Table 3), pupils' practical involvement in their own moral development was the lowest ranked indicator (M = 3.11 on a 5-point scale). As for the pupils' experience of developing moral character, they generally rated it neutral (M = 3.20, SD = 1.174, M_o = 3 for all indicators except one indicator on their ability to focus on getting good habits for more than a month (M_o = 4)). Respondents rated highest their interest in moral development (especially the indicator pointing out that their interest in it does not disappear easily (M = 3.46)), and their orientation to the goal of becoming better persons (especially the indicator pointing out that they do not lack goal orientation for moral development (M = 3.36)). Pupils were less prone to recognise in themselves the ability to overcoming difficulties in acquiring virtues (especially regarding the acknowledgment that setbacks stop them from developing morally (M = 2.91)), and to practicing virtues consistently (most of pupils rather disagreed that they are continually seeking to improve their moral character (M = 2.96)).

Regarding the moral growth strategies used by pupils, overall 57 % of them rarely or never asked for advice on developing moral character (M_o = 1, M = 2.38, SD = 1.248) and 41 % of them never took interest or took little interest in moral authorities, i.e. people who exemplify moral growth (M_o = 2, M = 2.89, SD = 1.277). Furthermore, 45 % of respondents rarely or never tried to avoid morally disruptive online environments (M_o = 2). The most commonly used strategies for moral growth were meeting friends who give good moral example (M_o = 4) and having a clear plan for using free time (M_o = 3).

Regarding the environments in which young people engage for their moral development, most pupils often or very often engaged in sports and outdoor activities (M_o = 5), family chores (M_o = 4) and school activities (M_o = 4). However, 53 % of pupils admitted that they never or rarely engage in cultural or artistic activities (M_o = 2). For their part, spiritual and religious activities were the least used opportunities for moral development: 71 % of respondents never or rarely engaged in them (M_o = 1).

D - Pupils' moral identity: overall, pupils felt a relatively high level of joy and support for moral development, which relates to their moral identity. A good number of respondents (75 %) get joy or great joy in the process of moral growth (M_o = 3, M = 3.02, SD = .970). Analysing pupils' statements on how they felt about developing their moral character, on the one hand, a number of positive trends were found: positive emotions were mentioned, such as in a Year 5 pupil's comment that "*I feel very good because my character is getting better and it makes me happy*", and in a Year 7 pupil's comment that "*If I change myself for the better, it makes me happy*". Moreover, determination to overcome difficulties or challenges was also mentioned: *"Sometimes I want to give up because it is hard, but I try anyway*" (a Year 5 pupil). But on the other hand, there were also references to a certain lack of motivation due to poor knowledge, for example in this Year 5 pupil's comment: "*I don't feel motivated because I don't really know much about it*", or due to difficulties or challenges, as in this Year 7 pupil's reflection:

"*Sometimes I try but people don't treat me very well, so I lose motivation. Why should I be nice to them if they are not nice to me?*" More than 3/4 of the respondents rated their efforts to develop their moral character quite highly (M_o = 3, M = 3.06, SD = .951). Only 22 % of pupils felt that they do little or nothing in this area.

Almost all respondents (more than 4/5) felt support for their moral development in different environments: especially from family, but also from friends, and less so in the school environment. Some of the pupils' statements, sharing examples from their own lives, illustrated well these quantitative results: "*Recently I have found very good friends, they are very supportive in all situations, sometimes it feels like if one of us is going through something, we are all going through it together*" (a Year 7 pupil's comment on support from friends); "*Whenever I fail at something, nobody gets angry with me, but they help me, and it is easier for me to develop my character*" (a Year 7 pupil's comment on support from family); "*My teachers set a good example in behaviour*" (a Year 5 pupil's comment on support in the school environment).

Discussion

The discussion was organised around three topics related to salient results: moral growth and emotions; moral growth, moral conscience, and freedom; and support to moral growth.

Moral growth and emotions: more than half of respondents were interested and willing to engage in their own moral development, and about 3/4 of pupils agreed that the development of moral character brings them joy and that managing one's emotions is part of developing moral character. Speaking about their own experience, more than 4/5 of pupils found joy or great joy in the process of moral development. These results show that many youngsters felt the attraction of becoming better persons and were able to recognise and acknowledge this positive emotion.

This emotionally positive perception of their moral growth process is particularly relevant, given that moral character development is closely related to moral emotions. The positive psychology trend (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman et al., 2005) has contributed to an increasing appreciation of the role of emotions in morality, and the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2022) defines character as "a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct" (p. 7). According to Darnell et al. (2019), moral emotions represent one of the four components of phronesis, and 'rationally grounded moral emotions' are included in the sense of self of a virtuous person.

Early adolescence is a key developmental stage regarding the development of social-emotional skills (Hansen et al., 2021, preface), when youngsters "become more aware of emotions and their meanings on a cognitive level" (Hansen et al., 2021, p. 165). If, in Aristotle understanding, the virtuous person rejoices doing the good, for early adolescents' moral growth it is even more important to find joy in this process, given their "enhanced motivational/reward sensitivity" which, if not well oriented, "may also motivate [them] to engage in behaviours that are 'rewarding' (e.g., exciting) but carry risk, such as substance use" (Hansen et al., 2021, p. 64).

Moral growth, moral conscience, and freedom: approximately 1/3 of respondents engaged in their own moral development after a personal moral conversion, by evaluating some previous moral action that they found unsatisfactory. This points to the relevant fact that early adolescent have an active moral conscience and engage in moral judgment regarding their own life. This finding resonates with recent research, which found that increased cognitive sophistication, which characterises this developmental period (Urdan & Klein, 1998, p. 6), goes hand in hand with better moral reasoning skills: "adolescents are increasingly able to notice and attend to multiple concerns, which can then be more effectively coordinated into sophisticated moral judgments" (Smetana et al., 2014, p. 32).

Early adolescence is a key period for the formation of the moral conscience. Moral identity "begins to emerge in middle childhood perhaps as a social moral identity" (Sengsavang, 2018, p. ii), and, in the formation of the moral conscience, the sense of personal freedom plays a central role. However, while in a virtue ethics understanding virtue growth goes hand in hand with and increasing of personal freedom as self-mastering, only 60% of pupils in this study had a clear understanding that freedom grows with character development. This can be discussed, considering that early adolescents experience changes

that challenge their incipient moral identity: "their sense of self and who they are is more differentiated and less integrated during this time period" (Sengsavang, 2018, p. 35), in which they are navigating, as Baird (2008) put it, between the demands of the "imaginary audience" (teens' tendency to believe that others are always watching and evaluating them) and those of the "personal fable" (the common adolescent belief that their self is unique, invulnerable, and omnipotent). Early adolescents start thinking differently, questioning how moral values affect their sense of freedom and, "as [they] experience puberty and transition into high school, they might be more concerned with the need to belong and "fit in" with their peers rather than upholding their moral values" (Sengsavang, 2018, p. 34). This lead to the next topic of the discussion, early adolescents' need for support.

Support to moral growth: early adolescence is a period that has been characterised by "negative changes on a variety of motivational indices" (Urdan & Klein, 1998, p. 8), and this is why "adolescents may especially need greater support and education regarding moral values both at home and at school" (Sengsavang, 2018, p. 34). Family support is important, because "parental support positively predicted mean-level of moral identity" (Sengsavang, 2018, p. 32). The role of school is also important, because "moral identity development is context-dependent" (Sengsavang, 2018, p. ii) and children spend many hours a day at school. In this study, 1/5 of pupils had never thought about developing good character. This could indicate that school should support more clearly moral character development, suing moral character 'caught', 'taught' and 'sought' strategies (Arthur et al., 2022). In this regard, effective family-school collaboration is crucial for supporting youngsters' moral growth (Surikova & Fernández González, 2022a, 2022b).

This study found that involvement in cultural, artistic, spiritual, and religious activities were rarely used opportunities for moral growth. However, as Kristjánsson (2016) put it in his proposal for an extended, 'enchanted' account of moral life, "I would hesitate to describe a human life as flourishing that did not include considerable elements of emotional awe. Children's experiences of the world are typically filled with awe, but unfortunately the capacity for awe often seems to dissipate in adolescence and become suppressed in many adults" (pp. 711-712). Enriching early adolescents' cultural, artistic, as well as spiritual and religious experiences, where they can draw inspiration for moral development, should be particularly encouraged.

Conclusions

In conclusion, overall, Latvian pupils have:

- a high level of understanding of the process of moral character development. However, their understanding of the acquisition of freedom through character development and the need to practise in order to foster one's own moral growth needs to be further developed;
- a certain maturity in their decision of becoming better persons, which needs to be supported both in the family and at school, where pupils should meet opportunities to think purposefully about their own moral development;
- a mitigated practical involvement in their own moral development. Pupils are willing to seek support from friends with high moral standards, and they involve family cores and sport and outdoor activities. However, they rarely seek advice from a trusted adult or take an interest in people who are exemplars of moral growth. Pupils also need specific support for getting the habit of avoiding morally disruptive online environments. Enriching pupils' cultural, artistic, as well as spiritual and religious experiences, where they can draw inspiration for moral development, might also be particularly encouraged;
- a quite strong moral identity. A high number of pupils find joy in developing their moral character. Pupils feel the most support for moral development from their families and friends, but less from the school environment.

This article offers a unique perspective on pupils' views on their moral character development. These findings can be particularly useful for parents, teachers, and school leaders who wish to support pupils' moral development, and they are also an important contribution to the development and strengthening of moral education in the Latvian education system. This article offers valuable material for personal reflection and for discussing the topic in the family, in the classroom, in teachers' meetings, school

leaders' seminars, and educational policy discussions, as well as for academic staff involved in the preparation of future teachers and in the continuing education of in-service teachers.

Funding

This work was supported by the Latvian Council of Science grant No. lzp-2021/1-0385 (project "Effectiveness research of an online curriculum for virtue education in Latvian educational institutions (from grades 1 to 12)").

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.013

Conversations between Rural Basic School Students, Parents and Teachers about Students' Learning

Laura Pāvulēna[1] Bachelor of Natural Sciences in Optometry; **Jānis Pāvulēns**[2] Mg.ed
Liepaja University[1]; Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies[2]
pavulena@gmail.com[1]; pavulens@inbox.lv[2]

Abstract: Students grow up and learn in various changing environments that channel their developmental trajectories, moreover, they are not passive targets of environmental influences, but active participants who receive diverse feedback about their successes and failures. Timely formative feedback about their learning helps students to adjust their goals, plans, and behaviour, as well as develop agency/co-agency, which is one of the most important tasks in lifelong learning during this century. Therefore, it is important to find out how frequent and qualitative is the feedback on students' learning provided by teachers and parents (we refer to *parents* to denote all caretakers/guardians who make decisions about students education) and received by students. The aim of the study was to find out how conversations between students, parents and teachers about student learning contribute to the learning process in rural basic school. To reach the aim of the study two research questions were raised, and to answer them several research objectives were set; the theoretical basis of conversations about learning and examples of good practice in basic education were found out through analysis of scientific literature and normative documents, as well as a survey of 58 students, 32 parents and 16 teachers was conducted in a Latvian rural basic school. To analyse the differences between subgroups of respondents contingency analysis was used, as well as Mann-Whitney and Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were calculated. The results of the theoretical research and survey confirm the importance of individual student-parent-teacher conversations about student learning in the learning process in basic school, as well as highlight differences (including statistically significant differences) in the understanding of such conversations in different groups of respondents.

Keywords: school education, conversations, learning, feedback, rural basic school

Introduction

The 21st century as the age of accelerated technological innovations is characterised by focus on sustainable development, accelerated migration, urbanisation, longer life expectancy, growing inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change and other challenges. To prepare graduates for life in a dynamically changing world, schools can no longer exist as closed entities in themselves, they must become a part of the larger eco-system in which they operate. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, students and adults need to develop three so-called "transformative competencies": *creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas*, and *taking responsibility*. This, together with the development of student agency and co-agency, is the most important task in lifelong learning during this century (Schoon, 2018; OECD, 2019).

According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), basic education (grades 1-9 in Latvian education system) comprises the two stages: primary education and lower secondary education. The aim of basic education is *to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development upon which education systems may then expand further educational opportunities* (International Standard..., 2012, 33).

Learning takes place in the context of culture, which defines *an "opportunity space" that affects people's motivation, thinking and behavior* (Salmela-Aro, 2009, 64) and formative feedback to students on their learning processes is an essential condition for learning (Cunningham et al., 2022). At least two subcultural contexts can be distinguished as learning environments: home where interaction between parents and student takes place, and school where takes place interaction between student and teacher (Hirsto, 2010). When these two parts are combined, triangular teacher - student - parent relationships are formed, a learning mesosystem – *the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates* – arises (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 25). In basic education *the adults most close to students, i.e. teachers and parents, are the key agents in establishing the*

environment and resources for students' *learning.* Although parents *have a crucial role in pupils' learning*, because *they know the pupils in ways that teachers do not,* the researchers have concluded that learners' and teachers' perceptions, conceptions and beliefs about learning and student achievements in basic education have been studied vastly, but the parents' viewpoint has not been investigated enough (Nieminen et al., 2021; Zimmerman et al., 2006).

Although parents' understanding of students' learning is not sufficiently known, a review of previous studies shows that it is different from teachers' understanding, because parents are non-professionals in teaching, they do not have a formal pedagogical education as teachers have, and "*their beliefs (..) are arguably confined to what they themselves have experienced when they were students*" (Wong et al., 2020, 451; Nieminen et al., 2021).

This means that in establishing the non-controversial environment and sufficient resources for students' learning, regular targeted communication between students, parents and teachers is required; to improve self-management (including self-directed learning) skills and to adjust their goals, plans, and thinking to successfully cope with the future challenges, students should regularly receive coordinated and consistent formative feedback about their successes and failures. One of the ways to ensure this is regular conversations about student learning between students, teachers, and parents.

Conversation, *the use of speech to communicate ideas and information between or among people* (Conversation, 2023), can be broadly defined as turn-by-turn natural language communication, that allows for learning and the exchange of pertinent beliefs and ideas, as well as develops a mutual sense of psychological safety based on shared beliefs. Unlike passive forms of information exchange (reading, listening, viewing, etc.), *conversations ask people to actively engage and generate thoughtful, on-topic responses, in many cases on an ongoing basis for some amount of time*. *Despite its ubiquity, research on conversation as a vehicle for social influence has been limited to date* (Hurst et al., 2023).

Therefore*, the aim of the study was* to find out how conversations between students, parents and teachers about student learning can contribute to the learning process in rural basic school.

Methodology

Two research questions were raised to achieve the aim formulated above:

1. What is the role of conversations between rural basic school students, parents, and teachers about student learning in the learning process?
2. What is the frequency of mutual conversations about student learning and the self-assessment of their quality among rural basic school students, parents and teachers?

To reach the aim of the study, following objectives were set:

- to analyse scientific literature and normative documents to find out the theoretical basis of conversations about learning and examples of good practice in contemporary school education, especially at the basic level;
- to develop a survey and empirically find out the frequency of conversations between rural basic school students, their parents and teachers about the students' learning and the self-assessment of the quality of these conversations, as well as find out the recommendations given by students, parents and teachers for the improvement of such conversations;
- to collect, process and evaluate the data obtained in the empirical study in order to develop conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of conversations about student learning.

A small (160 students and 26 teachers) Latvian rural basic school located 172 km from the capital of the country was chosen as the base of the empirical study. Two educational programs from the first to the ninth grade: the basic education program and the special basic education program for students with learning disabilities are offered at the school (Regulations Regarding…, 2018). Seventy-six 5th-9th grade students from both programs were chosen as the research participants; fifty-eight students (25 male and 33 female) aged 11 to 17 years participated in the study – 13 from fifth grade, 11 from sixth, 13 from seventh, 20 from eighth, and 19 from grade 9th. The mean age (M) in the male subgroup is 13.44 years, standard deviation (SD) 1.50, in the female subgroup M = 13.39, SD = 1.68, in the students' sample M = 13.44, SD = 13.41, the age distribution in both subgroups is similar ($t = 0.11$; $df = 56$; $p = 0.91$). 16 teachers and 32 parents of students from selected group also participated in the study.

The education of parents was not ascertained in the design of the research. In the future in next research this information would be especially important.

Empirical data have been obtained using a questionnaire developed by the authors. Two closed-ended questions and one open-ended question about conversations with each of the two groups (i.e. the student survey consists of questions about conversations with parents and teachers, the teacher survey - about conversations with students and parents, the parent survey - about conversations with students and teachers) were included in the survey. Ordinal-polytomous response scales were chosen for closed-ended questions - participants were asked to estimate the frequency of conversations about student learning using 6-point scale from never to daily (options: *never, less than once a month, once to twice a month, once a week, more often than once a week* and *daily*), as well as to give an assessment of the quality of conversations in which they participate, on a five-point scale from 1 to 5, where *one* denotes very low, but *five* very high quality. Students were asked to specify their gender and age. In the open question, respondents were encouraged to provide recommendations for improving conversations with each group included in their survey (see above).

The survey was conducted online on the *e-klase* platform. Every student, teacher and parent has unique access to this platform, so the data collected is authentic and personal data protection is ensured. The survey was available to respondents for one week at the beginning of January 2023. Seventy-six students, 138 parents, and 26 teachers were invited to participate in the survey, 58 students (77% of those invited), 16 teachers (62% of those invited) and 32 parents (23% of those invited) participated in the survey.

Data was collected in charts, Microsoft Excel and R (version 4.2.1) software was used for data processing. To analyse the differences between subgroups of respondents contingency analysis was used, as well as Mann-Whitney and Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were calculated.

Results and Discussion

Improvement of the "transformative competencies" mentioned in the Introduction: creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility, student agency/co-agency, as well as development of other knowledge and skills, attitudes and values necessary for a successful life in the 21st century, i.e. education for citizenship in a broad sense, cannot be fully realized in an isolated and static formal education environment. The role of students should be changed from participants in the classroom learning by listening to teachers' instructions to active participants with both student agency and co-agency. Educational researchers and policy makers should consider that …s*tudents develop co-agency in an interactive, mutually supportive and enriching relationship with their peers, teachers, parents and communities in an organic way in a larger learning eco-system* (OECD, 2019, 16). The role of the teacher in the pedagogical process has also changed: *teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities* (Dewey, 1938, 59) in which students are able to develop their personal agency and co-agency (Ambrose et al, 2010; Leadbeater, 2017). So that the development of student personal agency and co-agency could also take place successfully in the home environment, parents are also consistently encouraged to contact teachers to discuss student's progress in learning, however, the real involvement of parents in constructive conversations with teachers and students depends on several factors - parents' beliefs concerning education and the status of individual teachers, personal learning experiences, socioeconomic situations in the family (Cappella et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2020; Nieminen et al., 2021). Therefore, an empirical study was conducted to find out how students at Latvian rural basic school, their parents and teachers evaluate mutual conversations about student learning.

Conversations between students and teachers

After processing the empirical data, it can be observed that more than half of the students noted that individual conversations about their learning with teachers take place *less often than once a month* (a sixth of the respondents noted that they never happen). Contrary, more than a third of teachers stated that the conversations between teachers and students take place at least *once to twice a month* (Figure 1). Differences in the evaluations are not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.63$; df = 4; p-value = 0.106), but teachers believe that conversations about students' learning happen relatively more often. The respondents' answers to the open questions allow us to conclude that the differences in the evaluation of

the frequency of conversations occur because the students do not understand that the conversation is about the learning process, because the conversation is too generalized.

Conversations proceed only through the mutual belief that the addressee has understood the speaker well enough for immediate purposes (Conversation, 2023). The results obtained in our study confirm that the initiator of the conversation needs to clearly formulate the goal of the conversation and the results to be achieved (Margalit et al., 2022) as well as coordinate them with the interlocutor throughout the conversation. It should also be noted that the understanding of the quality of the conversation and the ability to recall it are interrelated. A.J. Guydish and J.E. Fox Tree were found that ...participants recognized well-balanced conversations more accurately and were also faster to recognize well-balanced conversations. When conducting conversations with students about their learning, teachers and parents should pay close attention to the basic elements of the conversation: reaching common ground, striving to contribute equally, and successful conversational closings (Guydish et al., 2022; Woolf, 2009).

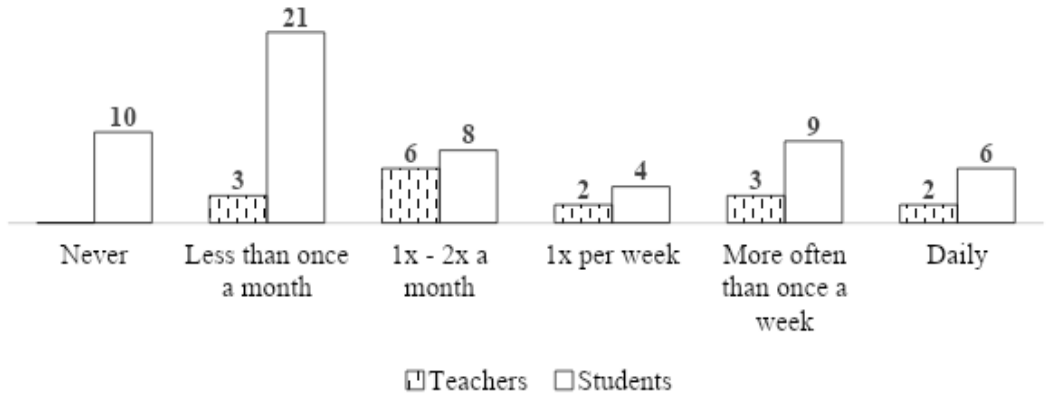

Figure 1. **Frequency of conversations between students (n-58) and teachers (n=16)**, *number of respondents in the assessment group*

More than half (31 participants from 58) of students believe that the *quality* of the conversations about their learning is *high* or *very high*; mode (the value of a variable which occurs most frequently, Mo) = 3, median (the middle value in an ordered set of data, Me) = 4, the lowest score (min) used in the sample of students is 1, the highest (max) is 5; teachers did not use the lowest scores (1 and 2 points), in the teachers sample Mo = 4, Me = 4, min = 3, max = 4 (Figure 2). To find out the statistical significance of the differences in the evaluations given by students and teachers, the Mann-Whitney criterion was calculated, and a good agreement between the evaluations was found (Mann-Whitney U =422.0; p-value = 0.559), students and teachers similarly evaluate the quality of conversations about student learning.

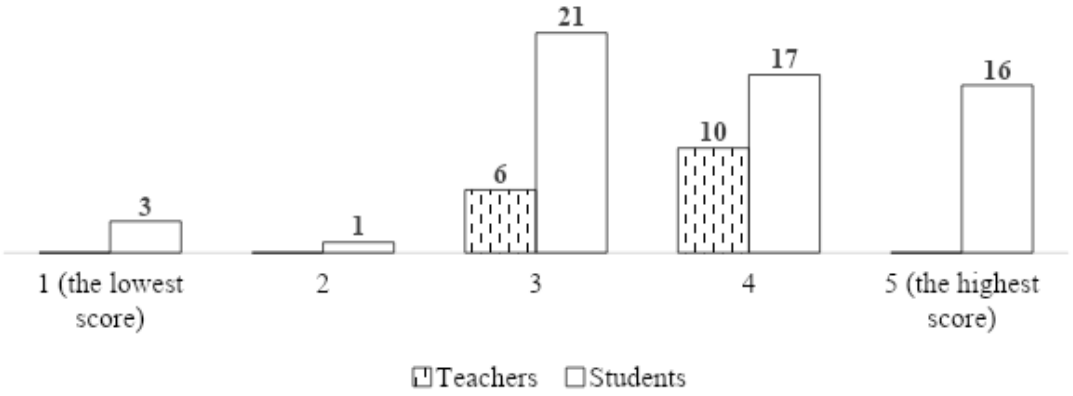

Figure 2. **Assessment of the quality of conversations between students (n-58) and teachers (n=16)**, *number of respondents in the assessment group*

In the answers to the open-ended questions, several recommendations for improving the conversations about student learning were given in each group of respondents. In the *teachers* (n = 16) group, 6 teachers indicated that students' interest and co-responsibility in such conversations should be higher, "*...taking responsibility on the part of students*" is needed, 6 teachers stated that more time should be

allocated, 2 teachers indicated the lack of understanding of the students, why such conversations are necessary. 2 teachers indicate that the conversations should be regular, as well as solutions to specific problems should be offered during conversations.

Almost half of the respondents (28 persons) in the students (n=58) sample noted that the quality of conversations about their learning with teachers is at least satisfactory (3 points) and no improvement is needed, 10 students want the teachers to delve into the problem more seriously, "*let the teachers answer my question normally and help me with my problem instead of telling me one thing and that's it!"* (female student, 14 years old), 12 students believe that teachers should think about their attitude during individual conversations with students. 5 students mention that before starting the conversation they would like to know a specific topic of the conversation, 2 students noted that they want to receive positive feedback during the conversation"*...the teacher would also say the good things about student's learning, and not just emphasize what needs to be improved or done"* (female student, 14 years old). One student indicated that he wants to receive support during individual conversations about his learning.

Conversations between parents and teachers

Two thirds of the respondents (23 persons) in the sample of parents (n=32) noted that individual conversations about students learning with teachers are ongoing *less often than once a month*. Contrary in the group of teachers (n=16), a little more than half of respondents (9 teachers) noted that individual conversations are taking place *not less often* how *once to twice a month* (Figure 3). Differences in the evaluations are statistically significant (χ^2 = 4.55; df=1; p-value = 0,033), teachers believe that conversations about students' learning happen significantly more often. Schools in Latvia inform parents about students' progress, studying and behaviour through both summative and formative assessment practices. It should be noted that parents, based on their personal experience, more often attribute the summative evaluation (in points) to academic achievements, while the descriptive (formative) evaluation is more often attributed to the student's behaviour. Teachers are able to professionally separate the information provided, knowing that *...some feedback is about learning, some is about behavior* (Frank, 2022, 64), but many parents may perceive conversations with teachers as conversations about the student's behaviour or about the student "in general", and do not perceive them as conversations about "student learning".

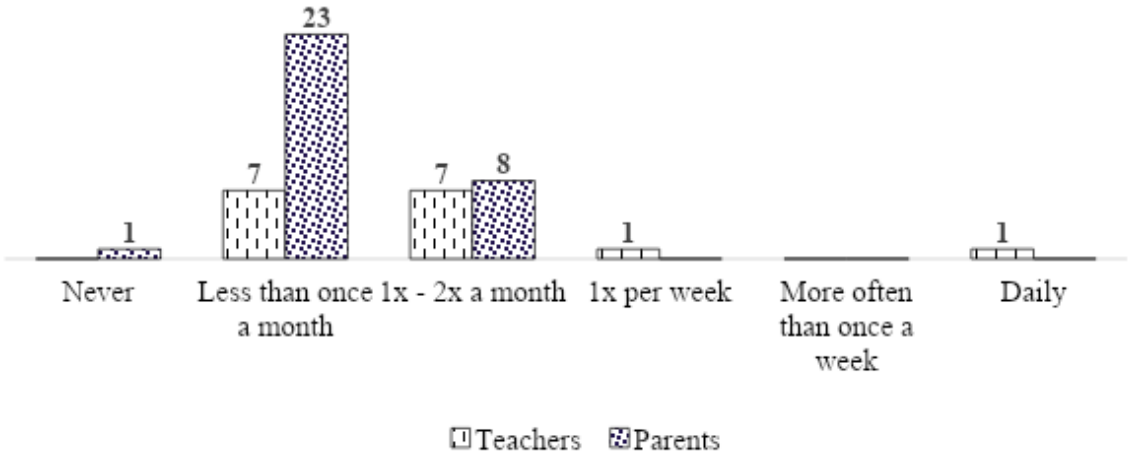

Figure 3. **Frequency of conversations between parents (n-32) and teachers (n=16)***, number of respondents in the assessment group*

The evaluations of the *quality* of mutual conversations in the sample of parents (Mo = 4, Me = 4, min=2, max=5) are higher than in the sample of teachers (Mo = 3, Me =3, min =3, max =5). (Figure 4) To find out the statistical significance of the differences in the evaluations given by parents and teachers, the Mann-Whitney criterion was calculated, and difference trends were found (Mann-Whitney U =181.0; p-value = 0.083), parents evaluate the quality of conversations about student learning relatively higher than teachers. Several studies indicate that parents tend to overestimate and overvalue information related to the well-being of students and summative assessment (numerical data and exams) and undervalue formative assessment practices (Yogan et al., 2017; Nieminen et al., 2021), therefore the results of our study should be viewed critically; in the future it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study of parents' opinions.

To increase the quality of conversations, 4 *teachers* noted that more time should be given, 4 teachers say they want more interest from parents, while another 4 teachers indicate that parents should be more involved in the learning process, another 4 teachers believe that the quality of conversations with parents would improve offering specific solutions from both parents and teachers.

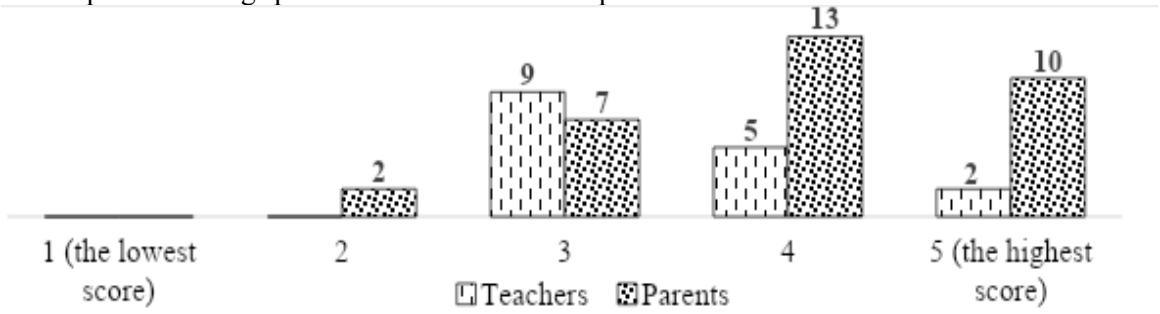

Figure 4. **Assessment of the quality of conversations between parents (n-32) and teachers (n=16)**, *number of respondents in the assessment group*

Almost half of the surveyed *parents* (15 parents) express the opinion that improvements in teacher-parent conversations about student learning are not necessary. 7 parents believe that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to successfully find an individual approach in conversations with students of different ages, and this makes conversation difficult *"...teachers' understanding of the fact that each student is different and everyone cannot be evaluated equally, I think that the teacher must also be educated in psychology in order to better understand the student himself"*. 5 parents noted that teachers should evaluate their attitude before conversations. 3 parents would like conversations to happen more often, while 2 parents would like to have more time to spend on conversations.

Conversations between students and parents

More than half (31 persons) of students (n=58) and the majority of parents (28 parents from 32) noted that student-parent conversations about students learning take place more often than once a week (Figure 5). Differences in the evaluations are statistically significant (χ^2= 12.81; df=2; p-value = 0,002), parents believe that conversations about students' learning happen significantly more often. This could be explained by the fact that the student and parents have different understandings of what a conversation about learning really is. Scientists indicate that during the conversation, constant feedback, and mutual clarification of the topic of the conversation is required; only in this way will both participants of the conversation understand the meaning of the conversation more and more similarly (Moss et al., 2019).

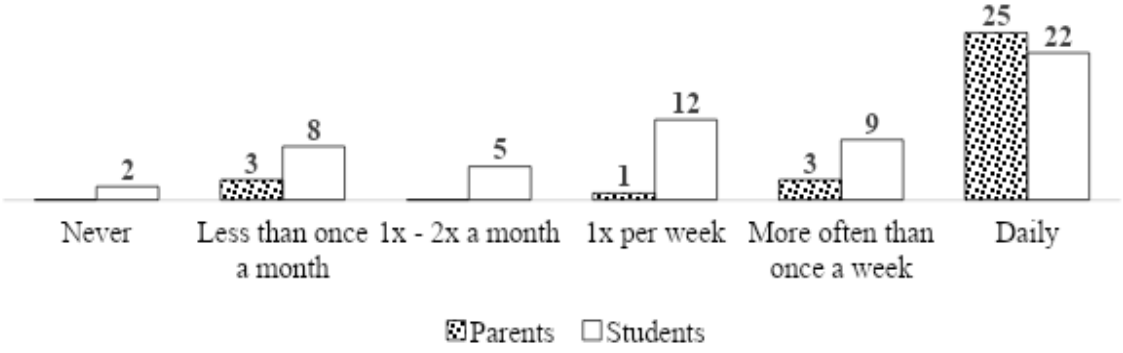

Figure 5. **Frequency of conversations between students (n-58) and parents (n=32)**, *number of respondents in the assessment group*

Almost half of the surveyed students assessed *quality* of the individual conversations with their parents *as very high* (5 points) Mo = 5, Me = 4 (ratings range from 1 to 5), while half of the surveyed parents rated individual conversations with students with 3 points Mo = 3, Me = 3.5 (ratings range 3 to 5) (Figure 6). To find out the statistical significance of the differences in the evaluations given by students and parents, the Mann-Whitney criterion was calculated, and statistically significant differences were found (Mann-Whitney U =657.0; p-value = 0.016), students, although the dispersion of their answers is greater, evaluate the quality of conversations about student learning significantly higher than parents.

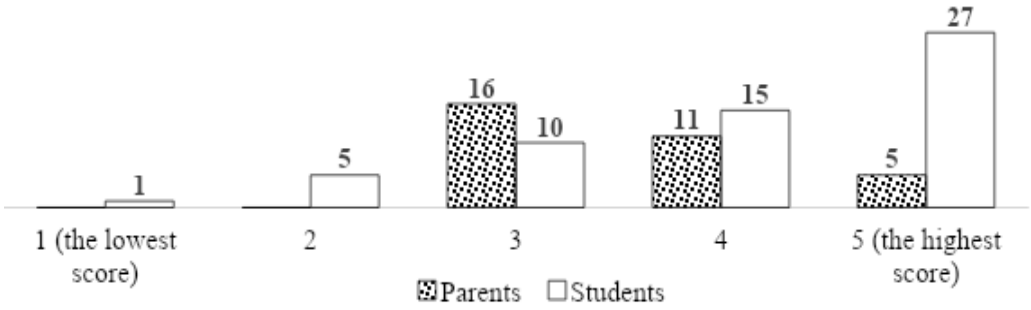

Figure 6. **Assessment of the quality of conversations between students (n=58) and parents (n=32)**, *number of respondents in the assessment group*

More than half (33 respondents) of *students* expresses an opinion that improvements in student-parent conversations are not necessary. 9 students (16 % of respondents) would like their parents not to be angry about the grades they received *"...let them not be so angry"* (male student, 15 years old). 5 students noted that they would like their parents to listen more attentively to what the students say, while 4 students feel pressure from their parents during conversations *"...let them understand that you can't do everything 100% all the time"* (female student, 12 years old), but another 4 students believe that parents do not have a serious enough attitude towards conversations about learning, the other 3 students would like their parents to speak more clearly and understandably about the specific topics.

Only 3 parents have noted that improvements are not necessary, and the quality of conversations is high. 4 parents express opinion that there is a lack of time for high-quality conversations with students about their learning, while 9 parents stated that the problem is the students' attitude towards the conversation, e.g. one parent states that the quality of conversation would be better, *"...if the child took the conversation more seriously and had a greater understanding of how important the knowledge acquired at school is"*. 9 parents believe that there is a lack of involvement in the conversation on the part of the student. 3 parents noted that the circumstances in which the conversations take place are important, 4 parents would like conversations to happen more often. It should also be noted that in a similar study on mutual communication between students and parents, it was found that parents consider conversations with students once a week to be more effective tool for achieving students' goals than students themselves (Yogan et al., 2017).

Table 1

Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of students' age and ratings of conversation frequency and quality

	Conversations with teachers		**Conversations with parents**	
	Frequency	**Quality**	**Frequency**	**Quality**
Age of students	-0.194	-0.385**	-0.241	-0.093
Frequency of conversations with teachers	1	0.259*	0.507***	0.325*
Quality of conversations with teachers	0.259*	1	0.493***	0.400**
Frequency of conversations with parents	0.507***	0.493***	1	0.352**

*- p<0.05; **-p<0,01; ***-p<0,001

When calculating the correlation coefficient (*Spearman's rho*), it was found that that the evaluations of the frequency and quality of conversations in the group of students negatively correlates with the age of the respondents, i.e., as the age of the students increases, the ratings of the frequency and quality of conversations decrease (Table 1).

Within the scope of the study, only one type of communication - individual conversation - was investigated. It would be a mistake to look at it in isolation from other asynchronous (texting, e-mail,

voice recording) and real-time distant (phone or *WhatsApp* calls, video chats) communication techniques and methods (Storlie, 2015). Therefore, the researchers are convinced that the further research on the exchange of information about student learning in the student-parent-teacher triad should be continued.

Conclusions

Scientific literature and regulatory documents, as well as empirical study on the conversation between students, teachers and parents about student learning allow us to formulate several conclusions:

- triangular teacher - student - parent relationships, maintained through conversations about the student's learning, form a learning mesosystem in which the development of student's personal agency and co-agency takes place;
- although the participants of the empirical study - students, teachers and parents - have a different understanding of conversations about student learning, they have noted that the *quality* of these conversations is at least satisfactory (in all groups of respondents, the median ratings are 3 or higher), statistically significant differences were found only between students' and parents' groups ($p = 0.016$), students assess the quality of conversations higher than parents;
- the perception of parents about the frequency of such conversations is statistically significantly different from the perception of students and teachers - teachers noted that conversations with parents happen more often than the parents indicated ($p = 0.033$), while in the parent-student relationship, parents believe that such conversations happen more often than the students noted ($p = 0.002$);
- to improve the quality of conversations about student's learning, it is necessary to clearly formulate and agree on the achievable goal and limits of the conversation, as well as to strengthen the participants' confidence in the ability to achieve the goal;
- student-teacher conversations should be regular, constructive, objective and aimed at the student's growth, the purpose of the conversation, the achievable result, should be clearly formulated in their content;
- parent-teacher conversations must be scheduled in time, aimed at achieving a specific goal that is understandable and acceptable to both parties, avoiding a subjective generalized assessment of the student's personality;
- parent-student conversations should be aimed at achieving a specific, mutually understandable and acceptable goal, based on mutual listening and understanding;
- it is recommended that conversation initiators (teachers and parents (caregivers)) clearly and in accordance with the level of understanding of the interlocutor, (i.e. taking into account the peculiarities of the student's age), formulate the underlying problem of the conversation, the purpose of the conversation, as well as continuously provide feedback during the conversation.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.014

The importance of previous education for foreign students entering studies in the western higher education system

Karina Svetina MBA,
University of Latvia, Latvia
jansonekarina@inbox.lv

Abstract: The aim of the research is to find out the significance of foreign students' previous general education experience when beginning their studies in the 1st academic year of higher education abroad according to the Western education philosophy. The research question envisages finding out what academic difficulties foreign students face when starting their studies abroad in the 1st academic year and how to provide support in the academic study process. The research is based on the exploration of the reasons behind academic failures, and on ways how to improve academic performance. The research sample involves South Asian and Central Asian 1st academic year students studying in Latvia for bachelor degree (the European Qualifications Framework (level=6)). The study was conducted in 4 phases in the period from 2019 to 2022: 1) a survey of foreign students (n=89) was conducted in order to find out the self-assessment about the teaching and learning methods practised in previous education; 2) an observation method of foreign students (n=89) was conducted during classes with the aim to analyse with which academic methods the students performed better and which they performed worse during the 1st academic year; 3) interviews were conducted with nationals of India, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan (n=3) to learn about the teaching and learning methods in general education in particular countries; 4) interviews were conducted with representatives of Latvian higher education institutions (n=8), in order to find out whether previous educational experience causes difficulties for students and whether it affects the learning outcomes. The results of the research indicate that previous education: lack of diversity of methods, proportion of large classes, teacher-centred lessons, has a negative impact on learning outcomes.

Keywords: academic methods, foreign students, higher education, learning outcomes, support

Introduction

The research problem is justified by the fact that local and foreign students in the 1st academic year face issues of an academic and social nature. In Ramsay's study (1999), foreign students found it more difficult to adapt to their studies than local students did. Foreign students demonstrated more stress and anxiety, and they had to work harder to achieve the same results as local students (Ramsay, 1999). Many foreign students still report lower levels of adjustment at university than their peers do from the local culture (Alharbi & Smith, 2018; Andrade, 2006; Brunsting et al., 2018; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Although Corradi and Levrau (2021) found that social adjustment is necessary for adjusting academically, and that it has a small, but positive effect on study success, the authors of this study will deliberately avoid socially and psychologically coexisting influencing factors.

In the academic literature several authors so far have reviewed the factor of students' previous experience in the general education system (Bone & Reid, 2013; Johnson & Kumar, 2010; Kukatlapalli et al., 2020; Kumar, 2004; Sevinc & Gizir, 2014; Trujillo & Tanner, 2014). Research to date has shown that students feel alienated, confused, frustrated and disappointed with their previous educational experiences (Andrade, 2006).

The aim of the research is to find out the significance of foreign students' previous general education experience when beginning their studies in the 1st academic year of higher education abroad according to the Western education philosophy.

Academic learning methods

A common belief among educators is that foreign students are insufficiently adjusted to higher education in their host country, both academically and socially (Andrade, 2006; Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013).

Lebcir et al., (2008) indicate that factors influencing the academic achievement of foreign students are related to learning techniques, the English language and assessment methods (Lebcir et al., 2008). By

learning the methods, the conditions of tasks, as well as the need to make notes and participate in seminars are understood. Foreign students have difficulty understanding the terms of the assignment and the grading system (Ridley, 2014; Valka, 2015). J. Ryan (2005) concluded that teachers often perceive foreign students as a homogeneous group with the same learning skills and methods (Ryan, 2005). In the study of V. Vevere (2017), foreign students do not hide the fact that the different evaluation systems of countries and universities are confusing. It is pointed out that there are several tests in Latvia during the semester, but there was only one test in the students' home countries (Vevere, 2017).

The researcher H. Fox (1994) observed that Western views on writing academic articles are incomprehensible to foreign students. She concludes that what professors perceived as the inability of foreign students to analyse and logically develop a written argument was the result of cultural communication styles, not a lack of knowledge of English (Fox, 1994). Differences in writing style across cultures can also lead to signs of plagiarism, as students may not understand the true meaning of plagiarism or the meaning of referencing, which may not be well developed in different cultures (Bamford et al., 2002). The author M. K. W. S. Kumar (2004) also concludes that there is a mismatch between plagiarism in the Western education philosophy and how it is classified by some Eastern societies (Kumar, 2004).

Eastern education philosophy holds on to the concept of teaching. Students receive full knowledge from the teachers inside the classroom (Gurney, 2007). In Eastern education the students practice the concept of memorising, as this philosophy focuses mainly on book learning and memorisation within the teaching and learning process, while Western education supports and encourages students in self-management and in controlling their own learning process (Hassan et al., 2010).

According to the students, in their previous educational experience, the teachers provided the students with all the necessary reading material for the subject. Teachers are very reputable sources of knowledge and role models for their students. The teacher is always held in the highest esteem, so what the teacher says will always be correct, and students are not brought up to ask questions or provoke discussion. It is the student's duty to sit quietly and listen. Asian students are quiet in the classroom and rarely participate in discussions (Hofstede, 1995; Wang, 2004). Students in their home countries from Asia and Africa are accustomed to strict leadership and control. When they arrive in Latvia, they have to become self-directed and this has consequences for the learning outcomes (Vevere, 2017). Teaching methods such as Flipped Learning and Team-Based Learning require students to pre-learn course materials before a teaching session, because classroom exercises rely on students using self-gained knowledge. This is the reverse to “traditional” teaching when course materials are presented during a lecture, and students are assessed on that material during another session at a later stage (Balan et al., 2015).

In India, students used textbooks for knowledge, and learning was assessed through tests and exams, while in New Zealand, studies included independent literature searches, reading articles, writing essays and oral presentations (Kukatlapalli et al., 2020). It is important to note that a large proportion of Indian students already have general education in English in private schools. Most of the students' learning experience and life in Indian private secondary schools had many features in common with the Western education philosophy (Caluya et al., 2011). The findings of K. Templeman et al. (2016) indicated that students with Western backgrounds integrated better socio-culturally and academically compared to students with non-Western backgrounds (Templeman et al., 2016). Possible academic support could include: peer mentoring providing students with opportunities to establish good relations with peers, local students and schools in home countries (Ding & Curtis, 2021; Ferencz et. al., 2020; Nguyen, 2021).

There are cultures, such as India and China, which have been researched a lot. Many other cultures are widely represented among foreign students but information on these cultures is not yet available and this poses a greater risk of misunderstanding between academic staff and students. The novelty of this research is to include foreign students from Uzbekistan in the research.

Since the research issue involves providing an answer to the question of how to provide support in the academic study process, the author will turn to the literature regarding aspects of how a higher education institution can support foreign students. The main aspects that will be discussed are the support of teachers and administration, consultation times, and orientation activities as essential support.

Higher education institutions cannot simply admit foreign students and expect them to adjust to life in a new country and educational system without appropriate support (Andrade, 2006).

F. Shu et al. (2020) found that university and faculty support positively influence the adaptation to new demands at a new school (Shua et al., 2020). It is necessary to assume that it is difficult for students to adapt, because they do not know academic rules, requirements and processes in the academic environment. In addition, students are often late through no fault of their own, as they missed their visa application and the counselling/orientation program. This results in negative experiences (Liu & Winder, 2014; Townsend & Cairns, 2003).

Higher education leaders must strive to provide all necessary support services including promoting cross-cultural competence among professors and administrators to relate well with international students, while meeting their academic and social needs. Various resources and support services available to international students are instrumental to their success in universities and colleges. As the most valuable resources, faculty members should ensure they give international students additional attention and support by encouraging them to ask questions, take advantage of office hours, submit multiple drafts for instructor comments, pair international students with native speakers in class projects or group work, and also have regular informal conversations with them in order to build a good teacher-student relationship (Akanwa, 2015). Some authors call on university lecturers to promote the benefits of supporting learning from the very beginning of courses. There are opportunities to make greater use of online technology to inform and prepare students even before they arrive at the university. Students should be more actively encouraged to use learning support and to incorporate learning and support into academic writing courses (Fenton-Smith & Humphreys, 2017; Larcombe & Malkin, 2007; Meer & Chapman, 2014).

Students come to the lecturers of the department during the scheduled hours for various reasons: to discuss a lecture topic, to get an explanation of the topic, to discuss the results and to get advice. A study by M. Guerrero and A. Rod (2013) found that 36% of students claimed they did not attend the lecturer's appointment because it did not fit with the student's planned schedule. It has been found that the set admission hours, visits for getting consultations positively correlated with the academic progress of the students. Each visit improves a student's course grade by 0.722 % (Guerrero & Rod, 2013). M. Guerrero and A. Rod (2013) offer 4 solutions for senior lecturers regarding consultations. First of all, for each following week, the appointment time should be scheduled at a different time, so that even those students who work or are absent at regular times can adjust. Secondly, at every opportunity, it is necessary to remind the lecturer about the date, time and place of the consultation during his classes. Thirdly, it is necessary to explain to students what the consultation time is, why this time is offered and that it is offered not only for fulfilling a promise, but also for consultation on the topic, in-depth questions and homework questions, so that students understand the usefulness of the consultations. Fourthly, the lecturer should personally invite students to visit his/her consultations, as this will make it clear to the student that he/she is especially welcome and that the lecturer will wait for the student, and this is an obligatory activity (Guerrero & Rod, 2013).

Adding to the above, the author C. McFadden at al. (2012) norāda, ka International students' need to have adequate faculty-student ratio in order for students to have access to professors whenever they have academic concerns (McFadden et al., 2012).

Some universities have established support services to help foreign students with their studies. These include English language courses, tutorials and additional courses focused on specific academic content and skills. In addition, an English language course program can affect English proficiency, academic achievement, and persistence (Mlynarczyk & Babbitt, 2002).

Q. Sun et al. (2020) point out that in addition to the above-mentioned support measures, it is important for the university to support the organization of cultural events, celebrating different festivals and events of the students' home country (Sun et al., 2020).

Scholarship support for students is also important. Autori E. Canton and A. Blom (2010) have found a statistically significant and stable effect of total financial support (amount of loans and scholarships) on academic achievements. A 10 percentage points increase in financial aid would increase a student's grade point average by about 0.2–0.3 points (on a 10-point scale) (Canton & Blom, 2010).

In order to facilitate adaptation for foreign students, universities can organize visits to companies, invite visiting lecturers and organize thematic meetings. The conversation should be organized in the format of a discussion, not a lecturer's monologue. Training of lecturers for working with foreign students should also be organized (Vēvere, 2017).

All of the listed support measures are logical and correct, unfortunately, most of them apply directly to the lecturers, for example, additional attention, informal conversation, taking advantage of office hours or submitting multiple drafts for instructors' comments. There is an overload among lecturers, and often lecturers do not have enough time, which does not create opportunities for additional in-depth counselling or free communication with foreign students after counselling hours. Preparation of high-quality digital materials is also a time-consuming process. The author believes that some of these responsibilities should be taken over by the administration of the faculty and/or external relations departments. More attention should be given to providing support and orientation weeks for students who arrive late.

Methodology

Research has been carried out in Latvia. Latvia (capital Riga) is a country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. In 2020, 9342 foreign students studied in Latvian higher education for the purpose of obtaining a degree, which is 14 % of all students. In the case of Latvia, the largest education import regions are South Asia - India, Central Asia - Uzbekistan, followed by Central Europe - Germany, Sweden. Sixty eight percent of foreign students come from countries outside the European Union (Dati par Latvijas augstāko izglītību 2020. gadā, 2021).

Private higher education institution *Turiba University* was selected for the research in the 1st and 2nd stages. *Turiba University* is the largest private university in Latvia, established in 1993. The first full-time study programme in English, established for attracting foreign students, was opened in 2003. The countries represented by students in 2020 were India, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. The total number of students in *Turiba University* in the academic year 2020/2021 was 2.681, of which 427 were foreign students (Data on Latvian higher education in 2020, 2021).

The research question envisages finding out what academic difficulties foreign students face when starting their studies abroad in the 1st year and how to provide support to foreign students in the academic study process. Only students studying for a degree (European Qualifications Framework (level=6)) in the 1st academic year in the 1st semester are considered in this study. The research consists of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (survey and structured observation) scientific research methods. The study was conducted in 4 phases in the period from 2019 to 2022. The quantitative data analysis software *Ms Excel* 2016 was applied for data processing.

In the first stage, groups of foreign students were surveyed over a period of 3 years (2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022). The aim of survey was to find out the self-assessment of foreign students about the academic methods used in previous education. 89 students participated in the survey. The survey took place during the 1st lecture of the study course 'Food and Beverage Service' at the beginning of February, when the semester for foreign students begins. The study course was implemented in the 1st academic year (1st semester), which allowed the author to reach a target audience that had just started studies.

In the second stage, groups of foreign students were observed over a 3-year period (2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022) and one group of local students was observed (2019/2020) for comparison. All four groups of students were observed within the study course 'Food and Beverage Service'. The study course was implemented in the 1st academic year (1st semester), which allowed the author to evaluate the students' initial preparation for the Western education philosophy and methods, and to analyse with which academic methods of Western education foreign students performed better and which they performed worse. A group of local students was included in the observation in order to better assess whether the learning habits of foreign students are related to the previous education system or not. A total of 89 foreign students and 26 local students were observed in the study. The observation period was as long as the study course - from the beginning of February to the beginning of May. Structured observation was based on previously set criteria what are based on literature review. The following

academic methods were observed during the observation: 1) understanding of the conditions of the tasks (asking additional questions, attending consultation); 2) presentation (presentation design, presentation style, defence, post-presentation discussion, compliance with the time allowed); 3) discussions (level of involvement, the English language); 4) taking of notes (design of notes, method of making notes); 5) reports (academic language, written English, references, signs of plagiarism); 6) practical visit of the company (level of involvement, critical approach, analysis).

In the third stage, interviews were conducted with nationals of India, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan (n=3) to learn about the teaching and learning methods in general education in particular countries. Interviews were conducted in 2022 via the *Webex by Cisco* platform.

In the fourth stage, interviews were conducted with representatives of Latvian higher education institutions (n=8), in order to find out whether previous educational experience causes difficulties for students and whether it affects the learning outcomes. Interviews were conducted in 2021 and in 2022 both via the *Webex by Cisco* platform and phone calls.

Results of the foreign students' self-evaluation survey

In the academic year 2019/2020, 32 students participated in the survey, in the academic year 2020/2021, 30 students participated in the survey and in the academic year 2021/2022, 27 students participated in the survey. The students' countries of origin were India 63 %, Sri Lanka 16 %, Uzbekistan 17 %, Kazakhstan 3 %, and Nigeria 1 %. It can be concluded that on average 90.6 % of students have only the experience of general education in their country; the remaining 9.4 % of students already have some other study experience - they have not been included in the results. On average, 80.6 % of students noted that they had learnt to create presentations in their previous education and 36.3 % noted that presentations had been given as well. In addition, on average, 55 % of the general education was reading textbooks at home in the amount of the defined pages, which also explains why the taking of notes is not strange to an average of 55 %. On the other hand, on average 47 % of students indicate that they have never written essays and reports, and on average 31.1 % of students indicate that formatting rules should always be followed. Group work is relatively less common, as evidenced by the high average number of students of 62.3 %, who indicated that there was none. The same proportion - 66 % of students on average, indicate that they did not tend to ask the teacher questions during the lecture. On average, 53.3 % of students said they knew what academic honesty meant, while on average 46 % said they had heard of it but did not know exactly what it meant. When asking students whether they have had to critically analyse, evaluate things, processes and substantiate them with their opinion, on average 26.6 % of students indicated often, a relatively large number of students 53.3 % indicated rarely, but 16 % indicated never.

Results from the observation of academic methods used by foreign students

The aim was to observe how foreign students cope with Western academic methods. The observed groups of students were the same students as in the first stage.

Understanding the conditions of tasks

Foreign students did not ask questions about their independent tasks from their place in the classroom, and after the lecture there was regularly a queue of students with questions in person. Within 3 years, 3 % students sent homework on time to the lecturer to confirm that the homework had been done correctly according to the instructions. There is no such a barrier for local students to ask questions in the class.

Presentation, discussion method

It can be concluded that 80 % of foreign students create presentations on PowerPoint for the first time. Students' presentations are very cluttered with colours, animations and the content is not perceptible. Students should be encouraged to experiment, as this is the only way they will understand which presentation style is most appropriate. In eighty percent of cases, the text on the slides is copied from the source in small print and is not paraphrased. Students mostly read the entire text on each slide from start to finish. Students also very often have difficulty reading fluently, which shows that they have not tried to work on the pronunciation, have not read it out loud to themselves several times, have not

checked the pronunciation of unknown words. In ninety five percent of cases, students are not ready to say the presentation in their own words, in ninety five percent of cases students have not prepared notes that would help. In seventy percent of cases, foreign students did not have eye contact with the audience. Foreign students presented the presentation to the lecturer only, not to the rest of the audience. The students only look at the lecturer, and even then the gaze indicates that confirmation is awaited that everything is being done correctly. Within 3 years, in 10 % of cases, a course member asks another course member a question to create a discussion after the presentation has been completed. Among foreign students, the English accent is an obstacle to the smooth running of the discussion. Quite often, there have been situations where students feel uncomfortable because they have not been understood. In ninety seven percent of cases, foreign students do not focus on the time spent in minutes, but ask how many slides are needed. In ninety percent of cases, foreign students mostly exceed the given time because they read every sentence on the slide. Local students make presentations transparent and understandable. In thirty percent of cases local students have prepared notes to help themselves to speak in their own words. In thirty percent of cases, local students ask each other questions about the presentation to provoke discussion. Receiving questions after the presentation is still associated with errors in the presentation (for both local and foreign students).

Note making method

The author concludes that, depending on the region, 80 % of foreign students are not used to taking notes at all. Students from East Asia took notes very carefully, but they did not meet the definition of notes because students rewrote every phrase; every sentence from the slides. Nothing was highlighted or marked in a different colour. Everything was monotonously rewritten. For students from Central Asia, the notes are more natural, and students have tried to write down what is most important. There are no such challenges for local students.

Reports, formatting, academic honesty

Foreign students write very little in their own words; they try to use the internet more and even copy what they can write themselves. The author has observed that 60 % of foreign students lack related expanded sentences. Foreign students like to use phrases through bullet-points, much like on presentation slides. From the 1st presentation, the lecturer must also use correctly formatted references in slides, thus providing a sample. The report formatting style is very individual for each student; students perform formatting according to their own idea. Although the university has a carefully designed regulation for independent reports, it is very extensive and students are obviously unable to read and comprehend it. Signs of plagiarism are common, but this is due to students still learning to use references. In the 1st year, it is also very difficult for foreign students to evaluate an academic language, because it is just beginning to develop. Neither foreign nor local students have experience in using academic language. Local students are much better at understanding and adapting formatting requirements in their writing. This is certainly, because general education, overall, has similar requirements in Latvia.

Critical evaluation

Foreign students desperately asked for a table of criteria to know what to evaluate in the company visit project. Foreign students are not able to apply new/additional criteria by themselves. It is also difficult for half of the students to make proposals. It is much more difficult for foreign students to give a critical assessment, to make conclusions and suggestions about the company's visit and its improvement than for locals.

It can be concluded that the unacquired skills to discuss, defend one's opinion, and prepare reports respecting academic honesty have a significant impact on learning outcomes.

Results of interviews with nationals of India, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan

Interviews were conducted with nationals of India, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan (n=3) to learn about the teaching and learning methods in general education in particular countries.

In India and Sri Lanka, in private educational institutions all subjects are taught in the medium of English, which explains the different levels of English among students, even from the same country. In Sri Lanka students are always required to perform pair and group activities during the subject of English,

in order to improve communication skills among them. In Uzbekistan, English is taught as a subject in both public and private schools, but the emphasis is on grammar and not on the oral aspect.

Foreign students are used to classes of 40-50-60 pupils in general education in State schools. In Private schools classes are significantly smaller.

Students in general education have not learnt to study independently. Students crave more control, more certainty and textbooks in each study course. Students in Uzbek families are brought up very strictly. There are strict requirements in schools and strict adherence to deadlines, and the start of lessons should not be delayed. Students in the Western education philosophy are confused; they are given too much freedom if the course of study is not strictly structured. They are not used to self-directed learning.

In the mentioned countries education is still teacher-centred, and everyone must strictly follow what the teacher says. Students expect the teacher to be present and to determine how to learn and to guide the course strictly.

In India, teachers use textbooks and tests. The tests were mostly only written, due to the large number of pupils. An accurate answer from the textbook is still expected. This is the easiest way for teachers to check the work of a large number of pupils. Teachers in Sri Lanka use diverse, interesting methods in teaching, specifically in private schools, where the number of students are fewer and hence easy to manage. In Uzbekistan, textbooks were the main tool used by teachers to teach lessons. There were no presentations because the classes were not equipped with projectors and other technical facilities.

Pupils in the mentioned countries have to learn classically from textbooks. Teachers usually indicate which pages should be read from textbooks for each subsequent lesson. Nationals from Sri Lanka admitted - it was very rare for pupils to need to search for extra information from other sources**.** In Uzbekistan, in humanities, texts had to be memorised by heart. All works are handwritten. Presentations in schools in all countries were never required, so presentations and oral opinions were not relevant.

Pupils in India are not able to express their creativity; it is not permitted to express their opinion or paraphrase the concept of the definition in their own words, and instead they must strictly follow the definition as written in the textbook. In Uzbekistan there was no need to critically analyse things. In Sri Lanka pupils needed to read literary texts and critically analyse them to prepare their own short notes in addition to the notes provided by the teacher. Nationals from Sri Lanka admitted that pupils did plenty of group work and projects as classroom activities and homework, but not any research, academic papers.

In all countries, formatting requirements were mostly not required, and only hard copies of hand-written answers were produced to the teachers. It was very rare for typed documents to be submitted for teachers. Project work, group work, scientific papers were not requested.

Pupils in India are encouraged to memorise accurately, and rewrite texts rather than paraphrase them, which also leads to misunderstandings in the context of plagiarism in Western education philosophy. References, academic reports, academic integrity was not taught at school in any of the countries.

It can be concluded that students have not mastered the skills to independently study, collect, search, analyse and evaluate information, which is also the main obstacle.

Results of interviews with representatives of higher education institutions

Leading higher education institutions in terms of the number of foreign students were interviewed (n=8), in order to find out whether previous educational experience causes difficulties for students and whether it affects the learning outcomes.

The initial stage of studies is difficult and students look for opportunities to communicate and work with their nationals. Students need to be given time, and it must be taken into account that students will take time trying to observe and understand what is happening. The level of self-motivation is important (1st, 2^{nd,} 5th respondent). Students have not learnt to study (3rd respondent). Pupils are already taught in schools that the teacher's opinion is the main one, so pupils do not tend to have their own (4th respondent). The culture of writing papers is very difficult for foreign students. There are big problems with unconscious plagiarism. There is a lot of resistance to group work. Students from Central

Asia understand better how to study independently than students from South Asia. According to the observations, the students of the former USSR countries, for example, Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan, have the most difficulties (6th, 7th, 8th respondent).

All the representatives of higher education institutions acknowledged that the factor of previous education has a great influence on the learning outcomes, especially in the 1st semester and in the 1st academic year when studying according to Western education methodology. The student's own determination and motivation to integrate into Western education is very important.

Discussion

The results of the research indicate that previous education: lack of diversity of methods, proportion of large classes, teacher-centred lessons, has a negative impact on learning outcomes. According to research question on how to provide support in the academic study process - some aspects are debatable. Most authors (Akanwa; 2015; Fenton-Smith & Humphreys, 2017; Guerrero & Rod, 2013; Larcombe & Malkin, 2007; Meer & Chapman, 2014) delegate ancillary activities to lecturers such as additional attention, informal conversation, taking advantage of office hours or submitting multiple drafts for instructors' comments. All of which put an undue burden on lecturers. This responsibility and support must be transferred from the lecturers to the advisors.

Preparatory courses for foreign students in Latvia, in higher education institutions, for example, 3 month-long, prior 1st study semester, during which students are prepared for Western studies, would be highly desirable. But this is not a popular view as it raises issues of competition among universities in Latvia and even among universities in Europe (where there won`t be such requirements).

There are aspects where the previous education experience cannot be blamed, as local students also present shortcomings, even though they have studied general secondary education in a competence education and a student-centred approach. Local students also lack skills such as oral presentations, defence practice, adherence to time, and preparation of notes for the presentation. Neither foreign nor local students have experience in using academic language in research a lot.

Both authors D. W. Y. Liu and B. Winder (2014), P. Townsend and L. Cairns (2003) both representatives from higher education outlined a problem, namely the late arrival of students in the 1st semester (due to a visa, due to late exam results, etc.). Students miss orientation week. It obliges the foreign student to study the already overdue subject independently. It is not clear whether a later start to the semester would be a solution, for example, for foreign students to start the semester not in September, but in October, or even in November. This aspect is also poorly studied in the literature. This will change the course of the program on an annual basis. This will also affect the workload of lecturers in semesters, administrative time plans on an annual basis. It is possible that there will be fewer joint study courses and various academic activities for local and foreign students, as the semesters will not coincide. It is worth exploring it in further research.

Conclusion

The significance of foreign students' previous general education experience is the determining factor for learning outcomes. The biggest academic difficulties faced by foreign students when starting their studies abroad in the 1st academic year are based in previous education (experience in the lack of diversity of methods, proportion of large classes, missing critical evaluation, reports and following formatting troubles, plagiarism, provoking discussion, western and eastern differences in teacher and student centred education.

- Since there are significant differences between Eastern and Western educational systems, it would be worth emphasizing these differences even more and offering corresponding materials to students in advance. It may be available in digital format. It should be emphasized which methods will be used during the study process – there will be group works and debates, and arguments will have to be presented and defended.
- Higher education institutions need to educate and inform their academic and administrative staff that foreign students will have academic difficulties because students have not yet studied using Western education methodologies and principles.

- Academic staff need to be educated on how foreign students study in the general education system in their home countries. In this way, awareness will increase among lecturers as to why students make the same mistakes. The lecturers will already anticipate what the students will find difficult and be able to highlight it more.
- Higher education institutions may request the support of their foreign guest lecturers in organising educational seminars for local academic and administrative staff to educate them on foreign students` previous educational system.
- Since the academic staff are already quite busy, the administration of the faculty should be more involved. It is better for the faculty to decide whether to give more responsibilities to program leaders and program facilitators, or to hire separate staff who advise foreign students on issues that the faculty can answer, which would not be an additional burden on the lecturers.
- The support would include: 1) regular reminders to the lecturers about consultation times, 2) explanations of where the regulations of the university are available, 3) explanations of how to maintain academic honesty, 3) explanations of how to work with the students' internal information system, 4) creation of digital materials (including samples), 5) maintenance of the website, 6) submission of a draft for review, 7) advising on academic issues both in person and remotely, etc.
- Some staged video fragments should be added, showing how each of the methods looks like in a studio setting. Samples of reports are to be added, showing correct and not so well prepared reports with explanations, where, why and how references, paragraphs, structure, consistent formatting are to be used, as well as academic language style.
- A separate section - study academic consultations - should be maintained on the official website of the university.
- To integrate peers more. The buddy should actively participate with 2nd study course local students, which in the beginning would help with the study process, literature, self-directed learning, as well as with the preparation of references and reports.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.015

Learning culture or learning organization – approaches to implement changes at schools

Solvita Lazdiņa, Mg. Sc. Educ.
University of Latvia, Latvia
solvita.lazdina@lu.lv

Abstract: Currently, in Latvia, the improvement of the education process at the political and practical levels is based on the approach of the school as a learning organization, without critically analysing the advantages and disadvantages of the approach. Therefore, the aim of this theoretical study is to evaluate a different theoretical approach - the school as a learning organization and a learning culture to explore the practices taking place at school and to influence them by implementing changes in education. The analysis of the theoretical sources, documents and studies carried out in the research allows to conclude that the approach of the school as a learning organization, although it is widely used, does not sufficiently explain the processes taking place at school, ignoring the interaction of various structures and agents and the power given to them. Educational research is increasingly recognizing the pervasive influence of culture on teaching and learning. From a cultural perspective, changes in education and practices at schools is a complex and not always feasible process, as it is associated with tensions and conflicts. Using the theory of learning culture, it is possible to understand why students learn or do not engage in the learning process, why teachers change or do not change their practices, and how management can influence developments at a particular school. The study demonstrates the possibilities of the theoretical approaches of both sides to find out and improve the teaching and learning implemented at schools on the way to the knowledge society.

Keywords: school as learning organization, learning culture, changes.

Introduction

The processes taking place at school and their improvement can be looked at from different theoretical perspectives. The approach of the school as a learning organization assumes that management methods and techniques can be used to create an ideal organization that will allow different children to achieve higher academic results (Kools et al., 2020, Kaulens & Upenieks, 2021; OECD, 2016). On the other hand, in the cultural approach, learning and teaching are considered as a complex interaction of processes, which is influenced by various structures, agencies and power, and the implementation of changes in such a setting is complicated, well-intended actions do not always achieve the expected results (Biesta et al., 2015, James & Biesta, 2007; Wallace & Hoyle, 2005; Hursh, 2005).

Education policy documents are saturated with the concept of school as a learning organization (Regulation of the Cabinet …, 2021; School 2030, 2019) It is considered an "ideal type of organization" (Kools et al., 2020, 2.) for mitigating all challenges related to the improvement of the learning process, achieving the set goals, ensuring change (ibid.). However, what to do if the school as an organization does not learn, if the teachers do not want to change, despite the efforts made by the management, and if part of the students are still not active participants in the learning process? Furthermore, schools or individual teachers resist change. In other words, the ideal image of the organization for what schools should become, seems unattainable in practice.

The described contradictions are also recognized by other authors, indicating that the approach of the school as a (learning) organization limits the possibilities of understanding and explaining the processes taking place at school (Rinehart, 2016; Kamens, 2013; Thrupp & Willmont, 2003). One of the possible solutions is to look at teaching and learning at school as a process influenced by culture (Lonka, 2018; Gil et al, 2018; Hodkinson et al., 2008; James & Biesta, 2007).

Culture has a significant influence on the practical work carried out at school - it starts with a widespread notion in the culture of what it means to teach and to learn, which further influences political decisions, and when coming to school, it can be seen in the actions implemented by the teacher, the participation of the student and the material resources available (National Academies of Sciences…, 2018). A broader view of learning allows us to realize the complex nature of this process, which is influenced by various structures and power relations (Kamens, 2013; Biesta et al., 2015).

Culture allows us to see and realize the interaction of different agencies and structures. For example, parents from different cultures may convey to their children's different understandings of what is expected of them at school, which in turn further affects children's participation by maintaining their usual routines (Tomasello, 2016). In Finland, the development of students' social-emotional skills is considered an essential prerequisite for academic achievement, without these skills, education is not equally accessible to everybody, at the same time, researchers have found that not all children acquire these skills due to the influence of culture (Lonka, 2018).

Any individual goal is also influenced by culture. Looking from the perspective of the individual - the goals and motivation to participate in an activity are related to the personal and social dimensions of identity, which are formed in the cultural context (National Academies of Sciences…, 2018).

The described examples demonstrate the significant influence of culture on learning at school, so the aim of this study is to evaluate theoretical approaches of schools as learning organizations and learning culture, choosing the most suitable one which would allow studying the teaching and learning implemented at schools, looking for opportunities to improve it.

Methodology

The tasks of this theoretical study are:

- to describe and evaluate the theoretical framework of the school as a learning organization and learning culture;
- to analyse the importance of both approaches, theoretical limitations and possibilities which would allow a better understanding of the processes taking place at schools and the possibilities of implementing changes.

Research methods – theoretical analysis of literature, documents and studies, their mutual comparison.

Results and discussion

Currently, the concept of school as a learning organization has entered educational policy and practice, which is interpreted as "the ideal type of organization for dealing with the changing external environment, facilitating and sustaining organizational change and innovation and even improving student and HR outcome" (Kools et al, 2020, 2). A school as a learning organization is characterized by a clear mission, vision, messages, cooperation and learning of all parties, including the systems that are outside the school, modeling and improving leadership (OECD, 2016; Kools et al., 2020).

The concept revives the approach created in the 80s of the last century, supplementing it with new discoveries, dialogues between various involved parties, as a result offering practical guidelines how to transform schools into learning organizations (OECD, 2016).

In Latvia, the approach was used in the education content and reform project to implement a competency-based approach (School 2030, 2019), and there is an opinion that reform is possible with continuous professional development of teachers, continuous learning, which further transforms schools into learning organizations (Kaulens, 2022; Kaulens & Upenieks, 2021).

Schools as a learning organization are widely described in the educational development guidelines, indicating its importance for achieving nationally important goals, for example, effective management of educational institutions, joint learning of teachers, the student achieving the new set goals and results (Regulations of the Cabinet …, 2021). The state has commissioned a study that would evaluate the approach of the school as a learning organization, developing a model and tools for self-evaluation of educational institutions and evaluation of growth (Ministry of Education, 2022), pointing out that this model will provide the Education quality public service functions to control the educational process and provide recommendations for the elimination of identified shortcomings (Regulations of the Cabinet …, 2013).

A similar theoretical approach to the school as a learning organization is also described by Leithwood and colleagues (Leithwood et al., 2017), emphasizing the essential role of leadership in the transformation of school practices, improving student learning. According to the authors' offer, it takes place on four distinct paths: rational (knowledge about the curriculum, teaching and learning), emotional

(individual and collective dispositions and feelings), organizational (relationships, instructions, structures, learning communities) and family (expectations and support). The authors believe that the failing school lacks talented leadership.

The limitations of the school as a learning organization approach can be seen from the theoretical perspectives of other authors who critically evaluate it, pointing to a series of shortcomings that are not sufficiently recognized and the consequences of the approach.

The culture approach of organizations in the promotion of school growth is neoliberal, an interpretation of the situation imposed by policies related to the market economy (Biesta, 2015; Wallace & Hoyle, 2005; Hursh, 2005). Authors who promote such an approach are connected to politics and ask researchers to study how to make school work more efficient, making it more productive (Biesta et al, 2015; Kamens, 2013), thereby contributing to the ever-widening spread of leadership, affecting the perception of the school as an organization that obeys the principles of business management (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003), ignoring the social importance of the school in society (Biesta, 2007; Elliott & Doherty, 2001). The massive decentralization of neoliberalism undermines professional freedom and democracy by changing the understanding of what teaching is, forcing teachers to serve the system rather than students (Rinehart, 2016).

The current focus of education on the achievement of certain standards does not allow to focus on truly important issues - on what students learn, why they learn, from what they learn (Biesta, 2015), and it is assumed that education is valuable in any case (Biesta, 2015), although for some students early school years become a harsh test (Erikson, 1998). Theories that point the way to excellence by defining what each of us should be, ignoring our different starting points, practice labelling (Lave, 1996). And it can be applied to both individuals and schools.

Schools are currently under heavy pressure dictated by national development plans, requiring schools to become open systems while innovation and accountability become the mantras of organizations (Kamens, 2013) and social fictions emerge. Under the influence of educational reforms, teachers have learned to use the new concepts, ensuring the use of language in accordance with the policy, but their understanding of them is superficial - the modern educational discourse is a mixture of competing and unclear ideas, which leave the teachers confused about their role (Biesta et al., 2015).

The approach that ascribes learning to the school as an organization does not allow to understand the essence of leadership, because it does not study the wider sociological and philosophical context, the role of structures and agents, which in interaction create the possibility to understand the existing strategies (Woods, 2007). For example, Kovačević and colleagues (Kovačevič et al., 2023), studying school leadership in the former Yugoslavia found that older teachers are still influenced by the socialist education system, fear change and do not see themselves as agents of change, instead trying to maintain the status quo. Also, the group of authors expressed the assumption that school leaders and organizational culture can have limited influence in an environment where resource availability has to be fought for and reward systems exist.

Finally, the school as a learning organization approach demonstrates the view that management today provides a solution to all complications, thus reducing school learning to a technical process where social aspects can be ignored (Thrupp & Willmont, 2003). However, schools are institutionally, socially, and politically complex structures that act as mediators to mitigate external influences, and they can develop systems that resist change, rather than yield to (Brown, 2004). The learning organization does not allow such a vision.

Believing in leadership as the solution to all the problems existing in the school, it is impossible to understand the complex nature of learning, as well as the changes that take place without the active participation of the leader within the institution, therefore, to learn about the processes taking place in the school, a social theory is needed, which helps to understand and characterize what is happening, thus reducing the risk that conducted research resembles management consulting (Fitz, 1999). Changes in education research have been brought about by the merging of social and cultural theories, interpreting learning as a social process that is formed, supported, and maintained by cultural systems (Tomasello, 2016). Such a theoretical point of view would allow overcoming the listed shortcomings of the learning organization approach.

Currently, new ideas about what it means to teach and learn are changing in the world - replacing the pedagogy of the industrial society (transfer of facts from the teacher to the student) with a knowledge society, which requires active participation of students, motivation ensuring deep learning (Lonka, 2018). When facing the new, the learning culture can be full of contradictions, creating tension and conflicts that prevent the implementation of the intended changes (James & Biesta, 2007). Therefore, it can be said that the changes in education, the transition to the competence approach, creating a knowledge society, can create disagreements, and not knowing the processes of how these contradictions arise and are maintained or reduced, will prevent the implementation of the intended.

Knowing the culture that affects teaching and learning can solve several challenges that schools and systems face, described by different authors, for example: how to promote the transformation of social practices from the dominant transfer of knowledge to work with knowledge (Hakkarainen, 2009); how to reduce power relations at school (in the field) by promoting teacher agency (Aoyoma, 2021); how teachers learn every day, situated because the existing knowledge acquisition process does not change practices in the classroom (Tarnanen et al., 2021); whether and how to change the student's identity in conditions where cultural expectations prevent the implementation of appropriate pedagogical approaches (James, Davies & Biesta, 2007).

The concept of learning culture can be interpreted narrowly, for example, Gil and colleagues (2021) describe it as the process between the teacher learning and the delivery of knowledge to the classroom, with the teacher taking/not taking responsibility for it.

This work will use a broader theoretical perspective of learning culture, where the authors James and colleagues (James & Biesta, 2007; Hodkinson et al., 2007b) propose to recognize learning by connecting people's individual growth process with the context and setting in which it occurs, thereby explaining in the interaction of what factors students' opportunities to learn are formed (Hodkinson, 2008). The authors use the anthropological definition of culture, meaning a way of life that is expressed through actions and the process of communication (Hodkinson et al., 2007a).

The theory of learning culture, as opposed to the school as a learning organization, emphasizes that the improvement of learning is related to the transformation of culture, which is easy to express in verbal form, but relatively difficult to realize in life, because culture is the result of the interaction of very different influences (Biesta et al., 2007). Different schools have different beliefs about how things are done, how things should be done, and opportunities to influence and change culture will also vary from place to place (James & Biesta, 2007).

The authors of the theory to cognize learning emphasize a set of four important concepts that help to understand the complex nature of learning (Hodkinson et al., 2008, James & Biesta, 2007).

The inseparability of individual involvement and social interaction in the learning process. The experienced situations and emotions influence how an individual feels and acts, how much they participate in learning or avoid it. This point confirms the recent findings that in the learning process the content, interrelationships and cognitive engagement are subjective, accompanied by emotional reactions that can support or undermine the individual's participation and achievement (National Academies of Sciences…, 2018). The importance of social situations in content learning. Learning content cannot be separated from the social situations in which it is learned. The importance of social situations is related to the situated learning theory, which explains learning as participation in everyday socially organized activities, learning norms and rules to become a competent group member (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The essential role of this influence was found by Nasir (2002) describes teenagers who, while playing basketball, were able to apply complex mathematical operations - calculate average values and percentages, while they could not perform the same mathematical operations in the classroom.

The impact of institutional, social structures and agency. Learning cannot be separated from the social and economic pressures, the influence of the media, which are felt at schools, affecting their performance. In the field of education, there is a tension between teacher's beliefs, values and wider institutional discourse and education policy (Biesta et al., 2015). Biesta and colleagues believe that there are countries where teacher agency is currently trying to be replaced by a data-driven approach, although teacher agency is an integral part of good, meaningful education.

The role of power. The learning process is also influenced by power exercised at the institutional or micro-political level. Sometimes it is difficult to separate the effects of structure, agency, and power as separate points. They are related to Bourdieu's theory of practice, using it as a thinking tool (field and habitus, capital, and power, misrecognition), which allows learning to be seen as interactions, also identifying the consequences it creates. Similarly, the interaction of structures, agency and power is included in the concepts of audit culture, audit society - the concept of what can and should be controlled (Apple, 2005; Power, 1994), and because of this influence, some people start believing that the exercise of control is an important part of learning (Hodkinson, 2008).

Considering the preconceptions described by the authors of the theory, the following basic assumptions are put forward, which are applicable to the theoretical understanding and knowledge of learning and learning culture (Hodkinson et al., 2007 a).

First, learning cannot be limited to intellectual activity. Learning is the process by which an individual's system of dispositions is recognized, developed, challenged, or changed. Therefore, the culture of learning is not focused on content, but on the study of the social practices in which people learn by participating.

Second, the interaction between learning culture and individuals is mutual. People influence the formation of learning culture and culture influences the formation of human behaviour. A person's ability to influence a specific culture depends on his/her position in the field, his/her disposition towards the specific culture and the capital (social, cultural, and economic) he/ she has at his/her disposal.

Thirdly, learning culture allows, promotes, hinders, or excludes the emergence and existence of specific social practices. Therefore, one of the functions of a culture theory of learning is to understand how culture facilitates or limits the opportunities for learning among its participants.

The theory of learning culture allows identifying barriers at different levels that limit effective learning, as well as synergies that promote learning; explain the extent to which learning depends on the teamwork of teachers and what lies beyond these boundaries (Hodkinson, Biesta, Postlethwaithe & Maull, 2007). Therefore, it is essential to use it when learning the processes of change at school and the education system.

Cultural approaches to learning are also subject to criticism, for example, they remove the focus from learning as knowledge acquisition (Besar, 2018). Looking more broadly, it can be said that approaches that do not have clear accountability and monitoring implemented in schools can threaten the progress of the education system by introducing harmful practices (UNESCO, 2017).

However, it would be advisable to use the theory of learning culture in the education research Latvia, in order to be aware of existing social practices that promote or limit the learning of students and teachers, including recognizing that the learning process at school can be not only a positive benefit; would understand the reasons for the emergence and maintenance of these practices, which are influenced by the school or other external bodies. Such a theoretical approach would allow us to understand how to help implement changes in the field of education by reducing tension and overcoming conflicts in order to create a knowledge society in Latvia.

Conclusions

- Both described theoretical approaches – the view of the school as a (learning) organization and the theory of learning culture are focused on the improvement of learning, but they interpret the opportunities to implement change differently.
- In the approach of the school as a learning organization it is assumed that the school can become an ideal structure that overcomes existing challenges, introduces changes, influencing the growth of both students and school staff. This approach is widely described in the documents of the education policy of Latvia, it is planned to be used in school quality assessment.
- The organizational approach has significant shortcomings - it does not sufficiently explain the processes taking place at school, their causes, it does not sufficiently recognize the difficulties and obstacles that both institutions and people face when implementing changes. Also, it overestimates the role of the management in making changes, not considering the structures that influence the school's processes, and is outside the school's control circle, thus preventing us

from learning and understanding the essence of leadership, the influence of other agents at a specific place.

- Research in the world, exploring teaching and learning, increasingly describe the influence of culture, which is formed, maintained and changed by structures and agents in mutual interaction, determining the value of education, the practices implemented at schools, including recognizing that culture can not only promote learning, but also reduce participation.
- Viewing teaching and learning as a process influenced by culture, it is recognized that implementing changes in education can be a long, complex process and can be implemented differently at different institutions. Local practices and experiences can significantly influence how changes are perceived and evaluated, their inadequacy.
- The cultural approach is criticized because it removes the focus from learning as the acquisition of knowledge and neglecting the monitoring function, schools can introduce harmful practices.
- However, by expanding the study of learning at schools from the learning organization to the framework of the theory of learning culture, it is possible to learn how the mutual interaction of different parties creates or limits learning opportunities for different students. The theory of learning culture in research can help to find answers to the questions - why students learn or do not learn, why teachers change or do not change the usual practices and how the management is able or unable to influence the course of these processes, so it would be recommended to use this theory in the research of the educational processes, on the way to the knowledge society.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.016

Everybody Has Their Own Image: Teacher Autonomy of the University Teachers

Eda Karabacak[1] Instructor; **Karel Nemejc**[2] Prof. Dr.; **Dilruba Kürüm Yapıcıoğlu**[3] Ass. Prof. Dr.
Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Turkey[1]; Czech University of Life Sciences, The Czech Republic[2];
Anadolu University, Turkey[3]
eda.karabacak@dpu.edu.tr[1]; nemejc@ivp.czu.cz[2]; dilrubak@anadolu.edu.tr[3]

Abstract: Teacher autonomy is defined as teachers' freedom to make their own decisions about the curriculum, their professional development, and their participation in the administrative decision-making processes. The term teacher autonomy is commonly discussed in the context of primary and secondary schools. However, it is also important to understand how faculty members perceive and experience their teacher autonomy to empower them professionally. As a result, the aim of this research is to understand how the university teachers define and experience teacher autonomy. The data of this basic qualitative research were collected through an open-ended survey and semi-structured interviews. The survey data were collected from nine participants and the interview data were collected from four participants. The data were analysed with thematic analysis. The results showed that teacher autonomy means being free to make decisions, taking responsibility, freedom and having the trust in the professionalism of a university teacher. The participants feel autonomous in all three dimensions of teacher autonomy. The approach of the management, collaboration, and professional development foster their teacher autonomy while work schedule, accreditation and inexperience limit their teacher autonomy as university teachers.

Keywords: teacher autonomy, curricular autonomy, professional development, adult education

Introduction

Teacher autonomy is a broad term which has been discussed in many different contexts. During the past decades, different researchers focused on different components or dimension of teacher autonomy. As a result, the research has changed what teacher autonomy means or should mean. L.C. Pearson & B.W. Hall (1993) define teacher autonomy as the teacher's ability to control themselves and their work environment. I.A. Friedman (1999) describes teacher autonomy as the teacher's power to make decisions about the teaching process, and to feel free to participate in the administrative decision-making processes. On the other hand, E.M. Skaalvik & S. Skaalvik (2014) define autonomy as the teacher's freedom to determine their goals, teaching methods and strategies in line with their own educational beliefs and values. Likewise, A. Grant et al. (2020) define teacher autonomy as the degree of freedom, independence, and power a teacher has over the curriculum, teaching, assessment, school practices and professional development. On the other hand, in higher education level, autonomy is generally discussed with the term academic freedom which can be described as freedom in terms of teaching practices as well as the freedom of universities to conduct research and publish the results (UNESCO, 1997). Based on these definitions, teacher autonomy can be described as the teacher's freedom to make curricular decisions, to have a voice in administrative decision-making processes, and to make decisions about their professional development.

Besides the variety of definitions of teacher autonomy, there are also different classifications of teacher autonomy. One of these classifications was presented by P.C. Pearson & B.W. Hall (1993) who discuss teacher autonomy in two dimensions: general autonomy and curricular autonomy. I.A. Friedman (1999) explains teacher autonomy in six domains which are "establishing school identity and praxis, teaching and achievement evaluation, parental involvement, staff development, teaching extracurricular subjects, and curriculum change and development. R. Smith & S. Erdogan (2008) classify teacher autonomy as professional action and professional development. On the other hand, I.H. Öztürk (2011) discusses teacher autonomy in three domains which are "planning and implementation of teaching, participation of teachers in important decisions about education and school management, development of professional knowledge and competence of teachers". J. Ulas & M. Aksu (2015), who developed a teacher autonomy scale for Turkish teachers, state there are three dimensions of teacher autonomy which are "autonomy in instructional planning and implementation, autonomy in professional development, and autonomy in determining the framework of the curriculum".

The literature shows that teachers who have higher levels of autonomy encourage learner autonomy, they are open to help students, and solve problems (Little, 1995; Han, 2020). In addition, autonomous teachers are more eager to have responsibility and control over the teaching practices. Autonomous teachers are also more willing to improve themselves professionally (Lamb, 2000). O.A. Gavrilyuk et al. (2015) argue that teacher autonomy in higher education contributes to the autonomy of the institution they work for, it also contributes to the development of more democratic and more innovative education systems. When teachers have higher levels of teacher autonomy, they can be empowered professionally. They must be empowered by giving chances to make decisions in classroom level and state level as this will contribute to their self-confidence, self-efficacy, and sense of professionalism.

The studies on autonomy in the literature are concentrated at the primary and secondary education while the studies carried out at the higher education level are very limited. It can be said that the reason for this is that university teachers are independent of any authority due to the autonomous structure of universities (Fin, 2020). However, there are a few studies on teacher autonomy of university teachers that highlight their role as teachers. For example, M. Yasué et al. (2019) found that university teachers feel the pressure of publishing which negatively affects their teacher autonomy. T. Yıldırım (2017) found that instructors of English had low levels of autonomy, and administrators believed instructors should not be autonomous in terms of evaluation and institutional activities. In addition, rules and regulations, the lack of curricular flexibility and knowledge of methodology were found to be factors that negatively affect their teacher autonomy. A.S.Bilgili (2016), on the other hand, argue that curriculum development is a dimension of academic freedom and university teachers should have autonomy to decide the courses that will be taught, the assessment methods and graduation criteria.

K.R. Menezes & M.R.C.G. Novaes (2019) state that university teachers define autonomy as the capacity to act in a way that balances the values of the institution and the needs that arise in the learning-teaching process. As teacher autonomy is related to teaching practices, professional development, and participation in administrative decision-making process, it can be said that it is crucial for university teachers to be autonomous to teach effectively, develop themselves professionally, and improve the quality of their institution. Therefore, understanding teacher autonomy in higher education is considered to be important since the results of the study can contribute to competencies of the university teachers and improve their teaching programs. The aim of this research is to understand how the university teachers define and experience teacher autonomy. Four questions that were formed to answer in the research are: 1) How do the university teachers define teacher autonomy?, 2) How do the university teachers explain their teacher autonomy in terms of administrative decision-making process, professional development, and the curriculum?, 3) What are the factors that foster teacher autonomy based on their experiences?, 4) What are the factors that limit teacher autonomy based on their experiences?

Methodology

This study was designed as basic qualitative research which focuses on "understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, 13). Since this research aims to understand teacher autonomy from the participants' point of view, the most appropriate design was considered to be basic qualitative research.

Participants: The participants are the university teachers who work at an institute of a university in Prague, the Czech Republic. The survey data were collected from nine university teachers while the interview data were collected from four university teachers. The survey participants have teaching experience at university level ranging from three to thirty-five years while the interview participants' experience ranges from three to twelve years. All the participants have a doctoral degree. Two survey participants and one interview participant have a managerial position. In the article, the survey participants are referred as participants (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2) while the interview participants are referred by nicknames.

Materials and measures: The data were collected through an open-ended survey and semi-structured interviews. Open-ended surveys are generally used in small study groups when the participants are expected to share their opinions freely and in detail (Bell, 2005). As a result, open-ended survey, which was prepared based on the literature by the researchers, was used in order to collect detailed data. The

survey consists of three likert-type questions about the participants' perceived level of autonomy in the three dimensions of teacher autonomy. The twelve open-ended questions are about how much freedom they have in terms of the dimensions of teacher autonomy and factors affecting their teacher autonomy. After the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted as they help the researcher to collect detailed data about the opinions, knowledge, and feelings of the participants (Creswell, 1994). The semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the procedures for administrative decision-making, curriculum development and professional development activities in the institute to develop an in-depth understanding about how they experience teacher autonomy in their own context. The interviews also gave the researchers a chance to clarify some of the participants' answers in the survey and to collect in-depth data through their personal stories, opinions, and feelings. The thirteen interview questions were prepared by the researchers based on the literature and the answers of the survey participants.

Procedure: The survey data were collected online between 4th-31st August 2022. The interviews were conducted between 5th-8th September 2022 by the first author of this study. Both in the survey and the interview, the participation was voluntary and anonymous. Two researchers of the study analysed the data thematically. To make the quantitative findings reader-friendly, the results of the 5-point likert questions were presented in five categories: not autonomous (1), somewhat autonomous (2), autonomous (3), very autonomous (4), and completely autonomous (5).

Results and Discussions

The definitions of Teacher Autonomy

In the survey, the participants were asked how they define teacher autonomy as a university teacher. The categories that emerged from the analysis are *being free to make decisions, freedom, confidence, censorship* and *taking responsibility*.

Four participants said teacher autonomy is being free to make decisions. For example, one of them draws attention to being free to make their own decisions and plans related to their job. However, they also highlight the importance of taking the rules of the institution into consideration. They express their opinion by saying: "I perceive my autonomy in the way that I am free to make decisions, plan, etc. within my profession, but with regard to the rules of the university/faculty/department - these need to be respected. In the event that I do not identify with them, I at least have the opportunity to talk about it with the relevant bosses/colleagues and be aware that either there will be a change or not." (Participant 1). Iida (2009) suggests that teacher autonomy should not mean isolation or being free from school policies, educational policies of the government. The teacher autonomy should be developed within the framework of the policies, the curriculum, and the students' needs.

One of the participants defined teacher autonomy as "autonomy in the field of pedagogical work, defining and implementing the content and program of teaching." (Participant 3). Another participant defined teacher autonomy as "having the possibility to manage the time for the preparation of the teaching and how it will look independently, having the possibility to decide on the form of the content of the courses, which I guarantee." (Participant 6). One participant also defined teacher autonomy as being free to be creative in teaching. These definitions show that the university teachers define teacher autonomy as being free from control and making their own decisions about their teaching. These findings are in line with the findings of Ramos (2006).

Two participants described teacher autonomy as having freedom. One of them highlighted having freedom in content, teaching, and professional development while the other stressed having "freedom in the preparation and implementation of teaching" (Participant 8). One participant defined teacher autonomy as "confidence in the professionalism of a university teacher." (Participant 4) while another participant described teacher autonomy as being free from the control of authority by stating "absence of censorship" (Participant 5). Another participant defined teacher autonomy as taking responsibility by stating "It primarily means professional and personal responsibility for me." (Participant 9).

During the interviews the participants were asked about the characteristics of an autonomous teacher. Petra said an autonomous teacher is someone who wants to improve themselves while Alena said an autonomous teacher can choose their methods of teaching, forms of examination by themselves. She also said an autonomous teacher has the responsibility to choose how they want to teach. Jakub said an

autonomous teacher is someone who feels free to make decisions. However, he stated an autonomous teacher is not completely free, they should also respect the rules and requirements of the institution.

Experienced Teacher Autonomy

The level of teacher autonomy that the participants experience in their institution in terms of the three dimensions of teacher autonomy are presented in this section.

Teacher Autonomy in Administrative Decision-making Process

In the survey, the participants were asked to rate their level of autonomy in terms of participating the decision-making process such as budget planning, class timetable, student selection, rules, and regulations in their institution. Then, they were asked to explain the reasons for the rate they have chosen for their level of autonomy. The quantitative data show that one participant perceives themselves completely autonomous in terms of their participation in the administrative decision-making process because they can express their opinion on everything in the institution. One survey participant rated their teacher autonomy in terms of decision-making process as very autonomous especially due to their managerial position in the institution. The findings of J.U.Wilches (2007) support this research as they suggest that teacher autonomy in decision-making highly depends on their position at work, and school directors have higher levels of autonomy in decision-making process. During the interview, Jakub, who has a managerial position, stated that there are times he does not feel very autonomous in the meetings held with the higher authorities because sometimes politics and diplomacy limit him to share his opinion.

In the survey, six participants rated their level of autonomy as autonomous in terms of participating the decision-making process. One participant said they will not influence the decisions much because they do not have a managerial position while one participant said administrative decisions are made by the management, but they have the freedom to explain their opinions. Another participant said they are autonomous "within the framework of established rules and regulations" (Participant 3). Two participants highlighted the importance of cooperation with the management. Likewise, J. Hunzicker (2011) found that when teachers are given the space to participate in decision-making process, it creates trust among them, and they are more eager to improve themselves professionally.

In the interviews, the participants were asked about the factors that affect their autonomy in terms of the decision-making process. Communication, cooperation, positive atmosphere, and positive messages from the management foster teacher autonomy while publication pressure limits it.

Four of the participants said communication among the employees is an important factor that contributes to their autonomy. For example, Petra said they know each other well, they spend time outside, they are close and open, so these help her to share her opinions freely. Alena stressed that the management gives the employees the space to make their own decisions and they care about the satisfaction of the employees. Likewise, Jakub, who is in the management, stated that they discuss ideas with the colleagues, and they take the requirements and recommendations of the colleagues into consideration.

Michal said the cooperation among the colleagues in the institute contributes to his autonomy. He also stated that they receive positive emails and phone calls about their work which helps him to feel free to share his opinions. Likewise, N.M.Garvin (2007) found that the cooperation among the teachers was a factor that supports teacher autonomy. In addition, Alena said the positive atmosphere in their workplace is a contributing factor to her autonomy because they could share opinions and solve the problems easily. In his research, A.Tadić (2015) found out that teachers feel free to express their opinions about decision-making process when there is a positive atmosphere at work. Two participants stated the publication requirement is a limiting factor to their autonomy because they feel pressured. For example, Alena said the pressure for publications from the higher authorities interfere with the teaching activities.

Teacher Autonomy in Professional Development

In the survey, the participants were asked to rate their level of autonomy in terms of their professional development. They were also asked to explain their reasons for the rate they have chosen for their level of autonomy in professional development. Five participants rated their level of teacher autonomy in terms of professional development as completely autonomous. Three participants rated their level of

autonomy as very autonomous. One of them said they can decide on the professional development activities they want to attend. On the other hand, they stated "I have to be in line with the development of the workplace and its needs" (Participant 6). One of the participants rated their level of autonomy as autonomous. They explained the importance of being autonomous in professional development by stating "Autonomy is the basis of the professional development of academic staff" (Participant 8).

During the interviews, the participants were also asked about the factors that affect their teacher autonomy in terms of professional development. Management support and positive atmosphere were found to foster teacher autonomy in terms of professional development while time and financial resources limit it.

Three of the interview participants said the support of the management is an important factor that foster their teacher autonomy. For example, Alena said the management was very supportive during her PhD and she did not have any problems with taking the classes and work in the institute at the same time. During the interview, Jakub also said the management of the institute support the professional development of the teachers. Michal stated the positive atmosphere among the colleagues contributes to his professional development because they attend trainings together and he does not feel any pressure.

During the interviews, three participants said time is a factor that limits their professional development. For example, Michal said because of his workload, sometimes he does not have enough time for professional development. In addition, Jakub said sometimes financial resources is a limit for professional development as the institution cannot always support them financially due to the lack of financial resources. In line with this research, P.B. Kadel (2020) found that the university did not support the teachers financially; as a result, teachers were not able to attend professional development activities.

Teacher Autonomy in the Curriculum

In the survey, the participants were asked to rate their level of autonomy in terms of curriculum. Then, they were asked to explain their reasons for the rate they have chosen for their level of autonomy. Three participants rated their level of teacher autonomy in terms of the curriculum as completely autonomous. For example, one participant said, "In terms of curriculum development, I am completely autonomous and have the opportunity to express myself, propose, support, contradict everything related to it, discuss with my colleagues, find meaningful solutions" (Participant 1). Two participants rated their curricular autonomy as very autonomous while four participants rated themselves as autonomous. Two of them said they are autonomous within the framework of accreditation. Another participant said the curriculum is developed in cooperation, they said "When creating the curriculum, cooperation with the team of colleagues is necessary, it is not a completely independent activity" (Participant 9). The findings show that the participants have autonomy in terms of the curriculum. In his research, P.A.Marshall (2019) found that the university teachers had high level of curricular autonomy regardless of their position.

In terms of determining goals and learning objectives, four participants said the accreditation gives them a framework and they can make individual decisions around the framework. In terms of the content, four participants said they make their decisions around the accreditation framework, too. Another participant stated they make their decisions about the learning objectives and the content by taking professionalism, labour market and the student need into consideration. They stated, "I am really allowed to make my own decisions in this respect, of course with regard to professionalism, expertise, quality, labour market requirements, needs of the students and society etc" (Participant 1).

In terms of the teaching-learning process, two participants said it depends on the approach of the teacher while two participants said they think about the needs of the students. In terms of assessment and evaluation, two participants said they make their independent decisions by following the rules and regulations of the university. During the interview, Petra shared a similar opinion by saying "There's a regulation, I know that this course is finished by exam but if it's an oral exam or just a test or quiz or something it's up to me" (Interview 2). She also said the examination rules of the institution is not a limit to her autonomy because she can choose her assessment techniques freely.

During the interviews, the participants were asked about the factors that affect their teacher autonomy in terms of the curriculum. Collaboration and management support are factors that foster teacher autonomy in terms of the curriculum while teacher competency and accreditation are factors limiting it.

Four interview participants said the collaboration among the colleagues is important. For example, Petra said they talk about the teaching activities they do in their classes. Alena said they collaborate to develop the curriculum so that students can reach the competencies of the program. Likewise, Jakub said "There is a collaboration based on discussions usually, but you are the specialist of your course so you are let's say the developer, but you can be influenced or advised by the colleagues… to be honest as for the pedagogy I, I cannot know everything, but I have my colleagues and we discuss what's needed and advise the colleagues as a team for example" (Interview 4).

Two participants said the support of the management is a factor that fosters their teacher autonomy in terms of curriculum. For example, Jakub said he has the trust of the management by stating, "I am given the responsibility and I am given the trust by the management of the university and of course if needed we discuss the matters during the sessions of the management of the university" (Interview 4). Likewise, Michal stated he can discuss ideas with the management by saying, "…they know my, it's my it's my presentation that's my image" (Interview 1). Based on these, it can be said that the positive communication between the teachers and management increase teachers' autonomy in the curriculum.

In the interview, Alena said the teacher competency is an important factor that limit her teacher autonomy by giving a personal experience. To be the guarantor of a course, the accreditation office requires having a PhD. When she started working in the institution, she did not have a PhD, but she was the only teacher with thirteen years of experience. However, her experience was less important than having a degree. Likewise, M.Yavuz (2016) states that teacher autonomy and teacher competency are intertwined. The level of autonomy increases as the level of teacher competency increases. Another limiting factor that the participants mentioned is the accreditation. However, they also said it is necessary. For example, Petra said the curriculum was done before she started working in the institute, so she followed what she was given by the accreditation. However, she said she is not bothered by the situation. Jakub, on the other hand, said he feels happy to follow the rules because he is given the space to make changes. He also said accreditation is important to create an order and prevent chaos.

Factors that foster teacher autonomy

Both in the survey and in the interviews, the participants were asked about the factors that foster their teacher autonomy. The factors that emerged from the data analysis are *management support, collaboration*, and *professional development*.

Five survey participants and two interview participants said management support is a factor that promotes their teacher autonomy. For example, one survey participant and two interview participants said the trust from the management that they are doing their job well is a factor that fosters their teacher autonomy. Two survey participants and one interview participants said collaboration among colleagues is a factor that fosters their teacher autonomy. Another survey participant said what fosters their teacher autonomy is "openness in communication with colleagues and mutual support and help also within the framework of teaching and preparation for it" (Participant 6). Two survey participants and one interview participant said professional development is a factor that fosters their teacher autonomy. For example, two survey participants said further education, learning new things and professional development increase their teacher autonomy.

Factors that limit teacher autonomy

Both in the survey and in the interviews, the participants were asked about the factors that limit their teacher autonomy. The factors that emerged from the data analysis are *work schedule, accreditation*, and *inexperience*.

Two survey participants said their work schedule is sometimes a factor that limits their teacher autonomy. For example, one of them said because of the work schedule, they cannot organize everything related to teaching as the way they want. Likewise, Yasué et al. (2019) found teaching load of the university teachers decreases their autonomy. Another participant said they need to respect the need of all colleagues, so their work schedule is not always satisfactory, and this is a factor that limits their teacher autonomy. One survey participant said accreditation is a limiting factor for the content of the teaching. In the interview, Michal said the teacher with less experience feel less autonomous.

Conclusions

For the university teachers in this research, teacher autonomy means being free to make their own decisions related to teaching. Teacher autonomy also means taking responsibility, being free from the control of the authority, and having the trust in the professionalism of a university teacher. The participants describe an autonomous teacher as someone who is open to improve themselves, who has the responsibility of their own teaching practices, who is free to make decisions by respecting rules, and who is open to help their students and colleagues.

The participants feel free to share their opinions and participate in the administrative decision-making processes. The cooperation between the management and the academic staff is an important factor that support their teacher autonomy in terms of their participation in the administrative decision-making process. Communication among the employees, the positive atmosphere, and the positive messages from the management are the factors that encourage them to participate in the decision-making process. On the other hand, the publication is a factor that limits their autonomy. The participants feel free to make their own decisions about their professional development. The support from the management and the positive atmosphere in the institute foster their teacher autonomy. Not having enough time and financial resources is a limit to their professional development.

The participants feel free to make their decisions about the curriculum. However, they make their decisions around the accreditation framework. The cooperation among the colleagues and the support from the management are factors that foster their teacher autonomy. Not having the competencies that the accreditation office requires and the accreditation itself are factors that limit their autonomy. The support from the management, collaboration, and professional development foster teacher autonomy of the university teachers. On the other hand, work schedule, accreditation, and inexperience limit their teacher autonomy.

Further research with a broader research sample from different universities would be beneficial to understand teacher autonomy of university teachers in depth. The role of the management approach is a key factor to teacher autonomy and further research can be done to find out what managers do and should do to foster teacher autonomy of university teachers.

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Personality Development in Diverse and Inclusive Environments

DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.017

A Hypothetical Model of Interactive Career Development in Communities of Practice: Extracting the Essence of Practice from the Danish "Efterskole"

Sachiko Morita
Kochi University, Japan
s.morita@kochi-u.ac.jp

Abstract: In recent years, the social environment surrounding us has been changing rapidly due to globalization and advancement in technology. In addition, Career Self-Reliance has become an increasingly important aspect in an individual's career development, especially in these unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Related to this Career Self-Reliance, the importance of the communities of practice (hereinafter, called "CoPs") has recently been gaining attention. CoPs are defined as "A group of people who have the interest or passion in something and who learn how to do it better by interacting regularly". However, previous studies have not yet elucidated the details of the process by which participation in a CoP promotes individual career development. In addition, most of the previous research have been based on samples of working individuals and in organizations so there has been little accumulation of studies targeting young people. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following two questions based on a case study of a CoP called "Efterskole" with a sample group of young people especially in Denmark: (1) To clarify the impact of participation in CoPs on career development in youths. (2) To clarify the process of having the above mentioned impacts and construct a hypothetical model of interactive career development in communities of practice for young people. We conducted interviews and observational surveys in three Efterskoles during 2016-2017 and analysed the interview data using "Steps for Coding and Theorization". As regards research question (1), there were three main impacts of participation in CoPs on young people's career development: (a) enhancing social skills, (b) acquisition of a sense of role fulfilment in a community and (c) obtaining opportunities for exploring new perspectives for career and further learning. In particular, (a) enhancing social skills was an effect not noted in previous studies targeting adults. As regards research question (2), a hypothetical model of the interaction process that brings about the three impacts was developed. In addition, it is revealed that the three impacts are brought about by single-loop learning and double-loop learning within the community.

Keywords: career development, communities of practice, Denmark, Efterskole, adolescence

Introduction

In recent years, the social environment surrounding us has been changing rapidly due to globalization and advancement in the technology. In addition, Career Self-Reliance will become increasingly important aspect in an individual's career development, especially in these unprecedented times that we are experiencing due to the covid-9 pandemic.

Related to this Career Self-Reliance, the importance of the communities of practice (hereinafter, called "CoPs") has recently been gaining attention. CoPs are defined as "A group of people who has the interest or passion in something and who learn how to do it better by interacting regularly (Wenger et al., 2002)". The concept of CoP has expanded from learning research to management research through major studies such as Brown & Duguid (1991), Wenger (1998), Wenger et al. (2002) and others. From there, it spread to research on the effects on career development as one of the perspectives on what outcomes a community of practice leads to in the context of management studies.

For instance, Arthur et al. (2005), who proposed boundaryless careers, point out that from the perspective of boundary less careers, support for an individual's career from colleagues, mentors, and supervisors within the same organization is not sufficient. Therefore, they pay attention to CoPs as communities that support individuals' careers by bringing in outsiders beyond the restrictive boundaries of the organization. Hall (1996), who advocated a protean career, also asserted that, in terms of new careers, there is limited value to be gained by developing growth-enhancing relationships in one organisation or domain. Therefore, he points out that growth-enhancing relationships outside work (GROWs; growth-enhancing relationships outside work) are an increasingly crucial opportunity for

career development and states that the real value of GROWs is the change they bring to self-perception and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, Tremblay (2003) noted that the new careers of the future, described as 'nomadic' or 'discontinuous', will trigger a rethinking of our vision of organisations and organisational theory, and that the new careers will base careers on informal communities. As mentioned above, it is predicted that, in place of ever-changing corporate and other organisations, communities of practice will become the focus of individual career development and career development support.

In Japan, research on CoPs and individual career development has been accumulating in the last few years. A series of studies by Araki (2007, 2009) is a major contribution to the relevant research area in Japan on this subject. Araki (2007, 2009) proposed suitable CoPs to enhance adult careers self-reliance, through questionnaires and interview surveys with Japanese businesspersons. However, Morita (2021) showed as a result of literature reviews that previous studies have not yet elucidated the details of the process by which participation in a CoP promotes individual career development. In addition, she stated that most of the previous research have been based on samples of working individuals and in organizations so that there has been little accumulation of studies targeted young people. Therefore, this research aims to the following two points based on a case study of a CoP called “Efterskole” attended traditionally by young people especially in Denmark:

- To clarify the impact of participation in CoPs on career development on youths
- To clarify the process of having the abovementioned impacts and constructs a hypothetical model of interactive career development in communities of practice for young people.

Theoretical basis

In this study, we use the model of social interaction (Kikuchi & Horike, 1994) in the field of social psychology as a theoretical framework (Figure 1). This model was developed based on the knowledge accumulated in the process of social skill research. According to Kikuchi & Horike (1994), the skills required for social interaction consist of encoding, decoding and control skills. They stated in his study that decoding skills control the process of operating the “person-situation schema” involved in the perception of the situation by selecting and discarding various cues provided by others and situations. The encoding skills govern the process of expressing the results of interpretation as actions. Based on the information processing theory in cognitive psychology, the flow of processing from decoding to encoding can be regarded as an automatic process. On the other hand, there is another processing flow in which cues such as novelty, similarity, attractiveness, and vigilance trigger the activation of a “control schema”. When this schema is activated, the encoding of emotions and needs are blocked, and the encoding is involved after the process. This study tried to reveal the process by which participation in CoPs promotes career development of youth by applying Kikuchi & Horike (1994)'s model to the interaction between newcomers and experienced members there.

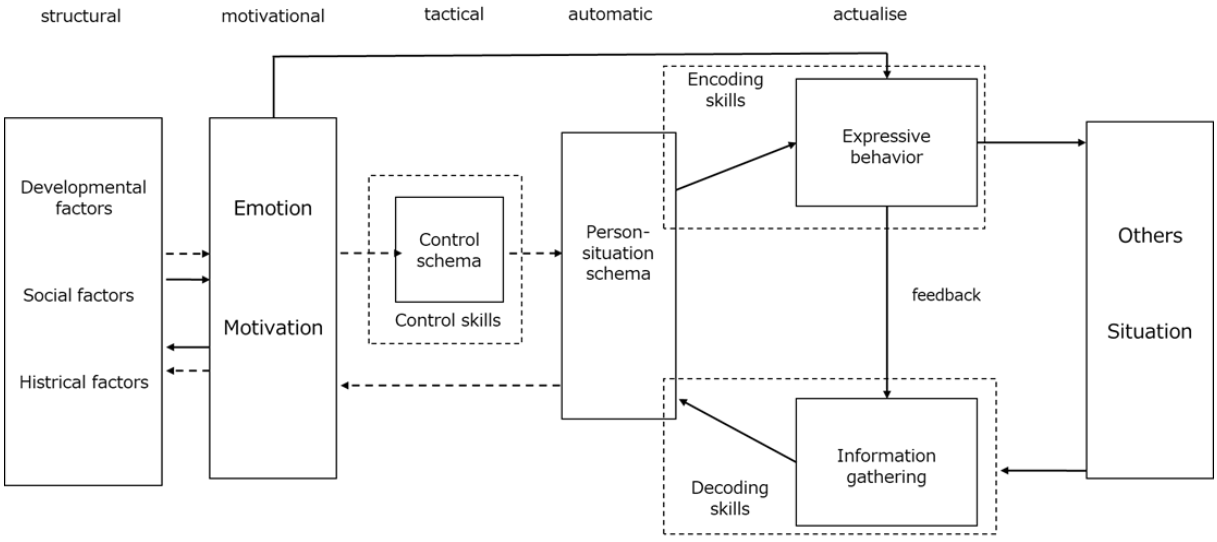

Figure 1. **Model of Social Interaction (Kikuchi & Horike, 1994)**

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the research site for this study is Efterskole, a traditional community of practice attended by Danish youth. This section provides an overview of Eftaskole and why Eftaskole is a suitable site for this research. According to Fedorenko (2019), the first Efterskole was set up in 1851 by a Danish teacher Kold (1816–1870) who exploited the pedagogical ideas of the famous Danish poet and priest Grundtvig (1783– 1872) – a founder of the Danish folk high schools. Although Grundtvig considered the folk high school to be only for adults, Kold Kold believed that such education was also needed for young people under the age of 18. Inherited from this idea of Kold, Efterskole still offers a unique education for young people, aged 14-18. Danaher (n.d.) states that one of the characteristics of Efterskole is a residential institution. Although it is in many ways similar to the concept of boarding school, it has rather clear distinctions. The Danish Efterskole is based on the idea of combining academic learning with that of general 'life-learning' as a preparatory tool for all aspects of life, as well as facilitating an understanding of 'the individual in a community'. The teacher is responsible for both teaching and supervision outside of school hours. This means that the teachers and students are together all day from the time the students wake up until they go to bed. This often opens up for a close, personal and nonformal relationship between students and teachers (Morita, 2018). Efterskoleforeningen (2015) states that the structured interaction which born because of the style of Efterskole's a residential institution creates frameworks and trust to ensure that life at an Efterskole does not end in chaos and anarchy. Efterskoleforeningen (2015) points out another interaction, the educational interaction in Efterskole as follows:

At an efterskole teachers and students are part of a number of different social practices that constantly have to be worked with. Teachers guide students through conversation, by asking and encouraging them to consider both professional and practical contexts. The educational interaction at these schools unfolds in many different contexts and frameworks – both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are not just teaching, they are also didactically present conducting serious and meaningful "learning" with knowledge, expertise and understanding from various viewpoints both inside and outside of the classroom. Through this educational interaction, pupils come to see that their lessons make sense; furthermore, they see a value in their lessons that they have not encountered before, which in turn creates authority and freedom.

As discussed above, community-based Efterskole, where continuous interaction between teachers and students or between students contributes to the acquisition of knowledge about their interests and to their personal development, is considered a suitable research site for this study.

We conducted interviews and observational surveys in three Efterskoles during 2016-2017. The interviewees are listed Table1. During the interviews, field notes were kept and the interviews were recorded on IC recorder with the permission of the interviewees. All interviewees approved that these contents may be published as academic conference, documents and papers.

Table 1

Data Collection Procedure

	Date	Institution	Interviewees (Title at that time)	Details of Observations
2016	November 14	Efterskole Association	Head of Communication	—
2017	September 14	Efterskole Association	Head of Communication Guidance consultant	—
	September 18	Flakkebjerg Efterskole	Principal	- Observation "Global Line" class and lunch - Informal interviews with two teachers - Informal conversation with 3 students and Tour of the school
	September 19	Haslev Idrætsefterskole	Principal Teacher（Danish, English, crossfit and gymnastics） Student 1 Student 2	- Observation during morning gathering and lunch - Tour of the school by the principal - Observation of dance and gymnastics classes
	September 20-21	Midtsjællands Efterskole	Principal Student 3 Student 4 Teacher（Danish, English, and Drama） Teacher（Religion, philosophy, drama, theater and English）	- Tour of the school by the principal - Observation of dinner and evening activities - Observation of morning walk, breakfast, and morning gathering - Observation of classes
	September 21	Efterskole Association	Head of Communication Guidance consultant	—

We analyzed the interview data using “Steps for Coding and Theorization: SCAT (Otani, 2019)”. SCAT is a method of qualitative data analysis developed by a Japanese researcher. SCAT was developed drawing upon the analytical procedure of the grounded theory approach (GTA), and is consists od the main features of GTA, generative coding and theorization. The analytical procedure of SCAT consists of 4 steps in coding as follows;

<1> Noteworthy words or phrases from the text

<2> paraphrazes of <1>

<3> concepts from out of the text that account for <2>

<4> themes, constructs in considerations of context

SCAT is also known for its analysis with all collected texts. It is said that the procedures of SCAT are clear and explicit and be suitable for analysis of small-scale data. Therefore, we believe that SCAT is appropriate for this study.

Results and Discussion

(1) The impact of participation in CoPs on career development on youths

The results indicated that there were three main impacts of participation in CoPs on young people's career development: (a) enhancing social skills, (b) acquisition of sense of role fulfillment in a community and (c) obtaining opportunities for exploring new perspectives for career and further learning. Two of these, “(b) acquisition of sense of role fulfilment in a community” and “(c) obtaining opportunities for exploring new perspectives for career and further learning” were shown to have similar effects in studies of adults. However, for “(a) enhancing social skills” was a unique effect found only for youth. The contrasting impact on adults from Araki (2021) and young people from this research is shown in Figure 2.

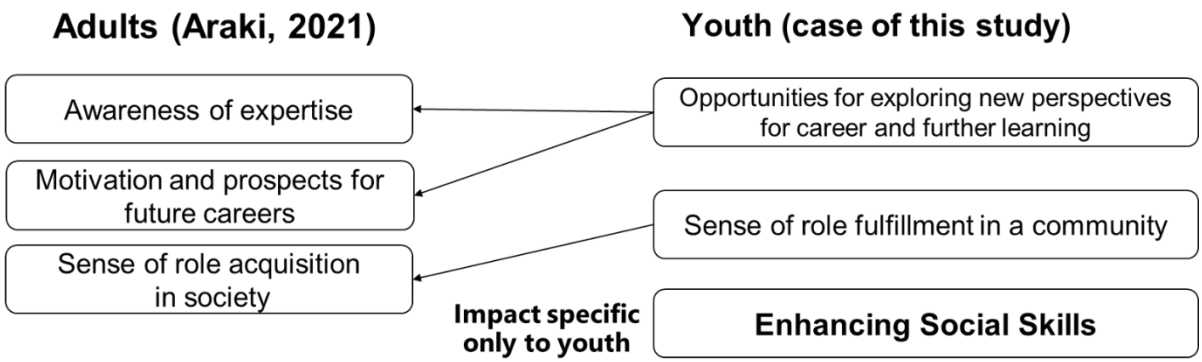

Figure 2. **The impact of participation in CoPs on career development compared to adults and young people**

Rani (2019) states that there are three social skills methods for developing social skills. They are Role playing, Modelling and Using Cooperative Learning Strategies. According to Rani (2019), role playing is a technique for engaging student interest and providing opportunities for practice and feedback. Modelling means that teachers can teach social skills by the behaviour they model. She also explains that using cooperative learning strategies that research has shown that cooperative learning techniques are effective for improving both academic and social skills of children and adolescents. The learning environment and pedagogy at Efterskole incorporate elements of the three methods identified by Rani (2019) and can be considered a suitable environment in which students can enhance their social skills.

(2) The process of having the abovementioned impacts and the hypothetical model of interactive career development in communities of practice for young people

The hypothetical model was constructed by applying Horike and Kikuchi 's model to the concepts related to career development extracted from the SCAT analysis and making descriptive inferences (Figure 3).

The right half of this model can be explained using the “information processing model (hereafter referred to as IPM)” in cognitive psychology. IPM is a theoretical framework of how humans think, reason, and learn, views human cognitive functioning as analogous to the operation of a computer (Slate & Charlesworth, 1988) and maintain that consciousness is a centralized processor that we use when processing novel or complex stimuli (Hardcastle, 1995). The “input information” in IPM is considered to be three feedbacks in our model which are [Self-assessment], [Verbal response of others] and [Non-verbal response of others]. In IPM, the result is expressed as “output information”. In our model, it is expressed as [Role performance in a community] which means works assigned to each student for boarding life, such as cooking and cleaning and [Pursuit of interests] which is learning of elective courses called Line. The “schema” in cognitive psychology means a pattern when a person perceives reality or experience. Person recognizes, interprets and reacts to reality or experience guided by this pattern. Person-Situation Schema in our model is also considered as the systematic knowledge about the behavior of others in the situation surrounding the students, and the students recognize, interpret, and react based on it. It is thought that the action is repeated.

The concept we should focus on in this section is [Rich opportunities for self-disclosure]. Self-disclosure is the act of revealing details about ourselves to others and self-disclosure develops human relationships (Masaviru, 2016). Efterskole's boarding system provides students with frequent opportunities for self-disclosure. This is due to the situation that students do not only interact with other people while at school but also are constantly exposed to interactions with other people outside of school hours. When you make a self-disclosure, others around you recognize it and give a “self-disclosure return”. (In our model, this applies to the three feedback.) The higher the frequency of self-disclosure, the more self-disclosure returns, or feedback, from others. And this leads to the discovery or awareness of their own weaknesses and challenges that the students were previously unaware of.

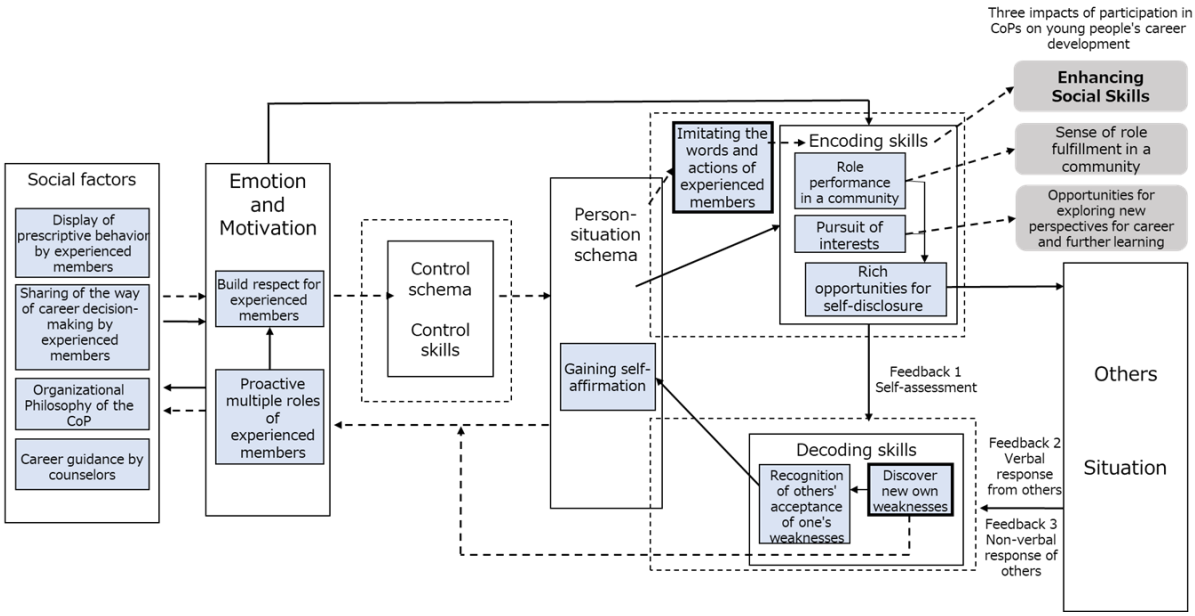

Figure 3. **The hypothetical model of interactive career development in communities of practice for young people**

Next, when students perceive that others have been accepting of their weaknesses, they gain a sense of self-affirmation. On the other hand, when others are not receptive to their weaknesses, students seek solutions by withholding the expression of their feelings and desires and by engaging in adjustment processing. The right half of our model can be thought of as "Single-loop learning" from the students' perspective, as it is an automatically repeated process. On the other hand, the left half of our model, which activates the control schema, is a "Double-loop learning" process for the students. Double-loop learning is a concept advocated by Argyris (1977). Single Loop Learning is about making adjustments to correct a mistake or a problem. It is focused on doing the things right. Causality might be observed but typically is not addressed. Double Loop Learning is identifying and understanding causality and then taking action to fix the problem. It is about doing the right things.

Experienced members, such as teachers and counselors, and the [Organizational philosophy of the community of practice] played an important role in this double-loop learning. They serve to present social norms to the students. In addition, the [Proactive multiple roles of experienced members] in which teachers took on various roles, not only as teachers, but also as temporary parents, big brother, big sister and role models of life, encouraged the referential behavior of young people. [Proactive multiple roles of experienced members] fosters respect for teachers and counselors among students, who in turn refer to and emulate their words and behavior in their own values and behavior change.

Prior research has suggested that double-loop learning occurs only when individuals participate in a community of practice beyond the formal organization. Therefore, the finding that double-loop learning can occur within a single community of practice is worth noting.

Conclusions

This research aims to the following two points based on a case study of a CoP called "Efterskole" attended traditionally by young people especially in Denmark:

1. To clarify the impact of participation in CoPs on career development on youths
2. To clarify the process of having the abovementioned impacts and constructs a hypothetical model of interactive career development in communities of practice for young people.

Regarding research question 1, it was found that participation in CoPs has three impacts on young people's career development: (a) enhancing social skills, (b) acquisition of sense of role fulfilment in a community and (c) obtaining opportunities for exploring new perspectives for career and further

learning. Two of these, "(b) acquisition of sense of role fulfilment in a community" and "(c) obtaining opportunities for exploring new perspectives for career and further learning" were shown to have similar effects in studies of adults. However, for "(a) enhancing social skills" was a unique effect found only for youth.

As regards research question 2, a hypothetical model of the interaction process that brings about the three impacts was developed. In addition, it is revealed that the three impacts are brought about by single-loop learning and double-loop learning within the community. [Rich opportunities for self-disclosure] was a key factor in promoting single-loop learning. On the other hand, [Proactive multiple roles of experienced members] are crucial for students to regard teachers and counselors as social norms and transform their values and behaviors in double-loop learning.

It is thought that this interactive career development model in Communities of Practice will be useful for teachers and career guidance practitioners to improve their daily activities. However, an investigating whether this hypothetical model can be applied to other communities of practice in other countries except for Denmark. It should also be included in a non-dormitory or an online community of practice.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.018

Functioning of the Model of Constructive Mediation

Viktorija Portere[1] Mg.jur.; Baiba Briede[2] Dr.paed.
Faculty of Engineering, Institute of Education and Home Economics,
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies
viktorija.portere@gmail.com[1]; baiba.briede@lbtu.lv[2]

Abstract: The development of a constructive approach in the field of communication and education calls for the constructive approach to mediation as well. The problem is that the process of mediation is quite uniform and lacks a variety of stages and an opportunity to help clients to establish longitudinal dialogical relations. That is why the aim of the study is to reflect the basis of the Constructive mediation model (CMM) and describe its functioning. The methods of the study were theoretical analysis the model theories and five expert assessment of the model using Friedman test. The research was done investigating the findings on constructivism, conflict resolution, philosophy of dialogue, communication, pedagogy, psychology and testology with the purpose to establish CMM. The study reveals that the model functioning is provided by the following eight phases as signing a contract with a mediator, clarifying of the conflict and constructs, data processing, learning for mediation, mediation process, searching/finding the conflict resolution, repeated survey and data processing, and self-assessment of the mediator's action. The eight phases consist of such elements as setting of an aim, mediator's and mediants' roles, strategy, questionnaires, and achievable results. The definition of constructive mediation was substantiated. Five experts evaluated the usefulness of CMM in a mediator's practice according to eight criteria and their evaluations were unanimously positive. 64 mediation participants and a mediator evaluated the process of mediation. The main conclusion is that CMM provides successful conflict solving using constructive approach emphasizing the mediants' learning, self-assessment and dialogical techniques. The significance of the results is that it can be used successfully by the mediators who recognise constructivist approach in mediation taking into account the structure of the eight CMM phases and elements.

Keywords: conflicts, mediation, constructivism, the model of constructive mediation

Introduction

Modern society in its development passes from postmodernism to meta-modernism in which search for new economic models and management methods, formation of complicated network non-linear thinking in versatile conditions take place, when the combination of institutional and informal norms in the society changes, when in line with the development of the human natural intelligence, quantum computers appear, the creation of wholesome artificial intelligence becomes possible.

This process is affected by all controversies accumulated in the previous development, the manifestations of which, especially, are:

- demographic problems, collapse of family institutions, problems of forced migration in the developed countries;
- increase of the number of institutional norms, often controversial, norms that leads to different interpretation of the communicating parties, and the shift of emphasis to informal practices which often do not coincide with the institutional norms;
- the disproportions of the economic development of the leading countries, adoption of decisions that may lead to economic crises;
- political instability and worsening of the economic condition in the countries of the world and regions;
- increasing inequality with people;
- increasing availability and amounts of information, occurrence of their excesses and increasing wrong choices and information hazards.

The accumulated controversies create conflict situation which impedes development, it is destructive. The aggravation of controversies and the growing conflict increase the necessity for mediation and the

necessity to improve its quality, to improve (diversify) its methods and models, inter alia, in the direction of its constructivism.

The constructive mediation model (CM model) is a scientifically substantiated mediation model based on constructivism which combines already known and described mediation models, such as justice restorative, transformative, narrative, provocative and facilitative and form some kind of mediation "meta" mode which explains the emergence of conflicts and the phenomenon of their resolution in the mediation process by involvement of professional mediator.

Conflict theory and mediation guidelines

The results of L. Coser's (Козер, 2000) research in the field of conflictology were used in the process of CM model development.

The conflict may arise from disagreement, controversy, opposition, dispute and resistance between persons, groups and organizations if this especially affects the interest or goals of each or any participant of the conflict and is based on the personal constructs of the involved participants about situation facts, objectives, methods, values (Schmidt, Tannenbaum, 2007).

In view the personalities are involved in the conflict, it is appropriate to mention the personal factors which escalate the conflicts: individual skills and abilities, peculiarities of personal character, which make the communication difficult, the peculiarities of the individual perception, fundamental differences – the differences in age, mentality, values, moral-ethical principles, transfer of personal problems to relations, lack of communication skills (Shahmohammadi, 2014).

Although the conflicts are emotionally hard, however, they help: to highlight and solve problems; help the people to "be real"; help the people to learn to identify and benefit from the differences (Ghaffar, 2019).

The researchers emphasize the basic errors which impede resolution of conflicts successfully: avoiding the conflict at all, excessive protection of oneself, generalisation, remaining with his or her "justice", psychoanalyses – "reading of thoughts", forgetfulness to listen, blaming game, striving to win in argument, personal accusations, "stonewalling" method – I do not hear and say (Scott, 2007).

Mediation is a structurally organized process where, with assistance of impartial, neutral, professional mediator, the communications and talks between the conflicting parties (mediation participants) are facilitated, looking for constructively communicate for solution and voluntary adoption of decisions by the conflicting parties are facilitated (Allahverdova, 2007). Mediation serves for various goals, including the possibility for the conflicting parties to determine and clarify the problems, understand different opinions, identify, study and assess the possible solutions and reach mutually satisfying agreement when it is necessary (Shapira, 2016).

Mediation as an alternative mechanism for conflict resolution is multi-functional, which may be used both as preventive as well as already existing conflict resolution instrument in one of specific fields of social relations, as well as to use both, its entire structure and its separate elements (phases). The mediation process is based on a certain created technology for the mediation method, and it has specific organizational provisions.

Resolving the conflict, two objectives are achieved in mediation: relations preserved or renewed and the solution proper to reality and the needs of the mediation participants is found.

Creating constructive mediation, the processual models of mediation were explored: evaluative mediation (Kichaven, 2008), transformative mediation (Bush, Folger, 2005), facilitative mediation (Zumeta, 2018), understanding-based mediation (Friedman, Himmelstein, 2006), narrative (Winslade, Monk, 2000; Hansen, 2003), justice restorative mediation (Jefimovs, 2018), active mediation model (Завьялов, 2018) which differ per the structure of process, the mediator's role, the subject of the conflict and the participants' point of view.

The mediator's role is reviewed on the basis of N. Alexander's meta-model (Alexander, 2008) and L. Riskin's mediation network (Riskin, 1994).

Reviewing the tasks and process of mediation on the basis of experience of provision of mediator training course and mediation management by the author, using the overview of the involved sources, using the works of such mediators as M. Pel (Пель, 2009), A. Trossen (Hoffmann et al., 2007), A. Leyendecker (Leyendecker, 2016), O. Allahverdova (Allahverdova, 2012), L. Parkinson (Паркинсон, 2016) the main skills and traits of the mediator were distinguished.

Paradigm of constructivism

"Constructivism in a group of theories created in psychology, sociology, philosophy which underlines the idea of non-reflecting, constructive nature of knowledge, conditionality of linguistic and cultural historical awareness, indirect cognition and understanding of the world with individual constructs created in ontogenesis, the idea of alternativism and pluralism of truthfulness" (Улановский, 2009).

Individual constructs, from the standpoint of the American psychologist G. Kelly, are "transparent cliches or patterns through which an individual looks to the world and which he creates and afterwards tries to adjust to realities of which this world consists" (Келли, 2000).

The direct constructs provide a possibility for the individual to build the partner's opposite line of behaviour prudently, reasonably and precisely or unintentionally, orally or without words in a conflict situation. Therefore, improving the constructs of the participants involved in conflict, expanding them, making changes in them, the goal of mediation can be achieved.

Three directions are distinguished in the theories of constructivism: constructivism in the narrow meaning of word, radical constructivism or social constructivism. The common principles of these directions may also be distinguished:

- knowing – is construing;
- truthfulness – numerous;
- criterion of the "good" knowledge is expedience (Улановский, 2010).

And implementation of just these principles became primary when defining the constructive mediation model.

J.Potter and M.Wetherell have defined the following main conclusions of the discursive psychology:

- the principle of constructivism: the discourse is construed with words, and this does not construe the world;
- the principle of intentionality: the discourse is focussed to activities and social practices;
- the principle of situation: the activities of discourse are derived from communicative, rhetoric or institutional situations (Potter, Wetherell, 1987).

Philosophy of dialogue

M. Buber's philosophical concept of dialogue is emphasised because it is important for creation of constructive mediation model: "I know three types of dialogue: 1) true no matter whether spoken or silent; 2) technical which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding; 3) monologue disguised as dialogue" (Buber, 2002).

In order to apply the concept of dialogue in mediation, the conclusion is especially important which is drawn by M. Bakhtin, that consent - one of the most significant forms of dialogic relations, and the dialogue is an universal type of human existence whose dual nature is "inseparability - no fusion" of "I" and "Thou" as organic link and supplementation of internal and external dialogue (Бахтин, 1979).

D. Bohm sets out the following provisions for dialogue management: there is no obligation in the process of dialogue to find or take a decision, there should be freedom to speak or not to speak, the assessment of the made assumptions and expressions should be avoided, the dialogue needs to flow maximally fairly and transparently but by sharing the thoughts to be based on contemplations uttered by the partner (Bohm, 2004). D. Bohm also underlined the importance of the facilitator's participation in the dialogue group which controls the fulfilment of the above specified rules (Bohm, 2004).

According to quotes of the classics of dialogue and modern researchers, the real and metaphoric dialogues need versatile skills: the skill to listen and hear, the skill to trust the world and other people, internal relationship with the surrounding world, strong experience and response to the dialogic

situation, strong feeling of his or her „I", high level of rational thinking and development of reflection, the ability of independent individual action, the ability to form a personal standpoint and also doubt on it, the skill to define and defend own standpoint, the readiness to change, the ability to accept own ignorance or weakness, to ask for help from other people, the ability to accept this help etc (Būbers, 2010; Wegerif, 2006; Matusov, Miyazaki, 2014).

The intellectual basis of the dialogue is antinomisk thinking where the antinomy is combination of two opposite judgements, besides, each of the poles is equally convincingly substantiated (Ermolaeva, 2011).

A special attention should be paid o more complicated type of dialogue used in the CM model – the discourse applying the approach of J.Habermas, author of discourse ethics or communicative ethics who pointed out that as an alternative to end instrumental usage of communication or language, the discourse is the way how to verify the significance of the contradictory objection by provision of arguments in the dialogue as a process which is directed towards achievement of functioning universal consensus (Habermas, 1981).

Communication theories

P. Watzlawick, the Austrian social psychologist belonging to the direction of radical constructivism, the author of the constructivist theory, emphasized, that the belief that one's own view of reality was the only reality was the most dangerous of all delusions and what there were, in fact, only thing that existed is many different versions of reality, some of them might be contracting to each other, and all of them were the result of communication and not reflection of any eternal, objective truth (Watzlawick, 1977).

Defining the communication model in mediation, Watzlawick's communication axioms are used (Watzlawick et al., 2000) and the definition of communication provided by N. Luhmann is taken into consideration «Just like life and consciousness, communication is emergent (synergic) reality. It arises through synthesis of three different selections: selection of information, selection of utterance of this information, selective understanding or misunderstanding of this utterance and its information" (Луман, 1995, p. 3), in order to characterize the communication in the process of constructive resolution of the conflict. Thus in the process of mediation the communication is the synergy of its components (aggregate of selections which is bigger than the sum of its simple parts), which is not only its simple contents of information, transmission of information in a form of message and its perception, realized through the sensory organs or by means of technical devices identifying the information, but also understanding of information which provides for its interpretation.

In order to create communication model in the process of mediation, Shannon's (Shannon, 1998) classic communication model was supplemented with the feedback link of the model of W. Schramm and K. Osgud, processing of contents of the transmittable information on the basis of lexicodes, which are provided for in the communication model of V. Eco (Эко, 1968), and the third party – mediator is included which arranges and facilitates communication between two other participants of communication.

During the mediation communication process a special attention should be paid to the noises disturbing the perception of information, and try to remove them. For instance, the following noises may be in the communication:

- physical noises related to disturbances in the operation of the information transmission channel (in online mediations), but when arranging face-to-face meeting with the participants of the mediation, their physical condition and the environment for the meeting, which should enhance a favourable dialogue. The mediator should check the channels of information transmission before, but the rules of face-to-face meeting should be thought over considering the compliance with the principles of mediation, convenience and safety for the participants of the mediation;
- psychological noises, among which the mood of the participants of mediation may be distinguished, usually their excessive emotionality; the presence of these noises requires the mediator to take measures in advance prior work for their prevention with each of the mediation participants in individual sessions;
- taking into consideration that the main objective of mediation is achievement of consensus among the participants of the mediation, the signs (codes) and constructs may become noises in

the mediation process and disrupt the communication between the participants of the mediation. The Mediator notices this in a timely manner and as far as possible helps the mediation participants to adjust it in order to achieve the goal of the mediation.

Theories of pedagogy, psychology and testology

During the process of constructive mediation the mediator fulfils the role of pedagogue, creating the learning environment for the mediation participants and the mediator, J. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning and D. A. Kolb's theory of experiential learning were used, as well as the methods developed by learning theories, as acmeology and testology, humanistic psychology as well as the concepts of self-actualization and self-awareness.

The approach of transformative learning is based on cooperation, when the pedagogues encourage the students to critically doubt and re-assess the integrity of their deeply rooted assumptions about their attitude towards the surrounding world (Mezirow, Taylor, 2009) and the system of views. Therefore the pedagogue stimulates overcoming of problems from various points of view (Mezirow, 1997). J. Mezirow distinguishes four principles of adult learning: making arrangements where the learners directly participate in the learning process; review of true problems or situations; critical approach to contemplation about experience; interaction with other learners (Mezirow, 2003).

These principles completely are fulfilled in the process of mediation when the mediation participants mutually have to resolve the actual conflict which has arisen on the basis of previous experience (knowledge).

D. Kolb in the theory of his learning styles lists four types of adult learning: the particular experience, reflection of new experience, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. D. Kolb considers that the learning process is integrated, in which each stage of learning supports and encourages each other.

Developing the theory of four learning types, D. Kolb defines nine learning styles: initiating, experiencing, imagining, acting, balancing, reflecting, deciding, thinking, analysing) (Kolb, Kolb, 2013).

The mediation participants involved in mediation use nine styles which create a perfect space for the process of the conversional learning language (conversational Learning) (Kolb, Kolb, 2013), which is performed in the form of conversation (dialogue). As D. Kolb emphasizes that a good conversion, most believable, takes place in the space which integrates thinking and feeling, speaking and listening, management and solidarity, individualism and identification associated therewith, as well as discursive and recursive processes (Kolb, Kolb, 2013).

Assessing the role of mediation in the resolution of conflict, whereas the specific role of mediator in the mediation, from whom the success of the mediation process depends, the mediator has to put forward the requirement for improvement of self-awareness.

By self-awareness we will understand observation, acceptance of reality, existence, without comparing and assessment (Earl, 2014).

In the process of mediation in order to help the mediator and the participants of the mediation to remove stress and irritation, to enter into condition of self-awareness, the mediator may use "Monitored self-regulation method" – this is an intentional method (Alieva, 2021), when an individual learns to manage his or her body. This "key" method may be applied also for effective arrangement of the dialogue process for the mediation participants. The other methods for achievement of self-awareness also may be applied, among them, the techniques of mediation and deliberate breathing (Cloke, 2009).

As each case of conflict is unique, because personalities with unique experience, history, mode of thinking and reaction are involved therein, therefore the mediator has to understand the process of mediation, to adjust the created dialogue to these unique personalities. This is success when the mediator analyses each case, its differences and equalities, and improve his or her professionalism in order to fulfil his or her task.

Having regard to the above, two levels may be distinguished in mediation:

1. mediator's acmeology when they are reached for achievement of the mediator's higher professional level, the issues and methods of his mental readiness and awareness, in order to conduct the mediation processes at a higher level.
2. acmeology of the mediation participants who have applied for assistance to the mediator for resolution of specific conflict and are disposed to resolve the conflict. They, taking into account the level of education at that moment, the life experience, the created contacts, wish to reach the highest readiness with assistance of the mediator for resolution of the specific conflict, additionally acquiring the skills for resolution of further possible conflicts.

Upon development of technologies which are used in research of awareness, processes of thinking and decision adoption in neurobiology (Earl, 2014; Szpunar et al., 2016; Van den Driessche et al., 2019), the constructivist approaches become more and more approved and draw attention to themselves becoming a prospective direction in pedagogy and wherewith also in mediation.

The role of the mediator as a pedagogue is based on the following pedagogical paradigms: human education; liberally rational education, ecological paradigm, synergistic paradigm (Katane, 2007b; Katane, 2007a).

The conflict resolution and training to do this in mediation require collection and processing of information about the conflict and its participants, the psychological constructs, barriers and components of the dialogue of the mediation participants, the phase of dialogue management by the mediator and the participants of mediation applying testology. By testology we understand "theory and technological practice making and using tests in various fields related to the human activity" (Шмелев, 2019).

The founders of the theory of testology are regarded Fr. Galton and J.M.Cattell (Cattell, 1890) who defined the main principles and approaches of psychological testing on the basis of example of development of particular tests.

Collecting information, the tests and questionnaires elaborated (adjusted) by the mediator are used taking into consideration the conditions of regularities identified in the specific conflict. The necessity is considered in the questions of questionnaire to identify the conditions of the conflict, traits (features) of the mediation participants, obstacles and components of the dialogue, results of self-expression research.

Working with the mediation participants, the mediator must not forget about necessity to teach conflict free communication basis of methods for adjusting constructs, the acquisition of which will enable to minimize the possibility for the conflicts to renew or for a new conflict to emerge. The following types of learning may be distinguished: familiarization with usage of signs accepted by the participants of mediation; research of the rules for construct creation and adjustment; explanation of negotiation techniques and their advantages; application of negotiation techniques in mediation process, including, with participation of the mediator.

The comparison of coefficients of the mediation participants enables the mediator of the process to highlight those components and barriers to which attention should be paid in teaching the dialogue to the mediation participants. Conducting new mediations, the mediator, on the basis of the questionnaires of the mediation participants which have gained successful results in the previous mediation processes, can analyse regularities. The basis of knowledge accumulated in such manner can help the mediator to fulfil his professional duty.

For improvement of their skills the assessment methods of the mediator's skills are advisable, as for instance, upon results of the conducted mediations, to use testing of the mediator's skills and upon the test results those skills can be determined to which a special attention should be paid improving their quality.

The Model reflects the process of formation of human constructs (the formed psychological clichés of world understanding), thinking, decision taking and awareness of action with underlying needs and interests which may confront the reality promoting both conflicting sides to develop mutual understanding. That is why the aim of the study is to reflect the basis of the Constructive mediation model (CMM) and describe its functioning.

Methodology

The survey of CMM usage in mediation had been investigated. Five practising mediation expert were questionnaired. They evaluated CMM according to eight criteria using five grade scale. Friedman correlation coefficient was calculated to identify the experts' consensus. The choice of five experts depended on their mediation practicing experience and interest in CMM content and functioning.

Mediation process was evaluated by 64 mediation participants in 5 grade scale.

Constructivism in mediation was determined by a mediator who worked with 64 (32 mediations) mediation participants considering how constructive mediation process was. The mediator evaluated the process from 0 -1 point.

Results and Discussion

A new approach to mediation is examined, a constructive mediation, the main features of which are awareness and adjustment of constructs, dialogue (discourse) for finding conflict resolution and the main subject – the mediator who organizes the mediation process enabling the mediation participants to acquire constructive communication for conflict resolution.

The novelty of the model is created by:

- defined constructive mediation model;
- the method of information acquisition using negotiations, discussion surveys about the conflict, the condition of the participants and processing of this information identifying statistical regularities. The system of collection of information is focussed to clarification of individual constructs of the mediation participants which (the constructs) increase emergence of conflict and hinder its resolution;
- training of the mediation participants for conflict-free communication methods in the mediation process taking into consideration the phonetic, semantic, logic, stylistic noises and achieving a uniform understanding about signs;
- creation of mediation dialogue and the usable types of mediation dialogue;
- identification, analyses, improvement, adjustment of the participants' constructs for finding conflict resolution;
- the communication model to be used in mediation process;
- repeated survey of the mediation participants according the results of mediation, processing of obtained data, supplementation of the data base of the obtained statistical regularities;
- training of mediators taking into consideration the identified regularities.

Summarizing the performed and published researches (Portere, 2021c; Portere, 2021a; Portere, 2021b; Portere, Briede, 2021; Portere, Morevs, 2020b; Portere, Morevs, 2020a; Portere, Briede, 2019a; Portere, Briede, 2019b) it is possible to schematically reflect "the constructive mediation model" and to describe it, this helps to see the picture of the model and regularities of elements as well as serves as a guide for teaching of the constructive mediation model to the prospective participants of mediation (Fig.1).

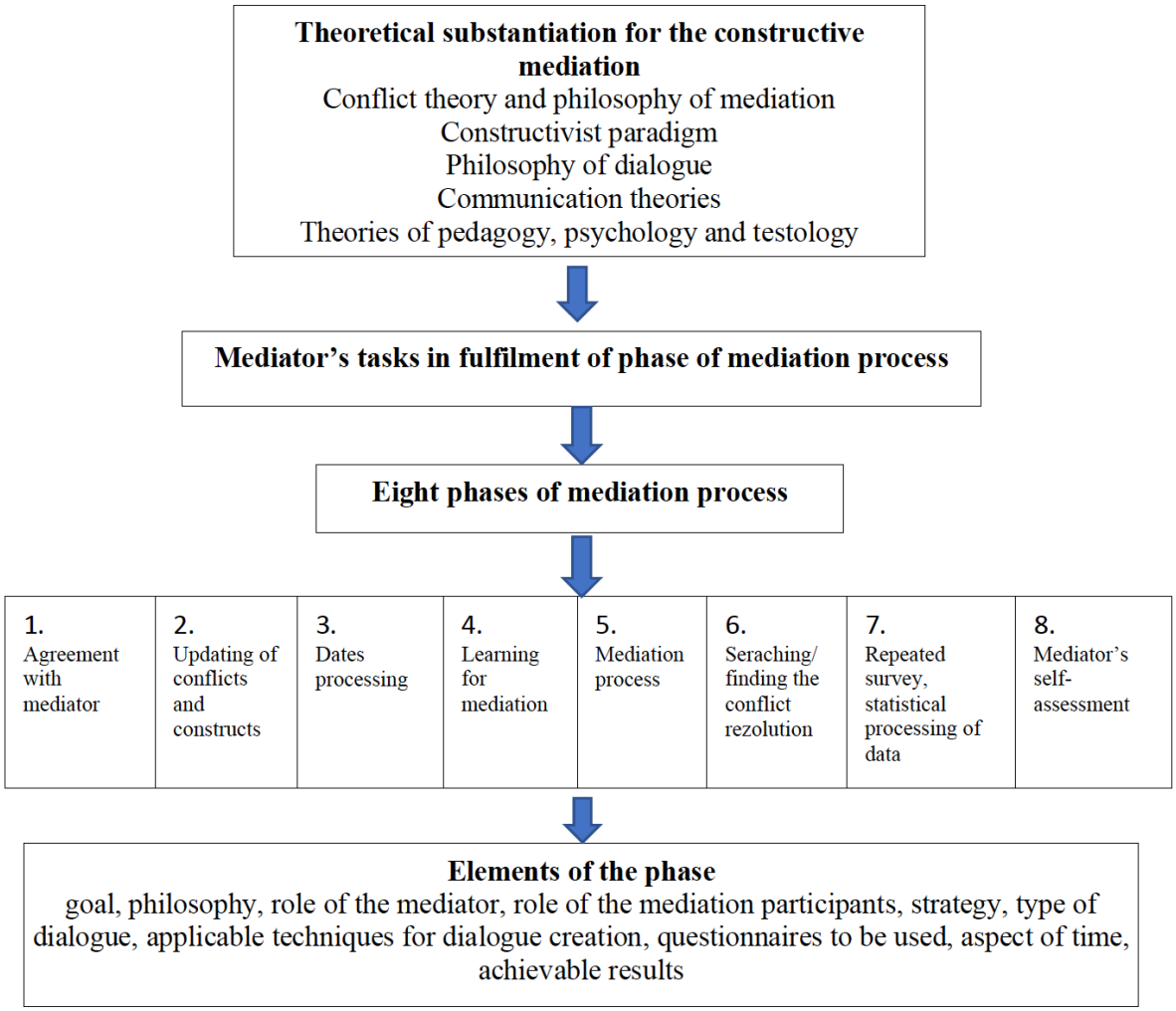

Figure1. **The constructive mediation model (CMM)**

Explanations of components of the constructive mediation model

Mediator's tasks in fulfilment of phase of mediation process:

- knowledge and usage of mediation principles and regulatory enactments;
- usage of negotiations, discussions and questionnaires;
- usage of previously accumulated information and mathematical-statistical methods;
- encouragement for learning of the mediation participants for creation of dialogue, uniform understanding of signs depending on condition of the participants of mediation, their constructs;
- selection of direction for topics and discourses, the type of dialogue depending on the essence of dialogue and self-assessment of the participants of mediation and their constructs;
- conduction of the dialogue of mediation process (discourse) for looking for/finding the conflict resolution;
- ensuring safe environment for compliance with the principles of mediation process;
- improvement of the mediator's professional competence depending on the results of the performed mediation

Dialogue in mediation has the following functions: enhancement of mutual understanding; enhancement of respect and tolerance; creation of cultural relations; enhancement of cooperation; enhancement of democracy; cognition; function of searching/finding (discourse); affiliative communication (affiliation is striving to contact people, create relations, enjoy together with other people and live together with them (Хекхаузен, 2002)).

The following types of dialogue may be distinguished in the mediation process:

- dialogue, the objective of which is to create the atmosphere of cooperation in the mediation process;
- cognitive dialogue in which the mediator and the participants cognize the informative aspects of conflict, reach uniform understanding about its essence and legal substantiation, disputable and undisputable facts;
- discursive dialogue (discourse) which is the main instrument for resolution of the specific conflict, achievement of specific goal;
- crisis intervention dialogue – the goal is to understand, verbalize and analyse emotions;
- transformative dialogue with the goal to clarify and share (coordinate) the points of view of the conflict parties, opinions and world views;
- provocative dialogue in which the views and thoughts of one or both parties involved in the conflict are provoked in order to obtain assurance about stability and genuineness of the thoughts and judgements or about necessity to review them and change.

Phases in the constructive mediation process

The entire mediation process takes place by phases, besides, each its participant (including, the mediator) is entitled to stop (end) it any time. There are often cases when the mediation participants have acquired the necessary skills for creation of dialogue, they stop mediation at one of the phases and resolve the conflict already by their own efforts.

The constructive mediation model is divided by phases. Starting such mediation process, the participants of mediation shall be familiarized with the phases of mediation

Each phase may be covered in one session or several sessions, as well as several phases may be passed during one mediation session. Usually one mediation session is 1-1,5 astronomical hours long, sometimes the mediation participants and the mediator are ready to work more or even until the resolution is found. Usually, the break between mediation sessions is one-two weeks, the breaks more rarely are shorter or longer. When agreement is reached on starting the mediation process, the mediator and the mediation participants agree on the procedure for the specific mediation process which, of course, may be changed again upon reaching agreement.

The structure of phases of constructive mediation process

Phase 1 – Agreement with the mediator.

Purpose: mediants' Agreement with the mediator about the mediation process, its principles, terms and phase of process.

Role of the mediator: to discuss the mediation principles and the terms of process creating atmosphere of trust for the mediation process and the mediator.

Role of the mediation participants: to assess and think over the possibility to resolve the conflict through mediation, to assess the possibility to work with the particular mediator in the process.

Strategy: to reach understanding of the mediation participants about the mediation process, cooperation and assuming responsibility for the mediation process and its results; to determine the rights and obligations of the mediator and the mediation participants.

Questionnaires to be used: introductory questionnaire; questionnaire for assessment of possibility of the mediation process.

Achievable results: to create feeling of safety for the mediation participants, trust to the neutrality and impartiality of the mediator; the mediator should gain assurance about his competence, neutrality.

Phase 2 – Conflict and constructs update.

Purpose: update of the essence of conflict, condition of mediants (the mediation participants), constructs, using questionnaires, discussions and negotiation methods.

Role of the mediator: to understand the essence of conflict disagreements, to identify the affected and involved persons, necessity for additional documents/information; to assess the legal consequences of the conflict; to clarify the advantages and risks of court and mediation.

Role of the mediation participants: to describe points of view in the conflict; to explain disputable and undisputable conditions of conflict; to gain assurance about suitability of the mediation process for resolution of the specific conflict.

Strategy: to identify the disputable facts and undisputable facts; to determine all the mediation participants involved in the conflict; to determine the topics of conversations and their priority.

Questionnaires to be used: questionnaire for investigation and assessment of situation, questionnaire of components of dialogue and barriers.

Achievable results: the mediation participants respond to emotions related to the subject of the conflict; the mediation participants gain assurance about the mediator's neutrality and interest in the mediation process and understanding of the essence of conflict; the common and separate themes are summarized, the priorities of themes are determined, all necessary and possible persons are invited to the session, all necessary documents and information identified.

Phase 3 – Data processing

Purpose: processing and interpretation of questionnaires, discussions and negotiation data.

Role of the mediator: to assess the obtained information with the purpose to construe further mediation process for resolution of the conflict (to develop an action plan) and coordinate it with the participants of mediation.

Role of the mediation participants: to think the plan over suggested by the mediator for the mediation process.

Strategy: to assess the necessary activities so that seeking resolution of conflict could take place constructively.

Questionnaires to be used: questionnaire for updating and summarizing of the information.

Achievable results: the mediators and the mediation participants assess the action plan necessary for the mediation process, the implementation of which will enable to move forward constructively towards resolution of the conflict; the plan is developed for constructive mediation.

Phase 4 – Learning for mediation.

Purpose: training of the mediation participants for conflict-free communication in the mediation process.

Role of the mediator: obtaining information about the mutual communication of the mediation participants, to carry out training of the mediation participants for constructive mediation by showing the example.

Role of the mediation participants: as far as possible to fulfil the mediator's tasks for practising methods of conflict-free communication.

Strategy: to teach the mediation participants for constructive conflict-free communication in order to resolve the conflict.

Questionnaires to be used: questionnaire for communication barriers and assistance.

Achievable results: the mediation participants gain experience of positive effect of the techniques for conflict-free communication; the mediation participants apply techniques of constructive communication, and the emotional background of the conflict has waned.

Phase 5 - Mediation process.

Purpose: conduction of mediation process as per sequence of the themes for dialogue chosen by the mediator and the mediation participants and in accordance with the type of dialogue chosen by the mediator.

Role of the mediator: to identify the constructs of the mediation participants which led to conflict, possibilities and necessity to transform them, change, improve; to broaden the view on conflict, its

causes and consequences and the future impact; together with the mediation participants to explore their true needs and interests, to define them and explain.

Role of the mediation participants: to investigate their constructs, which led to conflict, possibilities and necessity to transform them; to broaden the view on conflict, its causes and consequences and the future impact; to assess their true needs, interests and to share them.

Strategy: creation of dialogue among the mediation participants for identifying the true needs and interests.

Questionnaires to be used: questionnaire for observations and finding true needs.

Achievable results: the participants of mediation wish to recover the feeling of peace which existed prior beginning of conflict, to understand their motives and the motives of the partner's action, to obtain recognition about their personality; the participants of mediation have identified and discussed their true needs and interests, disputable facts; the constructs of conflict situation are coordinated.

Phase 6 – Seeking/finding the conflict solution.

Purpose: to seek the conflict solution which would meet the needs and interests of the mediation participants and would be implementable in reality.

Role of the mediator: to encourage finding of possible solutions which would meet the true needs and interests of the mediation participants and end the conflict preserving or improving the relations of the mediation participants; upon request of the mediation participants and according to their abilities to draw up a balanced agreement of conflict solution, if necessary, by executing it in written form.

Role of the mediation participants: to seek and verbalize the possible options of solutions which would meet the true needs and interests of the mediation participants and end the conflict preserving or improving the relations of the mediation participants by cooperating in drawing up the balanced agreement on conflict solution, if necessary, to consult with lawyers and other specialists.

Strategy: creatively, by cooperating on the basis of the principle of equality, to seek options of solution and how to reach the balanced agreement.

Usable questionnaires: questionnaire for solution finding and assessment.

Achievable results: creation of new prospective, thoughts about future. Beginning of new phase; possible options are found for resolution of conflict; mutually balanced agreement is signed.

Phase 7 – Repeated questionnaire, statistical processing of data.

Purpose: repeated questionnaire of the mediation participants, statistical processing and interpretation of data.

Role of the mediator: to obtain the feedback about the mediation process, for experience and further learning.

Role of the mediation participants: to provide the feedback about the role of mediation process in the process of conflict resolution, their feelings, acquired experience and skills.

Strategy: to gain assurance of the parties and acknowledgement about usefulness of the mediation process, the acquired qualifications and skills.

Questionnaires to be used: questionnaires for updating, summarizing the information.

Achievable results: self-development of the mediation participants, acceptance of self-actualization, improvement; the mediator has obtained the feedback link about the conducted mediation process

Phase 8 - Self-assessment of the mediator.

Purpose: Self-assessment of the mediator about the mediation process and understanding about necessity of professional development themes.

Role of the mediator: to assess the sufficiency of the existing skills and competences and their professional level; to acquire additionally necessary knowledge and skills.

Role of the mediation participants: takes place without presence of the participants of mediation.

Strategy: to obtain plan for self-expression.

Questionnaires to be used: questionnaires for updating, summarizing the information.

Achievable results: mediator's self-growth, self-actualization, development; new knowledge, experience acquired and further action plan.

In each phase of the mediation the mediation participants under guidance of the mediator perform subsequent cognitive activities in order to achieve the required outcome of mediation. The required outcome of mediation is determined by the mediation participants themselves. It should be noted that resolution of conflict not always is the most important and required destination for the mediation process which the parties wish and implement together with the mediator. The mediator's service may be used by the participants as far as they exit from the dead-end which they were not able to do by their own efforts.

The conflict among the mediation participants may be both at constructive level when the parties cannot share common visions, and at the level of issues and activities, the level of interests and needs and the level of values. The depth of elaboration of the phases as well as the length of mediation process depends on it.

The mediation process may take place in common sessions and separate sessions with each participant of mediation, on-site or on-line, interchangeably.

The mediator should have the necessary knowledge and understanding in the following fields: jurisprudence, psychology; sociology, philosophy; anthropology; phenomenology; conflictology, semiotics; management theory; behavioural economics; neuroscience; axiology; pedagogy; profiling

The mediator's personal traits which are used as instruments in the mediation process: neutrality, impartiality, reasonableness, skill to actively listen and hear, flexibility and creativity, assuredness, scepticism, empathy, honesty, trustfulness, wittiness, patience, insistence, optimism, observance, awareness.

Mediator's skills – instruments for the mediation process:

- ability to resolve problem situations and conflicts in his or her personal life;
- emotional intelligence;
- critical, responsible, systemic, intentional, positive and creative thinking;
- ability to gain trust of mediation participants;
- ability to ask open, assessment-free questions;
- to obtain the necessary information and to summarize it;
- to listen continuously, attentively, actively and hear the speaker;
- to create communication and dialogue, to train to do it;
- to identify the options of solution and to verbalize them;
- not to force and not to defend his or her point of view, to preserve self-determination of the mediation participants in the mediation.

The mediator during the mediation process with his or her example and encouraging the mediation participants to apply the techniques of dialogue, the mediator carries out pedagogic work for the mediation participants, by teaching the skills of constructive conflict resolution to them and the art to communicate in real dialogue. CM model can be applied to resolution of such conflicts when the mediation participants have a desire to understand the cause of conflict emergence, to find the solution by themselves which would satisfy all involved participants as well as to acquire skills for constructive communication and exit from conflicts.

The definition of constructive mediation model may be expressed as follows:

Constructive mediation – process of reaching agreement – among the conflict participants of mediation with assistance of mediator which is created on the basis of the obtained information about the conflict, the individual constructs of the mediation participants, the preparatory process for constructive communication and adjustment of personal constructs with the method of dialogue.

Empirical part

For expertise of the constructive mediation model, only for five experts, to evaluate the electronic material "**Constructive mediation model**" (hereinafter referred to as CM model) in compliance with 8 evaluation criteria, the definition of which is seen in the evaluation table. In compliance with each evaluation criterion I the box chosen in the evaluation table, the expert had to insert cross mark "X". The summarized expert evaluations can be seen in table 1.

Table 1

The summarized expert evaluations

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation				
	Very weak	Weak	Average rating	High	Very high
Novelty of the CM model, topicality (necessity) in the professional activity of the mediator				4X	1X
Novelty of the CM model in the professional activity of the mediator				2X	3X
Scientific (theoretical) basis of the content of the CM model				1X	4X
Structure of the CM model				2X	3X
CM model content outline logic				1X	4X
Usability of the CM model in the professional activities of the mediator				1X	4X
Legal basis for the content of the CM model			1X	2X	2X
Technical design of the electronic document, t.sk. formatting, references in text, bibliography)				3X	2X

The following comments were received in addition to the evaluations about the referred criteria:

- Very valuable and practicable usable model, which enables the prospective mediators to understand more clearly the structure of mediation, the tasks and essence of the mediation phases. It helps the conflict parties or the mediation participants, using reflection on experience of their conflict, to obtain perspective of a neutral watcher and not to get stuck into conflicting standpoints. However, it is important that the mediators, using this model and compiling questionnaires and making surveys, shall not be carried away with pedagogical assessments and judgements which could hinder the implementation of the mediator's neutrality.
- Working with specialists in the field of mediation, I can clearly assure that the author's work is reasonable, enhanced and may be used in practice. The constructive communication model created by the author is understandable and acceptable. The structure of the constructive mediation created by the author is well thought over and viable. Upon assessment of the structural elements of the phases and their reference to the entire process and its participants, the necessity for understanding of development of each element and the importance of existing and application in practice of this mediation model became evident. As a professional, I was influenced by the importance of questionnaire. Mediation is not effective if the mediator does not obtain all necessary information from the parties, as well as questionnaires relieve stress and increase involvement and activation of the cognitive resources. The questionnaires provide information and serve as a support both for the mediator and the parties. Just the dialogue is the lacking mechanism in conflicts of the parties, whereas correct creation of dialogue provided by the mediator using his skills, enables the parties to resolve the conflict in a new manner, unusual for them. A special emphasis is placed by the author on the learning process of the parties, which is also desirable mediation effect for the parties. The recommendation, I would like to

encourage the author to write a book so that the mediators could acquire additional knowledge and skills which will never be too much in order to conduct the mediation process.

- A broader public information about the constructive mediation (CM) model should be certainly available so that the mediators could get familiarized with this model and implement it in their practice, I was especially impressed the implementation of awareness practice, observation, reality, acceptance of existence, without comparison and assessment, in mediation.
- The CM developed by the author has a high level of novelty, substantiated in theoretical approaches, it has a high interdisciplinarity. The structure of CM model reveals also the high potential of its application by not remaining only as a construct of theoretical mediation model. The legal basis of CM model is medium because this criterion is minimally characterized in the work. At the same time the developed model is not contradictory to the legal norms of Latvia about mediation.

On the basis of the practical experience of mediation and the questionnaire of the practising mediators and the mediation participants after its completion, the parameters for the effectiveness of mediation are determined: conflict resolution (5); satisfaction with the reached agreement (3); more understanding about the legal norms of conflict and its resolution (3); adjustment of constructs which allow to live without conflicts (4); maintenance of relationship with the parties involved in conflict (5); learning in conflict-free communication (3); acquisition of dialogue skills and (4); understanding the role of awareness (self-realization) (4).

It is taken into consideration that the chosen parameters of effectiveness are not equal and more or less they influence the effectiveness of mediation. Therefore, various criteria from 0 to 5, shown in brackets in the list of indicated parameters (the greater numerical value, the more importance) were assigned to each parameter.

At the end of the mediation the questions in the questionnaires offered to the conflict parties correspond to the parameter of effectiveness. The list of questionnaire questions: is agreement reached in the mediation process; satisfaction with the reached agreement (0.5.); is the desired relationship achieved with the opposite party in the conflict? (the better relations, the higher result) (0,25); has the understanding about the conflict and the process of its resolution changed during mediation (my psychological constructs were adjusted) (1); the conversation in the form of dialogue (discourse) conducted by the mediator was the reason for reaching agreement (1); has learning of rules of conflict-free communication taken place during mediation process and the ability to adequately perceive the received information which would enable to avoid from occurrence of such conflicts (0.5); is additional knowledge about the conflict and its legal governance acquired (0,25); increase of self-confidence level (self-realization) in the mediation process (1).

Upon completion of mediation each participant of mediation (conflict) determines his or her stage of effectiveness of mediation at a value from 0 to 5, by filling out the column “Evaluation of effectiveness of mediation”.

The efficiency coefficient was introduced in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the conducted mediation. The efficiency coefficient is determined in percentage from the maximum possible result.

The efficiency coefficient shown below is given using the example of processing of five questionnaires (columns “Evaluation of efficiency of mediation 1-5”) (Table 2).

In the research the questionnaires were collected from the conflict participants upon completion of 32 mediations, totally 64 questionnaires filled out with constructive mediation model. Analysing the obtained results, the mediator concludes about the permissible efficiency coefficient. Of course, this refers to the particular mediator who applies the constructive intermediary model, and the author of the technique has 53%. Gaining lower coefficient is a signal for the mediator about the necessity to improve the mediation process.

Mediation process was evaluated by 64 mediation participants (Table 2). The mediation participants evaluated in 5 grade scale: 5 – Yes; 4 – Yes, partially; 3–Yes, but additional assistance is necessary; 2–No, no additional assistance is necessary; 1 – No, but I got benefit; 0 – No.

Constructivism in mediation was determined by a mediator who worked with 64 (32 mediations) mediation participants considering how constructive mediation process was (Table 2). The mediator

evaluated the process from 0 -1 point. The mediator evaluated constructivism critically from the point of view of CMM theories (Figure 1) and the progress of constructivism during mediation.

Table 2

Evaluation of mediation

No.	Indicators	Constructivism in mediation	Mediation process
1.	Agreement reached in mediation process	-	5
2.	Satisfaction with the reached agreement	0.5	3
3.	Desired relationship achieved with the opposite party in the conflict	0.25	3
4.	Acquired additional knowledge about the conflict and its legal governance	0.25	4
5.	Change of the understanding about the conflict and the process of its resolution during mediation	1	5
6.	The conversation in the form of dialogue (discourse) conducted by the mediator was the reason for reaching agreement	1	3
7.	Learning of rules of conflict-free communication taken place during mediation process and the ability to perceive the received information adequately which would enable to avoid from occurrence of conflicts	0.5	4
8.	Increase of self-confidence level (self-realization) in mediation process	1	4
9.	Coefficient of effectiveness of mediation process	-	85%
10.	Coefficient of effectiveness of constructivism in mediation process	46%	

The difference of coefficients between a mediatior and parties evaluation determined that the mediator evaluted costructivism in mediation critically and at the same time saw the opportunities of constructivism how to limit shortcoming and improve the progress of mediation process.

Conclusions

- Conflict theories, constructive paradigm, the philosophy of dialogue, communication, pedagogical, psychological and testological theories, and consequent guidelines of constructive mediation form the basis of the constructive mediation model so that it can function according to the tasks of the mediator in eight mediation phases and their elements. Therefore the model is an example of learning and developing constructive dialogical relations among parties. A mediator helps and teach parties how to develop dialogical relations in conflict solving.
- According to the study the dialogue has about eight functions, and it enhances the development of six types of dialogue, and parties choose through which one to gain conflict solution.
- The phases of mediation process are both the organizational tool with a particular period and dynamic of time, and indicators of the quality of mediation process through specific elements in every phase including a purpose, roles, strategy, type of dialogue and its techniques and achievable results.
- In order to analyse the success of the mediation process and increase its effectiveness (improve the quality), the coefficient of effectiveness of mediation can be used by a group of mediators who practise the constructive mediation model. In this case the quality of analysis can increase, because the number of observations increases (filled out and processed questionnaires). As a

result, this group may determine their professional activities to be applied to the newly admitted member.

Acknowledgement

The article was supported by LLU programme "Strengthening of Scientific Capacity LLU" scientific project No. Z-47 "Assessment of the Usage of Mediation Models and Mediators' Further Education Methodology "Terms 01/06/2020-31/05/2022

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.019

Visual Mediated Dialogue in Distance Education

Ilona Valantinaitė[1] Dr. Prof.; **Vaida Asakavičiūtė**[2] Dr. Prof.;
Živilė Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė[3] Dr. Prof.
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania
ilona.valantinaite@vilniustech.lt[1]; vaida.asakaviciute@vilniustech.lt[2]
zivile.sedereviciute-paciauskiene@vilniustech.lt[3]

Abstract: The way people communicate, work, and socialize has changed in the 21st century. Using a virtual environment, we lose connection and dialogue with the person. A person becomes an object. Losing a relationship, we lose responsibility. Only dialogue allows us to become individuals who are not selfish and limited. When education moved to the Internet, the issues mentioned above became crucial. Virtual dialogue in digital space can be termed as a quasi-dialogue focused on creating and maintaining superficial, consumer, short-term relationships, which are not based on values and intrinsic connection. Directness, the certainty of emotions and feelings, disappears here. Mediated communication has become the norm, but interactive dialogue constructed through the Internet only mimics the illusion of closeness because the human face and voice remain inauthentic. Without personal dialogue, education is not possible. It is possible to learn but not possible to transfer the values to develop thinking. The article presents the view of the learners about visual contact during their distance lectures. The purpose of the research is to reveal the harmony between Buber's and the learners' views on the role of the use of video cameras in the study process. A qualitative research (an open-ended question) was conducted. The research participants comprised 82 1st year students of their studies: 47 were studying online for their undergraduate diploma (B), and 35 were studied online for the doctorate diploma (D). Qualitative research showed that the widest role of using a video camera is associated with a quality study process, emphasizing information transfer and reception, concentration of attention, active learning and settlements. The pursuit of the quality of distance studies rests on Buber's philosophy in search of a person, life and the constant manoeuvring between the relationship I-Thou and I-It. In remote studies, as in face-to-face studies, the most important focus remains the relationship, connection, the interaction of people, exchanging values, information and perception. Regardless of the political, economic situation, and at the same time the change of educational paradigms, learners are looking for the I-Thou relationship in the education/study process.

Keywords: Buber, communication, distance learning, interaction, connection, education.

Introduction

M. Buber was unique in the 20th century. Philosopher, existentialist, theologian, representative of the philosophy of life and pioneer of the philosophy of dialogue. His philosophical interests and research areas included questions of the meaning of human existence and culture, art, education, sociology, and politics. His philosophical ideas are studied both from an existential and an educational perspective (Guilherme, Morgan, 2009, 2012, 2016; Tsabar, 2019; Richardson, 2019; Soares et al., 2019; Rumianowska, 2020; and etc.). In principle, he does not try to impose an obvious formula on his students, but asks questions that force them to find answers for their own lives (Hodes, 1972). M. Buber's educational ideas are important not only in order to show the individual, but also the social and intercultural benefits of dialogic education, as well as the dangers of non-dialogic education.

In today's media society, the rapid penetration of technology into each person's individual life and areas of professional activity has opened up new opportunities (Choi et al., 2023; Bosworth et al., 2023). A year ago, the Covid 19 wave that swept the whole world moved many social and professional fields, including education, into the virtual space. Although the practical benefits of mediated communication in the field of economy and business are obvious (Parida et. al., 2019; Wardana et. al., 2022; Santoso, Fianto, 2022; Aguilar-Rodríguez et. al., 2023), there are still many dangers for the world of the human spirit, the development of values, especially for people's interpersonal relations and communication. According to F. Peach (2012), in this age of technology and computers, people increasingly lose face-to-face interpersonal communication skills in their personal lives. M. Buber (1991, 1998, 2002) in his

philosophy draws attention to technical personalized dialogue / non-dialogical relations and substantiates the importance and impact of live dialogue on the development and education of human personality. These concepts can help to understand not only the crucial problems of interpersonal relations, but also the problems of modern education and to evaluate the nature of distance studies, which are based on the virtual relationship between the teacher and the student. What changes do mediated/virtual relationships (between teacher and student) bring to the educational process? Existential education, advocated by M. Buber, was based on the assumption that education is not only about gathering facts and presenting knowledge, but primarily that the educator must reveal to the student what it means to be human, help him understand himself, convey the meaning and values of life perception.

In the famous work "I - You" (1998), M. Buber delves into the relationships between people, their essence and meaning, presenting two different types of relationships "I - You" and "I - It". The first type - "I - You" - is a mutually dialogic, authentic relationship. The second "I - it" is an objective, consumerist, egoistic and utilitarian relationship, where the "it" person becomes only an object, a tool, a thing. These two relationships are among the essential starting points of M. Buber's philosophy of education. He formed an education direction based on a dialogic I-Thou relationship. The desire for a relationship is primordial, it manifests itself in early infancy, the baby feels a natural desire to be in a relationship everywhere, to seek communion, communication, and the touch of another person (Buber, 1998: 97). According to M. Buber, individual personality growth is determined by the active involvement of a person in a relationship with another You, with nature, with the world. This is why he asserts that "the development of relational skills" is an essential function of education (Yaron, 2000, p. 140). For the education and development of a young person and even an adult, interpersonal living dialogic I-Thou is necessary. In M. Buber's understanding, people are often treated as objects (rather than subjects) in business, science and education. M. Buber wanted people, regardless of profession or situation, to learn to say and see another as "You" with a capital letter. Working with young people means being able to act on the principle of "I-YOU" dialogue. This principle is one of the necessary conditions for other methods or creative, practical activities to be effective and achieve results. Thus, in the educational process, it is essential to establish a dialogic relationship between the teacher and the student as I - You (subject to subject/personality to personality) (Ozmon, Craver, 1996:297; Avnon, 1998: 22).

Distance studies are based on the new media (Internet), which becomes a means of mediating relationships. In the context of M. Buber's existential-dialogic education, establishing dialogic relationships in the virtual space is a big challenge. Mediated space is not reality, but only a reproduction of reality. The interactive dialogue constructed in the virtual space only simulates the illusion of closeness, because the person's face and voice remain inauthentic (Asakavičiūtė, 2020), and emotions are difficult to read and even more challenging to interpret. So in distance learning, in most cases, we create a technical relationship (I-it), but not a dialogic relationship. In remote studies, the maximum approach to the I-Thou relationship is possible only through the active use of smart technologies and their accessories (for example, cameras), individual mutual efforts, and the initiative to broadcast the factors that support human communication.

In order to better understand why distance studies cannot create and maintain a dialogic relationship between student and teacher as "I-Thou", it is essential to pay attention to M. Buber's concept of "engage". The teacher can play his role of starting the "real educational process" only after "experiencing the other side", which means a deep inner involvement. In his work "Education", Buber uses the example of a person hitting another and receiving "in his soul the blow that he strikes." The educator aims to hear the student (not only what he says, but what he experiences inside), through this to understand his emotions and attitude towards reality (Ozmon, Craver, 1996: 296-297). Technical dialogue only promotes the need for objective understanding. Such dialogue is supported by the principle of use and use between teacher and student, causing tension and struggle. Often students accept the teacher as a stranger - "it". Especially when the cameras are turned off, interactions with students lose their human identity. According to M. Buber, this inability to enter into a dialogical relationship increases the individualism and egocentric self of the students. An egocentric person does not participate in a relationship, does not enter into a relationship, but on the contrary, contrasts himself with others (with the teacher, with other classmates), "uses others, appropriates others, tries to take from them as much as he can" (Richardson, 2019).

Another important aspect that emerges when analyzing distance studies in the context of M. Buber's philosophy is that education is closely connected with ethical education - primarily with empathy and responsibility. The development of responsibility was significant to M. Buber. The other You helps a person to see himself, the other You is my own mirror. The dialogic relationship - I - YOU encourages commitment, creates a relationship of responsibility: "I - You are not only in a relationship, but also in responsibility" (1998: 169). Thus, the development of responsibility is possible only through a dialogic relationship, a person learns to hear, accept, and understand the other.

A prominent follower of Buber, E. Levinas (1994), a dialogue philosopher and phenomenologist, emphasized the importance of the "Other - the Face" in the value and self-knowledge process. The other's face reminds me of my responsibility. The book "Ethics and Infinity" says, "The other person is the face <..> The face speaks <.> The face asks me and commands me. Its meaning is the command. More precisely when the face in front of me means a command" (Levinas, 1994). The direct experience of the "other" shows me the limits of my operation and the ship. Thus, interpreting the thoughts of E. Levin, in the process of distance education, the opportunity to see the face of the teacher develops the responsibility of the student and reminds him of his duties. Therefore, we can say that if the video camera is not turned on during remote studies, not only does the student's involvement in studies and the assimilation of knowledge decrease, but also the students' perception of responsibility for the study process and the perception of their duties (as a student) weakens. The research problem is formulated as a question: what is the attitude of learners towards the role of using video cameras in the study process and how does it affect learners? The purpose of the research is to reveal the harmony between Buber's and the learners' views on the role of the use of video cameras in the study process.

Methodology

An empirical study was conducted in order to determine the role of the use of video cameras during distance learning. The article analyzes an open-ended question about the role of video cameras in the process of distance learning. The research was carried out 3–16 March 2021. The research participants were the face-to-face students who during the quarantine period of the COVID-19 pandemic, were forcibly switched to distance learning. Study participants provided synchronously written answers (all parties responded in real-time) using a ZOOM chat tool. The researchers left students free to choose to provide an answer to the question to the researchers by sending a private message on Zoom or providing a visible answer to the group in the Zoom chat. Hen analyzed the data, the informants' answers were grouped according to meaning, and categories were created. Based on the aforementioned distributions of learners' opinions, a scheme was created (Figure 1). Four categories of the role of video cameras in remote studies are distinguished: better communication, interaction between participants, prerequisites for a high-quality study process and convenience of contact without a video camera.

Participants. The research participants comprised 82 1st year students of their studies: 47 were studying online for their undergraduate diploma (B), and 35 were studied online for the doctorate diploma (D). They were invited to participate in the research through a letter of an invitation following their enrolment in the courses with access to the virtual classroom space. Zoom was the virtual classroom platform for this trial.

Results and Discussion: Analysis of Students' Opinions About the Role of the Video Camera in Distance Studies in the Context of Buber's Ideas

Qualitative research showed that the widest role of using a video camera is associated with a quality study process, emphasizing information transfer and reception, concentration of attention, active learning and settlements. The category of prerequisites for a quality study process consists of as many as seven subcategories (Figure 1).

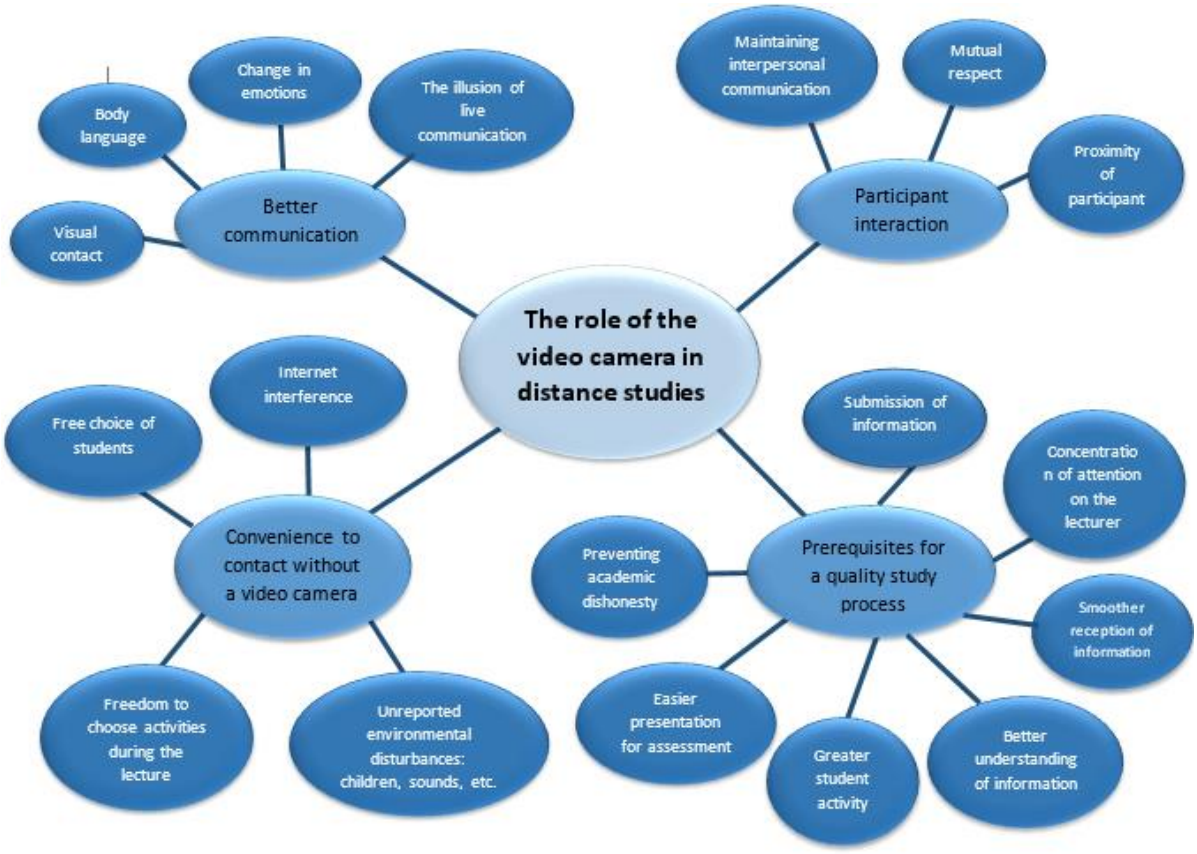

Figure 1. **Distribution of the role of the use of video cameras in the process of distance learning**

Informants note that the use of a video camera in remote studies helps to *"maintain concentration throughout the lecture"* (B25) and *"not to be distracted during the lecture"* (B14). The use of the video camera seems to discipline the learner not only to listen or follow the visual material, but also to observe the teacher, his facial expression, emotions, etc. In addition, *"the image conveys a much larger amount of information than just the sound"* (B13), *"without the camera, remote studies would be incomplete, we would get too little information"* (B3). The aforementioned research data substantiate the breadth of the educator's functions in the educational process. A teacher is not and cannot be a transmitter of information detached from emotions.

The students who participated in the research associate the study process with an exchange-based process, when they want not only to receive from the educator, to *"actively participate"* (B24), but also to provide feedback to the educator, giving meaning to the activity: *"the meaning of the video camera is to show the teacher that you listen carefully to the lecture"* (B17). At the same time, the educator, by observing the faces of the lecture participants, can respond more accurately to the needs of the learners: *"the teacher can see from the student's expression whether he understands what is being said, whether he understands the theory, whether he is listening attentively"* (B5), *"I think it is important for everyone to see each other, because it is very unpleasant to talk to "yourself"* (D12). The need and necessity of the I-Thou relationship (according to Buber) becomes apparent. *"Having a video camera on is more representative of live communication, which isn't happening much these days"* (B36).

The second broadest category, better communication, consists of four subcategories: visual contact, body language, exchange of emotions, and the illusion of live communication (Figure 1). First of all, the video camera makes it possible to *"see a person"* (B24), *"see whom we are communicating with"* (B13), even *"remember group colleagues"* (B16), *"the camera during these studies is a very important tool to ensure full communication"* (D8). Used, constantly repeated things, including the image, remain in our long-term memory. The analysis of the opinion of the students who participated in the study shows that the constantly unremembered image of the teacher and colleagues can begin to change both

the image of the university and self-perception of it. According to Buber's ideas, from the I-Thou relationship, which was widely developed at the university, there is a transition to the I-It relationship. The analysis of the research data allows us to say that the separation of the student from the human relationship can be seen if video cameras are not used in the lectures, and it leads to isolation or even loneliness.

We also observe the perspective of human exclusion in the subcategory of body language (Figure 1). Informants read the body language of another person and create a more comprehensive and thus deeper picture of the analyzed topic*: "a video camera is a way to see body expressions"* (B4), *"reaction to emotional state and eye contact help maintain attention"* (D22). At the same time, it is noticeable that body language also helps the speaker to convey his thoughts more precisely and clearly: *"the image is very important in communication, because it is 100% possible. to say what we want and how we want"* (B8). *"Seeing a person's face, reaction or movements makes it easier to communicate and assess the situation. Also, don't feel like you're talking to a wall"* (B7). It can be said that the I-Thou relationship analyzed by M. Buber in remote studies is supported by a video camera.

The informants distinguish the video camera as a tool for conveying the emotions of the participants in education, correcting the feeling and even the behaviour: *"the camera is important to see the reaction"* (D2), *"the video camera allows seeing the smiles, emotions, reactions of colleagues"* (B2), *"it is more fun to pay for work when you see the groups, their emotions and you know that they are really listening to you"* (B32), *"it is easier to present the completed task when you see the groups instead of a grey background"* (B33). The informants name the video camera as a necessity to exchange emotions and even thoughts: *"to see other people's emotions, glowing faces!"* (B19), *"it allows you to show your emotions and thoughts, self-expression is easier between communicating people"* (D9), *"I think that without a video we wouldn't be able to convey all emotions with a camera, because a video camera is a really good way to communicate, see each other, convey thoughts"* (B6). We find emotions in every form of communication. In most cases, they decide whether to continue the communication further.

The participant interaction category comprises three subcategories: maintenance of interpersonal connection, mutual respect, and participant closeness (Figure 1). In the study process, the informants highlight the importance of the interaction between the participants of education as a necessary element of studies: *"to maintain such a connection, at least through the distance"* (B1), *"to recreate the atmosphere of live lectures, the connection"* (B22), *"when you can see a person, a connection is established"* (D16), *"with the video camera on, teachers feel that students want to interact with them and show some effort and respect"* (B17). Only a relationship based on cooperation and mutual respect can lead to quality studies, regardless of the type of studies (face-to-face or distance). The educational process is based on communication, during which the educator not only conveys knowledge, but also forms values, forms a personality, a responsible representative of some profession. If the educational process were limited to the transfer of knowledge, then in the 21st century, all educators could easily be replaced by technology, this process could be robotized. However, this will never happen, because the educational process requires people, their relationships, mutual change in their interaction.

The category of convenience to contact without a video camera consists of the following subcategories: freedom to choose activities during the lecture; unannounced environmental disturbances: children, sounds, etc.; Internet interference; students' free choice (Figure 1). During remote studies, the unused video camera creates a sense of freedom for the learner: *"when the video camera is on, it makes you stretch more, and when the video camera is off, you can do whatever you want"* (B14), *"with the video camera off, you can not worry about how you look"* (B18), *"when the video camera is off , you can eat in a lecture and no one sees"* (B26), *"since the student is listening and trying to understand and summarize, it can interfere with seeing himself on the screen"* (D27), *"it depends on the lecture, if you listen to certain material during the lecture, you don't need a camera at all"* (D5). The feeling of freedom from demanding one's appearance, the freedom to choose activities not related to studies are associated with non-involvement in the study process. An academic session is taking place, and the learner does not participate in it at total capacity, allowing the study process to be nearby. Following M. Buber's ideas, the following questions arise: can the such presence of the learner be treated as studying? Can a learner without a video camera establish and/or maintain contact with other participants? Do such studies make it possible to achieve the results envisaged in the study program?

Discussion

M. Buber points out that the educational development of young people must first of all be based on a dialogical relationship between the teacher and the student (subject - subject). This includes both a comprehensive, practical toolkit and insights into the challenges around embedding classroom dialogue in real settings (Barak & Lefstein, 2021) while retaining the complexity of classroom dialogue itself (O'Connor & Michaels, 2017). We often hear virtual communication described as more convenient, easier, safer (Gu, Chen, 2021; Renqiang, Wende, 2022), which we can control, while covering large groups of students. However, virtual communication promotes the alienation of the teacher and the student, the lack of connection and the elimination of values, especially responsibility, from the study process.

Thus, from the perspective of Buber's philosophy, in virtual reality teachers and students (as well as students among themselves) exist only as unrelated human units, alienated and anonymous. Since the virtual space contradicts the authenticity of reality and denies the possibility of having a dialogic relationship, distance studies form more of a technical dialogue or monologue (*I am*), when students and teachers look at each other in a depersonalized space. Therefore, the online space (in which there is no direct eye contact, the person no longer has a connection with the "real face", with the real *You*) makes the dialogue between the teacher and the student very superficial and instrumental - I-this. Online communication requires a different set of cultural competencies to interpret conversations that may be lacking in the richness of non-verbal cues. By the way online communicating can also require technical skills to utilize devices, which less technologically savvy students may find stressful (Ishii, et. al, 2019).

The media encourages isolation and self-isolation (with the cameras off). The development of student values, including responsibility for studies, and the study process decreases.

Therefore, we have to admit that during distance studies, the teacher sitting in front of the screen often leads not to a dialogue, but to a monologue, when the teacher talks to himself. Losing a relationship, we lose responsibility. Only dialogue allows us to become individuals who "are not selfish and limited"(Johannesen, 2000, p. 153). In a monologue, "everyone talks to himself, <...> everyone is left only to himself" - writes M. Buber (2001, p. 71). A certain paradox arises here - others seem to participate in the monologue, even more so - a conversation can even take place with them. However, according to Buber, there is no dialogue here, because there is no listening to the other, there is no acceptance of the other - You, there is no viewing the other as an object. Thus, remote virtual studies pose a challenge to existential education, which focuses on the complete and comprehensive upbringing of a personality as a future specialist, as a social being.

It is noticeable that M. Buber's philosophy does not provide specific dialogue techniques or formats, his philosophy of education represents more views on the communication between the educator and the educated, indicates the direction that should be taken in order to prepare young people for life, not for obtaining a diploma. Buber cared little about curricula, methods and exams, but the priority was how to give the student an authentic identity, how to form a complete personality, show him the way to responsibility and love (Hodes, 1972).

Conclusions

The analysis of empirical data shows that the pursuit of the quality of distance studies dictated by the 21st-century COVID-19 pandemic rests on Buber's philosophy in search of a person, life and the constant manoeuvring between the relationship I-Thou and I-It. The technology-created possibility to continue studies remotely can be considered as an achievement of the 21st century. However, the appropriate and comprehensive use of technology is extremely important in order not only to ensure the quality of studies, but also the learner's quality presence in the study process, communication and even in society. Virtual communication without the use of a video camera is associated not only with limited transmission, reception and perception of information, but also with the isolation of a person and the feeling of I-Thou in the I-It relationship. In remote studies, as in face-to-face studies, the most important focus remains the relationship, connection, the interaction of people, exchanging values, information and perception. The formation of personality as a future representative of the profession is directly related to the ability of the participants of the study process to maximally restore and maintain the process of direct communication based on communication. Technology must be used as a tool to ensure

such communication, as the functions of the educator cannot be replaced or compensated by technological advances. Regardless of the political, economic situation, and at the same time the change of educational paradigms, learners are looking for the I-Thou relationship in the education/study process.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.020

Psychological Correlates of Time Perception

Valerijs Makarevičs[1], Dr. psych.; **Dzintra Iliško**[2], PhD;
Deniss Andruškevičs[3], Mg.psych.
Daugavpils University, Latvia
valerijs.makarevics@du.lv[1]; dzintra.ilisko@du.lv[2]; D.Andrushkevich@outlook.com[3]

Abstract: A person exists in space and time. His or her life and work are subject to a temporal rhythm. Each of us has his/her own psychological time, which is different from the objective, physical time measured by the chronometer. The perception of time is a part of human experience, which is important for everyday behavior and for the survival of an individual organism. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the accuracy of perceived time intervals and the specifics of the activity, age and functional state of an individual. One's functional state of being is understood as a level of well-being, activity and a mood of a person. In the experiment, respondents were offered to watch two videos of different lengths. At the end of the demonstration, they had to estimate the duration of video. Before demonstration, all participants filled in a SAN test form, which determined the level of their functional state. The results of the study indicate that there are no relationship between the accuracy of perception of the duration of the demonstration of video films, age, as well as the specifics of the professional activities of respondents. The accuracy of perception is influenced by the well-being and level of activity of respondents.

Keywords: adult education, accuracy of time perception, specifics of activity, functional state, person's age.

Introduction

The driver of the train, actor, teacher, the operator of the interplanetary station. What do these professions have in common? The driver needs to bring the train to the station exactly according to a schedule. When pronouncing the line, the actor needs to be able to keep a pause just long enough that is necessary to keep public's attention so that the viewer does not have a suspicion that the actor has forgotten his or her speech. The teacher finishes the his or her presentation before the bell rings from the lesson. The operator must take into account the time delay of the signal reaching to the station. In other words, their actions are subject to some internal clock. Dawson & Sleek pointed to a critical importance of accurately estimating the time for the eyewitnesses of events whose testimony can be used in the process of reconstructing what has happened or in historical documents (Dawson, & Sleek, 2018). The inability to plan one's actions in time adds an anxiety of not having this skill. This increases the level of stress, which in turn causes employee turnover (Olsson, & Sundh, 2019). A person exists in space and time. The person's life and work are subject to a temporal rhythm. Each of us has his/her own psychological time, which is different from the objective and physical time measured by the chronometer. Almost every person can estimate the duration of the time interval with a small error.

The perception of time is a part of the human experience; it is important for everyday behavior and for the survival of an individual organisms (Wittmann, 2009). This explains active interest of researchers about the problem of time perception. As by Cappon & Banks argue, contemporary studies has a wide spectrum of focus to begin with defining the features of perception of time by an ordinary person to the ratio of perception of real and surreal time by mentally ill people who lived in the historical and personal past (Cappon & Banks, 1964). However, the researchers argue that there is still no answer to the question how person does it (Block, 1990; Skylark & Meck, 2014; Foley & Matlin, 2019 et al.). Current theories on a time perception can be divided into two large groups. On the one hand, these are theories that assume the existence of one center, a certain internal chronometer that is responsible for counting internal, psychological (as opposed to physical, objective) time. On the other hand, there are theories that claim that there is no single center responsible for the perception of time. The localization of the zones of activity of the cerebral cortex during the process of perception of time depends on many factors. According to the authors of theories of the first group, there is an internal timekeeper, a kind of biological chronometer in the human brain, which accelerates or slows down under the influence of

emotions and the situation (Grondin, 2010; Skylark & Meck, 2014; Lehockey et al., 2018). This internal chronometer is activated in the moments when attention is directed to the countdown of time (Taatgen et al., 2007). In this case, the perceived time intervals are compared with the standard stored in a long-term and episodic memory (Pouthas and Perbal, 2004; Noulhiane et al. 2007b). Thus, the internal timekeeper is related to the cognitive sphere of personality.

Within this group of theories, there are two main models of time perception: attention-based models and memory-based models (Brooks, 2012). Montare stated that the perception of time is disturbed if the activity accompanying the countdown of time requires large amount of attention (Montare, 1985).

The leading role of attention in the processes of time perception has been convincingly demonstrated by the experiments of Block, Hancock & D. Zakay and others (Block, et al., 2010; Droit-Volet et al., 2010). At the same time, not less convincing evidence was obtained in the experiments confirming the connection of time perception and memory (Kellaris & Kent, 1992). Theories of the internal chronometer suggest the presence of a sensory channel connecting the chronometer with the outside world.

There is no single pathway that transmits information about time to the human brain does not exist. Skylark & Meck suggest that all sensory channels support the perception of time. However, this assumption does not provide the answer to the question what are the common mechanisms that mediate these processes (Skylark & Meck, 2014).

The authors of the theories of the second group had an attempt to find the answer to this question and they have focused on the methods of neurophysiology. Their reference to the neurophysiological explanations of time perception ranges from simple fixation of pupil dilation (Kruijneet al., 2021) to complex measurements of local activation of excitement in the cerebral cortex**.**

The studies of recent decades show that when time is perceived, excitation of pupil appears in the insular cortex. At the same time, the location of the foci depends on the conditions of perception and the task (Bamiovu et al., 2003). It has also been found that there is a some kind of connection between individual differences in the perception of time and the peculiarities of neural connections in the cerebral cortex (Grahn & McAuley, 2009). With the emergence of a new point of view on the mechanisms of perception of time, it is suggested that the term "perception of time" itself is not accurate. Thus, Le Poidevin argues that the concept of time perception is not accurate, since a person perceives not time, but changes in the surrounding world occurring in time (Le Poidevin, 2019). Philosophers also offer their own solution to the problem of person's perception of time. According to Bergson, the perception of time is a function of the Self that can only exist in time (Bergson, 1913). The self is the integrating center of a human psyche in its deepest meaning.

The dependence of time perception on the emotional state of the person is also confirmed by the experiments of Thayer & Schiff, as well as Rudd, Vohs & Aaker. They studied the perceived duration of an event that was pleasant or unpleasant. Researchers have concluded that the waiting time for the unpleasant events subjectively flows faster than the waiting time for pleasant events (Thayer & Schiff, 1975; Rudd et al., 2012).

The influence of negative emotions on distortions of perception of time is reported in other studies (Angrilli et al., 1997; Everhard et al., 2003; Droit-Volet et al., 2004; Hancock &Weaver, 2005; Campbell & Bryant, 2007; Gil, et al., 2007; Droit-Volet et al., 2011; Droit-Volet, 2013; Johnson &MacKay,2019). The influence of negative emotions on distortions of perception of time is confirmed by other studies (Angrilli et al., 1997; Everhard et al., 2003; Droit-Volet et al., 2004; Hancock &Weaver, 2005; Campbell & Bryant, 2007; Gil, et al., 2007; Droit-Volet et al., 2011; Droit-Volet, 2013; Johnson &MacKay, 2019) as well.

The most convincing results confirmed the connection between emotions and the perception of time that were obtained in experiments with depression. As depression rates have increased, respondents' time perception error increased (Gil & Droit-Volet, 2009). However, there may be exceptions. In the study by Stetson and others, the subjects jumped from the 31 meters hight and landed on a grid. The subjective time of fall of subjects exceeded the objective time. But when they began to be supplied with the chronometers (the authors do not explain what they are), and they were monitored during the fall, the difference between subjective and objective time practically disappeared (Stetson, Fiesta & Eagleman,

2007). Effects related directly to perception has been found. Thus, the experiment of W. Matthews confirmed the manifestation of the effect of novelty in the perception of time. In this experiment, the participants were presented with photographs.

The exposure time was the same in all cases. At the same time, the exposure time of new photographs was subjectively perceived as longer than the exposure time of already known ones (Matthews, 2011). The subjective time of perception of moving objects increases compared to the perception of stationary objects (Sysoeva et al., 2010). Age and specificity of activity are in direct connection with the perception of time (Kozlova, 2009; Vasile, 2015). Personality traits can influence perceptions of time, but there is little research in this area to be mentioned (Skylark & Meck, 2014).

Taking into account the existing studies on perception of time, the authors have set the purpose of the study: to study the relationship of time perception in relation to extra psychological (age, profession) and intra psychological (well-being, activity, mood) phenomena.

The method and the research sample

The authors used two videos. One lasted 15 minutes and the other lasted 10 minutes. By genre, it was a cartoon and a popular science film. After demonstration of video, respondents were asked to rate the duration of each video. The second test (SAN test) designed to assess a psycho-emotional state of the respondent: well-being, activity and mood (the technique was named according to the first letters of functional states).

Prior to testing, all respondents were asked to relate their condition with a number of signs in a multi-stage scale. The scale consisted of indices (3 2 1 0 1 2 3) and was arranged between thirty pairs of words of opposite meaning, reflecting mobility, speed and pace of functions (activity), strength, health, fatigue (well-being), as well as characteristics of the emotional state (mood).

The subject had to choose and mark the figure that most accurately reflects his or her condition at the time of examination. When processing the respondents' scores they were recoded as follows: index 3, corresponding to unsatisfactory well-being, low activity and bad mood, marked by 1 point; the index following it as 2 by 2 points; index 1 by 3 points and so on until index 3 on the opposite side of the scale, which was respectively marked by 7 points. Below is a fragment of the test:

Feeling good 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Feeling bad

Feeling strong 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 Feeling week

For the positive feeling the individual receives points higher than 5, for negative - less than 5 (Doskin et al.,1973). The experiment involved 45 respondents in the age group from 18 to 67. Before watching the film, participants filled in the SAN test forms. Afterwards, they watched videos. First video lasted 15-minutes, the next was 10-minutes long.

Research Findings

The entire sample was divided into three subgroups: teachers, students and the representatives of other professions. Teachers were included because their professional activities are directly related to the perception of time. Table 1 shows the characteristics of each of the three subgroups**.**

Table 1

Characteristics of subgroups of respondents

The name of a subgroup	Average age	σ	Average result of perception of time 1	σ	Average result of perception of time 2	σ
Teachers (n=15)	39.7	12.2	18.3	3.8	12.5	4.8
Students (n=15)	23	2.5	17.5	4.2	11.5	3.5
Others (n=15)	40.5	15	17.6	4.2	13.1	3.2
All (n=45)	34.2	13.9	17.7	4.1	12.4	3.9

In Table 1, and in the subsequent ones, the average age is provided in years. The average result of the perception of time is in minutes. The number 1 refers to the first experiment when respondents watched a video that lasted 15 minutes. Number 2 - the second experiment, when the participants watched a video that lasted 10 minutes. The average result is the sum of all the results of a group divided by the number of members of that group σ is the mean quadratic deviation.

Table 2

Coefficients of the Mann-Whitney criterion

Groups	1st experiment	2nd experiment
Teachers - Ctudents	103.5 (p>0.05)	96 (p>0.05)
Teachers - Others	103 (p>0.05)	105 (p>0.05)
Students - Others	107.5 (p>0.05)	80 (p>0.05 for $p_{0.05}$ = 72)

Table 2 shows that only the difference in outcomes in groups of students and others reaches the boundary of statistically significant quantities. The rest of the results are not statistically significant.

One of our assumptions was that professional activity affects the accuracy of time perception. Teaching refers to professions where time control is necessary. Therefore, let's examine the group of teachers and the influence of their work experience (experience) on the accuracy of perception of time intervals.

Table 3

Perception of time by the teachers with the experience up to 10 and more than 10 years

Groups	Average result of time perception	σ	Average result of perception of time 2	σ
Teachers with work experience up to 10 years (n=7)	19.9	4.5	12.9	3.8
Teachers with work experience mere than 10 years (n=8)	17.1	2.9	11	3

The Mann-Whitney criterion, as calculated from the bases of the results of two experiments, was equal to U1 = 25 (at U0.05 = 13), respectively: U2 = 22 (at U0.05 = 13). But, despite the absence of statistically significant indicators, there is a tendency for a more accurate perception of time among teachers with more than 10 years of experience. The authors also have studied the influence of age on the accuracy of perception of time.

Table 4

Characteristics of subgroups of respondents of different ages

Age	Average age	σ	Average result of perception of time 1	σ	Average result of perception of time 2	σ
Until 30 (n=26)	24.4	2.8	17.8	4.5	12.2	3.5
30-50 years old (n=11)	41.5	5.1	18.3	4.1	12.8	5.2
Older than 50 (n=8)	57.4	4.8	17.5	3.4	12.4	3.0

To answer the question of whether there are differences in the perception of time by respondents of different ages, the authors have calculates the Mann-Whitney coefficient.

Table 5

Coefficients of the Mann-Whitney criterion for groups of respondents of different ages

Groups	1st experiment	2nd experiment
Until 30 – 30/50	137 (p>0.05)	141 (p>0.05)
Until 30 – Older than 50	100.5 (p>0.05)	99 (p>0.05)
30/50 – Older than 50	42 (p>0.05)	43 (p>0.05)

The results of the study indicate that age does not affect the accuracy of time perception. The authors also have gained the results by the use of the criterion of well-being of the SAN Test. Group characteristics and Mann-Whitney coefficients were presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Characteristics of subgroups of respondents with different levels of well-being

Well being	Average indicator	σ	Average indicator of perception of time 1	σ	Average result of perception of time 2	σ
Lowered (lower than 4) (n=6)	3.1	0.6	19	4	15.8	5.6
Neutral zone (4-5.99) (n=24)	4.9	0.5	17.8	4.7	11.75	3.6
Promoted(more than 6) (n=15)	6.4	0.3	17.5	3.4	12.4	3.0

Table 7

Coefficients of the Mann-Whitney criterion for groups of respondents according to the subscale of the SUN test "Well-being"

Groups	1st experiment	2nd experiment
Well-being is reduced/lowered – Neutral zone	54 (p>0.05)	37.5 (0.05>p>0.01)
Well-being is lowered – Well-being is increased	36.5 (p>0.05)	25 (p>0.05, $p_{0.05}$ = 23)
Neutral zone – well-being increased	166.5 (p>0.05)	166 (p>0.05)

The maximum of points that can be obtained on this scale is 8. The sum of points less than 4 indicates to a low level of well-being, namely, a fatigue of the respondent. In order to obtain a more detailed information about the relationship between well-being and the accuracy of time perception, the authors have identified a transition zone from 4 to 5, 99, which we call neutral. The same principle of division into zones was applied to the "Activity" and "Mood" subscales. Tables 6 and 7 indicate that the respondents with a reduced level of well-being tend to exaggerate the time of the event. The result is statistically significant.

The results of the study on the criterion of well-being of the SAN test indicate that the characteristics of the groups and the Mann-Whitney coefficients are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8

Characteristics of subgroups of respondents with different levels of activity

Activity	Average indicator	σ	Average result of perception of time 1	σ	Average result of perception of time 2	σ
Lowered (lower than 4) (n=14)	3.5	0.5	18.3	4.8	10.9	3.8
Neutral zone (4-5.99) (n=23)	5.1	0.5	17.5	4.2	12.3	3.2
Increased (more than 6) (n=8)	6.3	0.3	18.4	3	15	4.8

Table 9

Coefficients of the Mann-Whitney criterion for groups of respondents on the subscale of the SUN test "Activity"

Groups	1st experiment	2nd experiment
Activity reduced – Neutral zone	144.5 (p>0.05)	120.5 (p>0.05)
Activity reduced – Activity increased	53 (p>0.05)	25 (0.05>p>0.01)
Neutral zone – Activity is increased	76 (p>0.05)	59.5 (p>0.05 при $p_{0,05}$=55)

With a reduced level of activity when evaluating event that was10 minutes long, respondents made fewer mistakes than individuals with an increased level of activity.

Now let's consider the results obtained from the "Mood" subscale of the SUN test.

Table 10

Characteristics of subgroups of respondents on the scale "Mood" of the SUN test

Mood	Average indicator	σ	Average result of perception of time 1	σ	Average result of perception of time 2	σ
Lowered (lower than 4) (n=5)	3.6	0,3	16.2	4	14.4	4.6
Neutral zone (4-5.99) (n=27)	5.3	0.5	18.4	4.5	11.7	3.3
Increased (более 6) (n=13)	6.4	0.3	17.4	3.4	12.9	4.5

Table 11

The coefficients of the Mann-Whitney criterion for groups of respondents on the subscale of the SUN "Mood" test

Groups	1st experiment	2nd experiment
Decreasing Mood – Neutral Zone	53.5 (p>0.05)	42 (p>0.05)
Decreasing Mood – Elevated mood	23.5 (p>0.05)	25 (p>0.05)
Neutral zone – Elevated mood	154 (p>0.05)	153.5 (p>0.05)

As it is seen from Table Nr. 11, no statistically significant differences were found between the groups.

Discussion

The assumption that a professional activity has an impact on the perception of time has not been confirmed. Moreover, the mistakes in assessing time intervals were made by students who are just preparing for a professional career. The assumption that pedagogical activity contributes to a more accurate perception of time intervals has also not been confirmed. Both young teachers and experienced teachers made similar mistakes.

Despite the fact that some studies show that aging leads to errors in the perception of time (Graf, & Grondin, 2006; Fereira et al., 2016), our results do not support findings of this research.

Statistically significant results confirming differences in the assessment of time intervals were obtained in groups of respondents with low indicators on the well-being scale (compared with respondents with neutral indicators on the well-being scale) and with low indicators on the activity scale (compared with respondents with high indicators on the activity scale).

In addition, near the boundary of statistical significance are the results of respondents with low indicators on the scale of well-being (compared with a group of respondents with high scores on the scale of well-being) and the results of respondents with neutral indicators on the scale of activity (compared with the results of respondents with high indicators on the scale of activity).

Respondents with a low scores on a well-being scale make more mistakes compared to respondents with neutral indicators on the well-being scale. At the same time, respondents with low scores on the activity scale make fewer mistakes compared to respondents with neutral and high scores on the activity scale. Low indicators of well-being of respondents indicate fatigue. It is more difficult for a tired person to focus on the task, which explains the errors in assessing the time intervals of these respondents.

It was discovered that a low activity contributes to concentration on the task. Low activity is a characteristic of the state of contemplation, when the individual is fully concentrated on his or her cognitive processes. It seems that with an increasing activity, an indicative reflex begins to manifest itself, distracts an individual from solving the problem.

The results obtained indirectly confirm the correctness of researchers who believe that the perception of time by an individual is associated with attention. The differences described above refer to the second experiment, when the duration of the estimated video watching event was equal to 10 minutes. With the increasing of the duration of the event up to 15 minutes, no differences were recorded in all respects.

This phenomenon can be associated with the amount of attention of a person, which, as you know, is equal to 5-9 units of information. A time interval of 10 minutes corresponds to these parameters. The amount of short-term memory is also equal to 5-9 information units.

Therefore, in regards to long periods of time, perception errors are associated with peculiarities of cognitive sphere of an individual and his/her functional state.

Conclusions

In this study, the respondents were asked to retrospectively estimate the timing of two events lasting 15 and 10 minutes.

The results of the study did not confirm the relationship between the accuracy of the perception of time intervals, the professional activities and age of the respondents.

Respondents with neutral and high scores on the well-being scale made fewer mistakes in perceiving the timing of the event than respondents with low scores on a well-being scale.

The respondents with low scores on the activity scale made fewer mistakes in perceiving the timing of the event than respondents with neutral and high scores on the activity scale.

The above results apply only to a temporary estimate of a 10-minute event.

According to the results of the study, this can be argued that when perceiving long periods of time, perception errors are associated with the peculiarities of the cognitive sphere of the individual and his or her functional state.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.021

Supervision Opportunities in Overcoming the Fear of Failure, Increasing Self-efficacy and Professional Achievement

Rita K. Zumberga[1] Mg.sc.administr.; **Maija Zakrizevska - Belogrudova**[2] Dr.psych.
RISEBA University of Applied Sciences
rita.zumberga@gmail.com;[1] maija.zakrizevska@riseba.lv[2]

Abstract: Data suggest that, globally, an average of 40-50% of entrepreneurs and their management teams experience various types of fear of failure (FF), which is currently reinforced by the high levels of uncertainty. Combined with the external circumstances, these factors create substantial barriers, echoes in the relationship between human resources and influences individual self-efficacy (SE), evaluation of opportunities, and the levels of mental health. Although psychologists emphasize that, in the sample of entrepreneurs, FF may transform into a stimulus and a factor that increases motivation, the levels of entrepreneurial confidence suggest a pessimistic frame of mind with regard to growth and development. The aim of the research study is to find out what effects FF amongst entrepreneurs and top-level managers has on their SE and professional achievements as well as whether supervision has a potential in overcoming the FF and increasing the levels of professional achievements. Using the approach of quantitative research, the authors created a questionnaire consisting of three parts: The FF Survey (six fear factors), the Overall SE Survey and the Future-oriented Professional Achievements Survey - Proactive Career Engagement (PCE), Achievement Motivation (AM), Hope of Success (HOS). The questionnaire was completed electronically, and 193 respondents were surveyed. It was found out that statistically significant correlations and mutual influences exist between fear of failure, self-efficacy and professional achievements. In addition to that, statistically significant differences were found between the female and male sub-samples and also between the respondents who never attend any supervision sessions (or advisory sessions of any other type) and those whose attend such sessions "rarely" and "frequently". The research study enables supervisors and other advisors to develop a methodology in order to focus on the needs of entrepreneurs and top-level managers more purposefully and efficiently with regard to FF, SE and professional achievements.

Keywords: supervision, fear of failure, self-efficacy, professional achievements, entrepreneurs

Introduction

In the beginning of year 2022, a reminder regarding the significance of entrepreneurs in the national context was published in the Latvian media by the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) to particularly emphasize that the key contributors to the budget funds are entrepreneurs and their teams (Rostovskis, 2022). The currently high levels of uncertainty, which is influenced by the lingering COVID-19 pandemic (Sheng & Chen, 2022), the war of Russian against Ukraine, the drastic increases in the prices of raw materials and natural resources, urge households to continue cutting down their expenditure even further. The levels of entrepreneurial confidence also suggest a pessimistic frame of mind with regard to development and growth (Kruks, et al., 2020).

The latest data suggest that FF is experienced by 51.8% of entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom, and the percentages are very similar in other major economies, i.e., 42.6% in the USA and 47.9% of entrepreneurs in Japan (Szmigiera, 2022). A similar tendency can be seen in the most recent report regarding this topic from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia (2016), i.e., the monitoring of global entrepreneurship heralds an explicitly high level (39%) of fear of business failure in the population of Latvia as well, and, in combination with the external circumstances of perceiving the entrepreneurial environment, these "internal" circumstances create substantial barriers.

FF is one of the most common fears amongst entrepreneur. Based on the theories in psychology and social psychology, experience of FF may be described as a situation where evaluation of threats takes place to anticipate a failure as an outcome (Cacciotti & Hayton, 2014). The research studies also reveal that top-level managers experience FF as well, i.e., high quality performance of work is often achieved with tremendous external pressure, which only adds to fear and creates doubts regarding compliance.

Similarly, FF intensifies if the external environment imposes expectations on the managers who have just started their career in the new position (Bugdol, 2020).

FF affects the relationships between human resources, individual SE and accurate evaluation of opportunities, but not only these. It has significant impacts on the levels of physical and mental health as well. Action that echoes FF is frequently accompanied by high levels of anxiety and mental fatigue, which is detrimental to the welfare of the individual (Cacciotti & Hayton, 2014). Similarly, FF goes together with depression, self-blame, low levels of endurance, self-neglect, lower self-esteem, increased levels of self-doubt, and a tendency to renege on activities (Henschel & Iffland, 2021).

As the concept of FF develops over time, scientific publications start emphasizing the positive aspect of this phenomenon as well, and many research studies currently accentuate that not only an obstacle, but also a function of motivation can be spotted in FF. Consequently, FF is also motivation for entrepreneurship (Nefzi, 2018; Xiling, et al., 2020; Bugdol, 2020), because fear is associated with failure to use opportunities, thus speeding up the risk assumption process (Nefzi, 2018). In many cases, FF may provoke a more energetic approach in an entrepreneur (Gherardini, 2017), they use more effort and are able to have more focus on the targets of their entrepreneurship (Hunter, et al., 2021).

Although a lot of various FF does exist amongst entrepreneurs and top-level managers, FUF, FSE, FOL, FDS, and FUO are experienced most commonly (Conroy, 2003). FIN (or the impostor syndrome) is of equal significance. It refers to intense thoughts about fraud (Zanchetta, et al., 2020) as well as fear of failing to repeat past achievements in the future, and also fear of being revealed as an impostor (Pulliam & Gonzalez, 2018).

As research suggests, the state opposite to FF in successful entrepreneurs and managers is associated with thoughts about high levels of success and achievement (Smith & Karaman, 2019). Although, generally, all research studies into professional accomplishments in the context of entrepreneurship exist in past and present time dimensions where the accomplishments can be calculated and evaluated based on what has been completed or obtained, within the context of both an enterprise and an entrepreneur, the aim of this research study is to address the potential accomplishments of entrepreneurs and top-level managers and their achievements in the future professional context. The following approaches were discovered during the analysis of the scientific literature: PCE (the individual typically has a focus on self-driven, determined career behaviour, and it includes such components as self-determination and values) (Hirschi, et al., 2014), AM (guides the entrepreneur towards success, is associated with emotions, meaning that the individual should feel proud of themselves in order to try and achieve something significant for themselves) (Smith, et al., 2019), and HOS (which consists of being aware of own capacity to act (determination, persistence), and belief in finding solutions (based on their knowledge and experience) (Snyder, et al., 1991).

The latest research reveals significant correlations between entrepreneurial success and AM (e.g., flexibility, courage, HOS, domination, prioritization of complex tasks, independence and objective orientation) (Staniewski & Awruk, 2019). Several programs have been developed to increase the levels of AM, they imply teaching thoughts and action with regard to accomplishments, so that the demand performers are able to attain the set targets and improve their overall performance (Smith, et al., 2019). HOS, which is measured as hope for positive results of action, occurs in situations where creative dealing with problems is required. Being convinced that their action would bring benefit in the future strengthens a person's effort in attaining their goal. Hope is a component of future orientation which is motivating and makes space for discovery of opportunities. It also allows to create trust in own skills in dealing with challenges (Minda & Piasecka, 2019). Other research studies suggest that the new form of career, PCE, proves the strength of career self-management, exceeding the personal traits and SE (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Statistically significant differences exist between proactive entrepreneurial personalities and entrepreneurs of other types — they manifest in work ethics and SE. Proactive entrepreneurs are individuals who are internally motivated for full-time care for the development of the enterprise and their own development (Ness, et al., 2020).

SE, in its turn, is a construct which may influence choice, effort, persistence and achievements (Rees, et al., 2020; Blumberga & Lasmane, 2022). Entrepreneurial behaviour is typical in the individuals combining self-determination, SE and self-identity (based on their own significant values, beliefs and needs) (Cui, 2021). SE projects people's belief in being able to perform a certain task efficiently. It is,

in fact, a self-evaluation of individuals' own abilities (Adekanmbi & Ukpere, 2021). Individuals subject themselves to dangerous situations when concentrating on fear-causing thoughts and forming them in their minds. This reaction occurs at a low level of SE. And vice versa, a high level of SE reduces the perceived threats and, thus, the fear associated with them. Fear excitement reduces as SE increases (Rees, et al., 2020).

The key functions of supervision also include the forming or educational function (focus on development of experience and skills) as well as the renewing or supporting function (focus on health and welfare, supportive assistance to the professionals who work in stressful conditions for extended periods) (Mihailova, et al., 2017), which is suggestive of benefits from supervision among entrepreneurs and top-level managers. Reponses to major failure in life when accepting negative emotions and engaging again in the attainment of new, meaningful goals is associated with improved future welfare (Gherardini, 2017). Awareness of FF and understanding its mechanism is a way of finding approaches to managing them instead of going thought this experience silently (Dong, 2022). Furthermore, with the presence of the awareness processes, it is possible to mitigate the FF (Sode & Chenji, 2021).

The aim of the research study is to find out what effects the FF amongst entrepreneurs and top-level managers has on SE and professional achievements as well as whether supervision has a potential in overcoming the FF and increasing the levels of professional achievements.

Methodology

Three research questions were asked: Is there statistically significant mutual influence between FF, SE and professional achievements? Do statistically significant differences exist in FF, SE and professional achievements between women and men? Do statistically significant differences exist in FF, SE and professional achievements between the entrepreneurs and top-level managers who use the supervision and other advisory service opportunities "frequently", "rarely", and those who do not?

Data acquisition method: quantitative, source data acquisition method which involved a combined conduct of three surveys: The FF Survey created by the authors and adapted to the Latvian entrepreneurial environment, which includes 5 scales of a modified PFAI (according to *Conroy et al.* (2003)) - "Fear of Having an Uncertain Future" (FUF), "Fear of Upsetting Important Others" (FUO), "Fear of Devaluing One's Self-estimate" (FDS), "Fear of Experiencing Shame and Embarrassment" (FSE), "Fear of Losing Interest" (FOL), and also a modified and shortened "Fear of Incompetence" (FIN) scale (according to *P.R. Clance* (1985)); The Overall SE Survey modified by the authors (1 scale) (according to *Schwarzer & Jerusalem* (1995)); The Professional Achievements Survey created and adapted to the Latvian entrepreneurial environment by the authors and including 3 scales: The Modified PCE Scale (according to *Hirschi et al.* (2014)), The AM Scale (according to *Smith et al.* (2019)) and The HOS Scale (according to *Snyder et al.* (1991)).

The research study was conducted between 28 February and 29 May of year 2022. The survey questionnaire was distributed electronically via the LCCI and also by approaching entrepreneurs and top-level managers personally. The processing of the statistical data was carried out using the IBM SPSS 28.0 software.

Research participants: responses were received from 193 respondents: 56.5% women (n=109) and 43.5% men (n=84). Breakdown based on the professional status: 66.3% entrepreneurs (n=128) and 33.7% top-level managers (n=65). Most of them represent the age group of 30 to 49 years (78.3% in total), followed by respondents from 50 to 60+ (18.1% in total), with the smallest being the youngest age group of up to 29 years (3.6%), which is close to the actual distribution in the population. The respondents who never use supervision or other advisory service opportunities were 46.6% (n=90), those who use "rarely" — 40.9% (n=79), and those who use "frequently" — 12.4% (n=24).

Results and Discussion

The linear regression analysis between the sub-samples (men n=84, women n=109) revealed a statistically significant mutual influence between FF, SE and professional achievements. The data suggest that all of the six fear factors in the male sample have a negative influence on SE: FUF and FSE have 20% influence, FUO has 19% influence, FDS and FOL have 17% influence, and FIN has 14%

influence. In the male sample, AM is negatively influenced by three fear factors: FOL has 13% influence, whereas FSE and FUO have 11% influence. HOS is negatively influenced by 5 fear factors: FIN has 18% influence, FSE has 15% influence, FOL has 12% influence, FUF has 11% influence, and FUO has 9% influence (Figure 1).

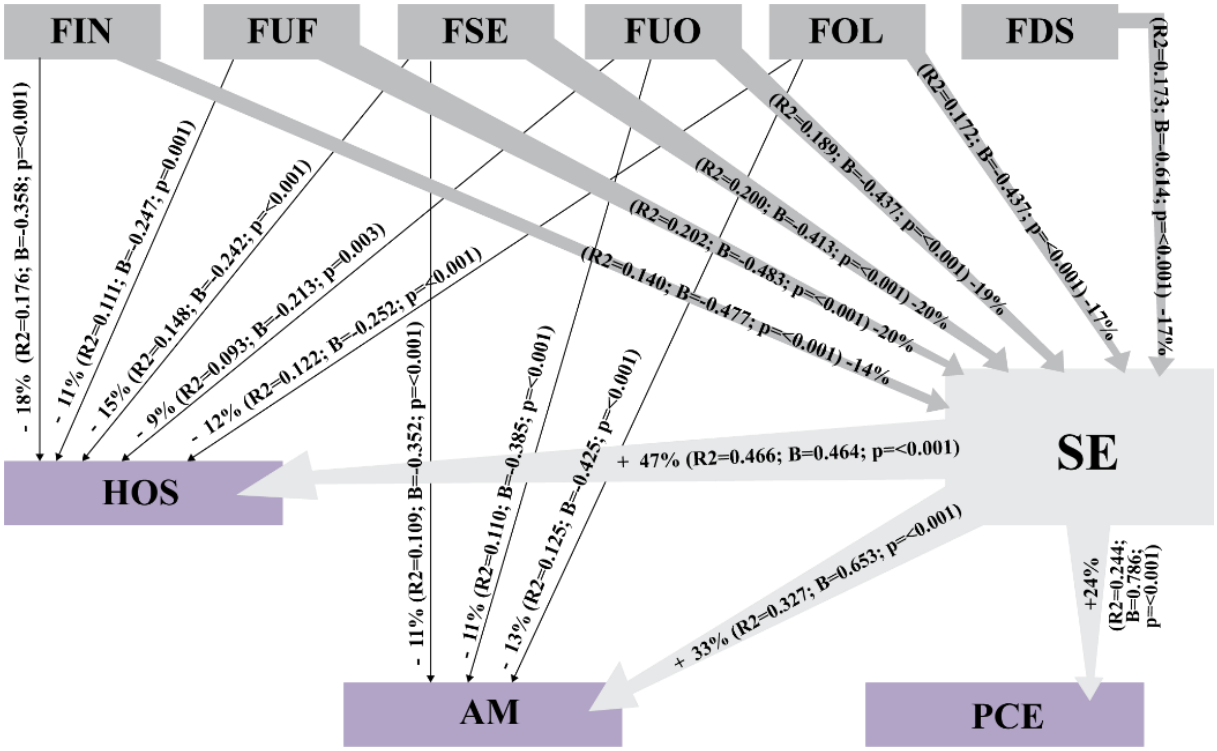

Figure 1. **A summary of the linear regression created by the authors for the male population (n=84)**

Fear has no influence on PCE in the male sample. SE, in its turn, has a positive influence on all of the three achievement scales: 47% influence on HOS, 33% influence on AM and 24% influence on PCE (Figure 1). The overall results for the male sample can be seen in Figure 1 and suggest that SE is a mediator for the influence of FF on professional achievements. FF is not able to directly achieve PCE in men, but is able to reduce SE. Lowering of SE has substantial negative impacts not only on PCE, but also on AM and HOS.

In the female sample, in its turn, only three fear factors have a negative influence on SE: FUF has 12% influence, FIN has 11% influence, whereas FOL has 9% influence. In the female sample, FF has no influence on either PCE or AM (Figure 2). In the female sample, HOS is negatively influenced by only three fear factors: FIN has 13% influence, FUF has 10% influence, whereas FOL has 8% influence (Figure 2). SE has a positive influence on all of the three achievement scales: 54% influence on HOS,

34% influence on AM and 15% influence on PCE (Figure 2).

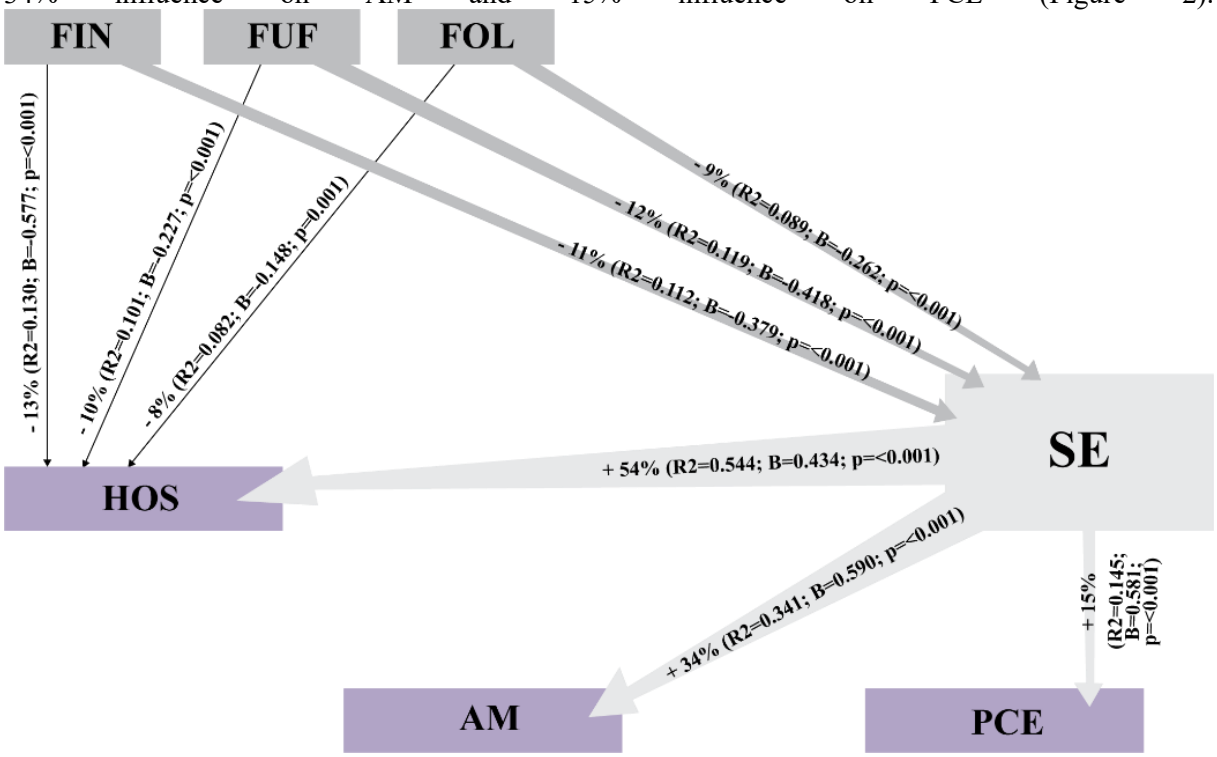

Figure 2. **A summary of the linear regression created by the authors for the female population (n=109)**

The female and male samples have substantial differences between the influence of FF on SE and professional achievements. Although women experience fear more intensely than men (Table 1), they do not have too big an influence on PCE, AM or HOS (Figure 2), which suggests that, in reality, there are several other factors of a substantial significance in the female sample. SE (like in the male sample), however, becomes a mediator between FF and achievements, with the data suggesting that it may be negatively influenced by fear while influencing all of the achievement scales itself (Figure 2).

There are also statistically significant differences in the three fear factors and AM between the female and male sub-samples. Women experience FOL, FSE and also FDS more intensely (higher scores for the arithmetical means on the scales). Since FDS occurs from questioning own value, the results suggest that women have lower confidence regarding their professional competences and abilities, which they try not to show (in order not to experience feeling of shame) (Table 1).

Table 1

T-test between women and men

Scale	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	M Men	M Women
FDA	-3.319	.001	9.0952	10.3394
FSE	-2.695	.008	11.7857	13.4037
FOL	-2.055	.041	10.5952	11.7156
AM	-2.647	.009	34.5357	35.9541

The data on the FSE scale show that women are more sensitive in their perception of failure occurring in presence of others or having a potential of becoming evident soon (Table1). To avoid shame, embarrassment and devaluing their self-estimate, women will more infrequently opt for making various decisions involving risks, will decide to wait, and will analyze more. More than men, women also fear that other might turn away from them as a result of their decisions, getting engaged in the society, comprehensive communication with friends, family, colleagues and other members of the society is much more significant for them than for men (Table 1). Interest from other helps to raise the self-estimate of women with regard to their perceived personal value, therefore loss of interest may, as an

external factor, also make them question their abilities and competences. The data of the AM scale (Table 1), in their turn, indicate that women are slightly more focused on the attainment of the goal, spend more time on analyzing the resources and obstacles before making hasty decisions, are more frequently inclined to monitor the implementation of plans and efficiency, and are also ready to assume responsibility individually.

Table 2

ANOVA sub-sample test according to frequency of supervision attendances

Scales		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
PCE	Between groups	757.533	2	378.767	15.346	<.001
	Within groups	4689.586	190	24.682		
	Total	5447.119	192			
AM	Between groups	90.674	2	45.337	3.305	.039
	Within groups	2606.435	190	13.718		
	Total	2697.109	192			
HOS	Between groups	33.042	2	16.521	3.571	.030
	Within groups	878.979	190	4.626		
	Total	912.021	192			

The research study proved that statistically significant differences exist between the entrepreneurs and managers who attend or do not attend supervision or other types of advisory services, on all of the three professional achievement scales. The entrepreneurs and managers who rarely or frequently attend supervisions (or other types of advisory services) have shown higher average scores for AM, PCE, and HOS, which is suggestive of a strong role of supervision (or another type of consultancy service) as a mediator between the entrepreneur / manager and achievements in the professional area (Table2).

On the PCE scale, the entrepreneurs and top-level managers, who have used supervision, couching, mentoring or other advisory service opportunities frequently, show higher response values (Figure 3), which suggests that they are more active in their professional growth, set specific goals, tasks and plans, and monitor their implementation. In professional matters, an advising mediator is a substantial item for PCE, because entrepreneurs and managers feel encouraged and motivated. On the AM scale as well, the top-level managers, who have used supervision, couching, mentoring or other types of advisory services frequently, show higher response value means (Figure 3), which suggests that, when seeing the advising professional, they are able to evaluate the routine organizational matters efficiently, are able to assume a considered risk, focus on the goal energetically, believe in own individual proficiency, implement the set plans confidently. There is an identical trend curve on the HOS scale as well. The entrepreneurs and top-level managers, who frequently use advisory service opportunities, show higher response values (Figure 3), which suggests that, during these sessions, they receive a reminder regarding their past success experience and stronger competences, thus increasing their confidence in potential success in their initiated and future tasks.

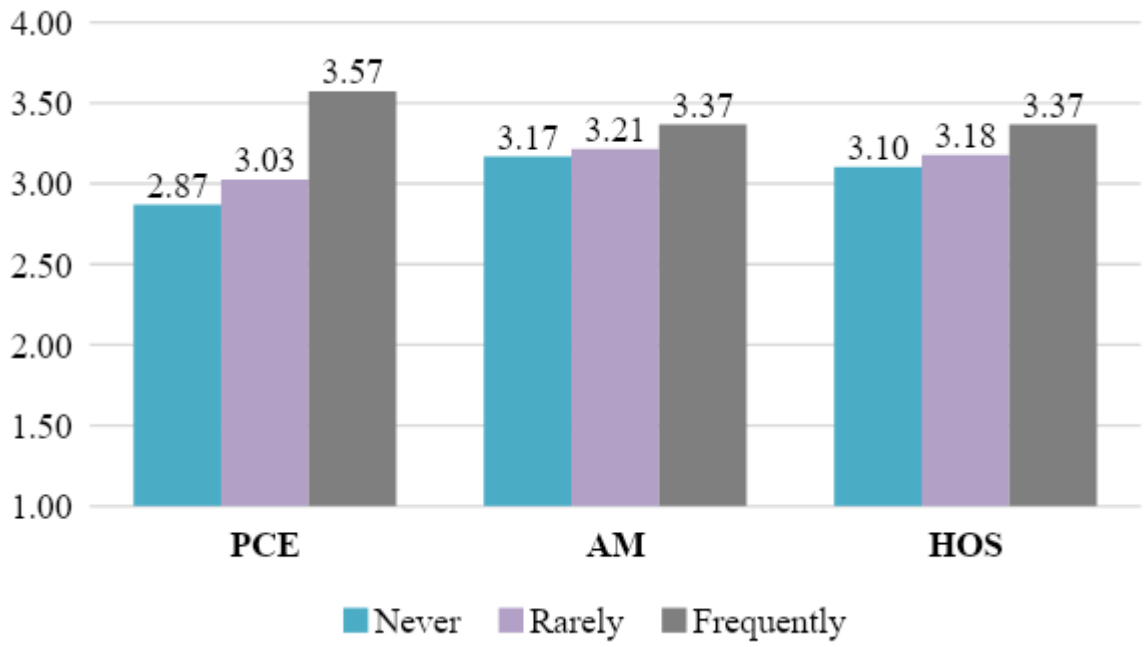

Figure 3. **Arithmetical means for achievement scales according to frequency of supervision attendances**

No statistically significant differences exist on the FF and SE scales between the entrepreneurs and managers who attend or do not attend supervision or other types of advisory services, which suggests that such matters have not been effectively handled during the advisory service or that no methods for working with FF and SE have been used.

Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

The aim of the research study was to find out what effects FF amongst Latvian entrepreneurs and top-level managers had on their SE and professional achievements as well as whether supervision has a potential in overcoming the FF and increasing the levels of professional achievements. The data suggest that all of the FF factors have a negative influence on SE and, in some, on professional achievements as well. SE, which is substantial in having professional achievements, explicitly acts as a mediator, with the fear factors being able to influence it and, thus, the future achievements as well. Although the female sample experience the FF factors more intensely, greater negative influences on SE and professional achievements are specifically in the male sample. Opportunities for supervision and other types of advisory services have positive effects on entrepreneurs and top-level managers on all of the professional achievement scales, which is suggestive of a high potential for mutual collaboration to improve and develop more accurate methodologies. Improvement of AM, HOS and PCE reduces the influences of FF.

There were restrictions in the course of the research study because entrepreneurs and top-level managers are substantially busy to take part in a scientific survey, and this prevented the authors from opting for more time-consuming research study strategies. Nevertheless, new directions were discovered for future research: interactions between perfectionism (adaptive and maladaptive) and FF as well as correlations between personality traits and the strategies for overcoming FF.

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DOI: 10.22616/REEP.2023.16.022

The Impact of The School on The Development of Normative Understanding of Citizenship: The Case of Latvia

Ieva Strode M.Sc.soc.
Advanced Social and Political Research Institute (ASPRI), University of Latvia, Latvia
ieva.strode@lu.lv

Abstract: Analysing the normative perceptions of citizenship in society - what is a good citizen–what are the civic virtues that influence political behaviour–attention is paid not only to what these perceptions are but also to the political socialisation process–when and how the views were formed. Traditionally, schools have been seen as one of the most important agents of political socialisation. This study aims to determine how the Latvian population describes the formation of their normative notions of citizenship and how they recall the influence of schools in this area. Qualitative methods were used to conduct the research based on 30 in-depth interviews that were conducted in the first part of 2022. Participants were selected by ensuring that people of different ages, genders, and ethnicities, as well as citizens with migration experience, were represented. The results of the study show that not only the Soviet past and the different approaches in Latvian and minority schools regarding political issues but also the changing curriculum and the lack of common standards have influenced the lack of a common understanding in this area. The study shows that the population is not used to reflecting on these topics, which suggests that it is necessary to activate discussions not only in school but also in society as a whole - what are the political values on which they want to base the future of the country?

Keywords: good citizen, education in comprehensive schools, Latvia

Introduction

The debate on citizenship and related normative notions has been ongoing since Ancient Greece and Rome: Plato, Aristotle, and others (Van Deth, 2008) have discussed the definition of a good citizen, but the debate continues to this day (Villalobos et al., 2021). One topic that inevitably attracts attention is the formation of normative notions related to citizenship. Consequently, children and young people and the educational process are inevitably the focus of attention (student surveys are conducted, teachers' perceptions are analysed, and teaching materials are analysed) (Kerr, 1999; Harwood, 2010; Anderson et al., 1997). In recent decades, researchers have also focused on the decline in civic virtue among young people (Dalton, 2008; Jennings, 2008), and the education system is often blamed for this decline (Stuteville and Johnson, 2016).

This is partly attributed to the political socialisation process, where for a given age group (Wasburn & Adkins Covert, 2017, Nieuwelink et al., 2018) the school system is one of the most important agents of socialisation (peers, formal curriculum, community service programs) (Jennings, 2008; Mills, 2013; Hammett, 2018), through which the state tries to internalise certain values (Janoski, 1998; Gutierrez, 2002).

This article will not analyse the content of the curriculum, but the impressions of citizens on how educational institutions influenced the formation of their perceptions of a good citizen and what exactly came to mind from their school life. Taking into account the age structure of the study participants (some of them went to school at the time of the USSR, and some of them after Latvia regained its independence) and the different places they lived during their school years (including outside Latvia), the study aims not so much to describe the Latvian education system and curriculum, but more the perceptions of the population about the influence of schools and teachers on this important sphere of life.

Methodology

This research was conducted to study in depth the perception of Latvian citizens as good citizens. The study covered a broader range of topics, but this article focuses on the role of educational institutions in shaping the perceptions of a good citizen.

In-depth interviews were conducted in this study. The interviews were conducted in the first half of 2022, in two waves. Thirty interviews were conducted in the first wave, and 28 of them were interviewed in the second wave (two refused to continue participating in the study).

Participants were selected through personal contacts, ensuring that interviewees were of different ages and genders and that some had migrated and lived abroad. The sample is characterised as follows: interviewees aged 19-83, 19 women and 11 men, 2 foreigners with long-term experience of living in Latvia, 15 Latvians born and raised in Latvia, 5 Latvians who themselves or whose ancestors went into exile after WWII, and 8 Russian speakers born or living in Latvia for a long time.

Most of the interviews were conducted in Latvian; however, if the interviewees had difficulties expressing themselves fluently in Latvian or wanted to speak Russian, the interview was conducted in Russian.

> Length of the interview in Wave 1: from 35 minutes to 2 hours and 19 minutes (average length 1 h 22 minutes).
>
> Length of the interview in Wave 2:55 minutes to 5 hours 15 minutes (average duration 2 hours 29 minutes). In two cases, the interviews were interrupted and resumed on another day. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or remotely, using the Zoom platform. Interviews were recorded (face-to-face audio, mostly remote video).

In the first interview, interviewees were asked to describe their general perceptions of citizenship, being good citizens, and their personal experiences. In the second interview, targeted questions were asked about the relationship between different societal processes and institutions, and perceptions of good citizenship. The topic of this article, education, was mainly touched upon by the respondents in the first interview, both spontaneously and by describing how their ideas of a good citizen and civic virtues were formed, and by answering a series of questions about the curriculum. In the second interview, apart from education, the question was asked about a teacher or whether they remembered a teacher who influenced the kind of citizen they became and who determined it. The names used in the article have been changed; however, the ages of the interviewees have been retained.

Results and Discussion

In summarising the results of the study, it should be noted that they are based on qualitative research data, and quantitative research would be needed to draw representative conclusions about the impact of educational institutions on perceptions of good citizenship among different generations of citizens.

As already mentioned, educational institutions are often blamed for the decline in civic participation (Stuteville and Johnson, 2016; Peterson, 2011; Wilkins, 1999). This study shows that there are several reasons for this (lack of active behaviour models in society and passivity of close people), but it must be acknowledged that the contribution of schools to interest in, knowledge of, and participation in citizenship issues is uneven, and the majority of the interviewees admit that they have thought relatively little about citizenship and its normative aspects–what it means to be a good citizen. Although some do not relate their knowledge and views to what they have learned at school, the majority acknowledges the influence of the school and teachers (sometimes also pointing to its negative aspects).

Given the wide age range of the interviewees, the results also show the influence of the historical period - the USSR period (in fact, this period can also be divided into several periods, such as the post-war years, the period shortly before independence, and the period between), and the independence period.

Similar to other studies showing **the impact of educational programmes** on perceptions of citizenship, values, and citizenship behaviour (Nieuwelink et al., 2018; Tibbitts, 2001), this study shows that interviewees recognise and acknowledge the impact of what is taught in school.

> *In primary school, teachers always discussed this issue during the [national holiday] weeks. Very often, trips were organised (...) to memorial sites, soldiers were invited to go on excursions very often to the front lines of the battle in the Ķemeri swamp [events of WWI, the battles for independence]. Afterward, we had to analyse these battles, these situations, and our thoughts, what we experienced, and what we thought. (...) It was not only in the lessons of the social sciences*

but also in Latvian language classes. Each teacher tried to somehow involve the experience we got in this excursion in their lesson (Kaspars, 19 y.o.)

It was probably the first time outside the family, well, in a peer group, that we talked about "adult people issues," about political processes, about elections, about some kind of political structure, let's say, and how things work, what's going on in Latvia. (Guntis, 35 y.o.)

However, the interviews show different assessments of the relevance of what is taught about citizenship and its relationship to the normative aspects of citizenship (some do not even remember it), which is noted both by describing situations in different periods of schooling.

They did not teach you in school, but what a good citizen should be. [about politics], absolutely nothing. It was still a rural school (...) There was no politics at all (Lūcija, 83 y.o.)

Well, I do not know, I do not think anybody has educated us about that. They taught their subjects– that is, all. (Santa, 48 y.o.)

Maybe there was something at school, but nothing comes to mind (Jana, 34 y.o.)

It should be noted that changes in curricula also have an impact, not only regarding the knowledge received but also on the view of the importance of this knowledge–the instability of the programme suggested that this knowledge was not important.

[other subjects like literature] were taken more seriously because it was clear that everybody had it from grade 4 and it was easier to take it seriously compared to a subject that came out of the blue and people who are a few years older didn't have it at all (Pēteris, 24 y.o.)

The study also showed the interaction between **school and family**: although many people's primary memories are of their families (parents and grandparents), who taught them by example what to do and how to do it, perceptions of how much influence each of them has (and should have) differ.

I would say the very beginning is in the family and, at least in my case, in secondary school. In the first grades, I did not talk about it much, but in high school and university, these topics were touched upon in various subjects. It was discussed, and there was a greater understanding of it. It also explained what the point was, say, going to participate in something or something. It was also a kind of patriotism. (Guntis, 35 y.o.)

Interviewees emphasised that at this age, they spend a lot of time at school; therefore, a school is a place where they meet peers and friends, so the influence of school is very important in the socialisation of a person in general (and thus also in the political socialization and perception of citizenship) (Nieuwelink et al., 2018).

If you think about this, we spend more time at school than with our families. Therefore, all those people, that society, and that environment around us, shape us as people more than our family. That environment, not the family, nurtures us and shapes us two-thirds as human beings. The family puts one-third, which is the basic foundation. (Elīna, 21 y.o.)

It was also stated that educational institutions can provide better quality civic education than parents, explaining different terms and meanings of historical events.

[Who should teach citizenship?]... Our education system probably (..) They have a kindergarten curriculum, but not all parents can explain it comprehensively. A large amount of information should be poured into the child's head. However, parents, maybe at some point can say: let us go and watch the fireworks, let us go - yes, it's Latvia's birthday. Someone might not even say it; they say that they're shooting fireworks today, let us go and see. In kindergarten, they are told the information in a structured manner so that it is completely understandable at that age. (Linda, 48 y.o.)

The role of the family also appears in the curriculum - how important it is that the pupil learns about historical events not only from the teacher's narration but also from the family's memories (and does not contradict what the teacher says). Here, however, it is necessary to mention the phenomenon observed, as many at-home historical events have not been discussed. Some attribute this to the discrepancy

between official history and family memories in Soviet times, and the fear that sanctions may follow if a child speaks out in public.

> *I did not have such stories because, well, I say there was a tradition of not talking about things like that. Parents did not tell their children about such things either. My grandmother was sent to Siberia in 49 but why and for what I was not told. My parents thought that it was better not to know than to start protesting something. (Iveta, 59 y.o.)*

Several interviewees pointed out that they did not get their knowledge of history from family members, not so much out of caution, but because as a child, they were not interested in it.

> *You do not find your parents very interesting anymore, especially when you are young. (Iveta, 59 y.o.)*

Those who recalled historical events told in the family more often indicated that the initiators were the storytellers themselves, or that such stories were a tradition of family events. However, the influence of the school was also mentioned; for example, to learn the topic in history, the pupils had to find out what the parents did during the restoration of independence (in this case, the 1991 events–the barricades). The interviewee points out that this prompted her to discuss these issues with her parents.

As already mentioned, research often focuses **on the curriculum and its relationship to understanding citizenship** (Stuteville and Johnson, 2016; Kerr, 1999). This study also showed that the time spent at school has a direct and indirect impact. There are influences from changes in the curriculum (e.g., the way history is taught, whether and how social studies are taught), but there are also other aspects that influence the way these subjects are taught: teachers' experiences and society's agenda.

> *We had a history teacher who was a WWII veteran. (..) I do not like history - there's all medieval history, the history of the Latvian SSR, but he was so interesting. He told us of his adventures. (Irēna, 64 y.o.)*

> *Two years ago, we heard a lot about, let us say, the same sorting of waste, which I think is one of the issues now: Let us not pollute the environment. At home, we were told that we could not use plastic straws now because they would end up somewhere, I do not know, in the environment. I was angry; I said I am going to take them all to the forest and throw them out, and then you will see. At school, there was a lot about sorting waste. (Linda, 48 y.o.)*

> *It was much less talked about because it was different in Australia - freedom was not won there like in Latvia. Australia Day is just a big barbecue, where people go and roast meat. This is because the country is always free of charge. It's different. (Laura, 52 y.o.)*

Analysing the answers, it is noticeable that the interviewees attributed more influence to subjects such as Latvian language and literature (including foreign literature), history, and geography on the formation of their understanding of citizenship. Social sciences, as previously mentioned, are not taught to everyone.

> *Because it tells us what the past was like, through it we can inherit the mistakes and good things of previous generations, and second, it gives us a better sense of the spirit and values of the country. (Pēteris, 24 y.o.)*

> *The only time it [citizenship] was mentioned was in history lessons. However, at the same time, I am not interested in history. I was so bored. Well, it is nice that you told me, and then? You are already talking in the form of the past. They did not tell [about recent history] either. It went on for 40 minutes about all that and the next hour. (...) [In the social sciences], it was more about how to behave, how to be a lady and things like that. (Sigita, 27 y.o.)*

It should be noted that both Latvian and minority school pupils emphasised the importance of the Latvian language:

> *Before secondary school, we had a new Latvian language teacher. (...) Then, the teacher gave a lot of information about Latvian heritage: folklore and poetry (...). And then they also switched to teaching the history of literature in the context of not just Soviet books but using literature that had been banned (..), so we were given a pretty good basis in school for understanding our new*

country: how it is built, that it is not just a territory separated from the Russian province and now there is Latvia, but that it is historical - that Latvians have lived here and the old stories about the Latvian people and tribes and how it has gone, developed and, say, who has occupied us - Swedes, Russians, Germans, Poles and so on - but that this is how this country has been formed (Linda, 48 y.o.)

My Latvian language teacher influenced me as a citizen because she was interested in teaching and training us Russians in Latvian. She was so enthusiastic about it that she tried to do so in some kind of game and in a way that would be interesting for us or us in some lessons. Therefore, after the 9th grade, I decided that I would go to vocational high school and I would learn purely in Latvian. (Alīna, 38 y.o.)

However, many speakers considered **the way the subject was taught** to be more important than the content.

About patriotism (...), it all depends on who is going to teach there and who is going to teach there. It is just as in health teaching, where the teacher cannot teach anything because she blushes at the mention of the word condom, the same here. Well, if it's very formal like that, then I do not know if it has any meaning or significance. (Maria, 80 y.o.)

There was ambivalence about the impact of **teachers' enthusiasm** on pupils' reactions. As previously mentioned, some were inspired by this enthusiasm, while others were repelled.

[Was there patriotic education?] Maybe there was something in the history lessons, but we had such a good teacher who didn't exaggerate (Kārlis, 39 y.o.)

My history teacher was a super-patriotic person, and she imposed her ideologies on us. And when they talked about Latvian history, I was like, no, it's cool that you tell us, but do not impose your ideology, your opinion on us. (Sigita, 27 y.o.)

It should be noted that several interviewees, when analysing the impact of school and teachers, emphasised **the personality and attitude of the teacher** more than the curriculum and activities.

If I believe that a good citizen is someone who respects the law and is interested in certain topics, then I believe that (..) if the teacher treats you as equal. Yes, of course, he is a teacher, and he cannot be treated badly, (..) but teachers also must not treat the pupil disdainfully, because then they will also feel the social inequality since their childhood, from their youth, they will realise that if an adult can afford it and they have nothing to say against it, then they can form a link that - when I am an adult I can do the same and there won't be any consequences too (Alīna, 38 y.o.)

The period during which the interviewees attended educational institutions also had an impact on their various activities: during **the USSR period**, those attending school pointed to their involvement in organisations of the time - the children's organization (oktobrēni), Pioneers, Komsomol, attitudes to which differed from time to time, but none of the interviewees identified themselves as enthusiasts of these organisations and this was also said to be relatively rare among classmates and acquaintances. However, one interviewee pointed out that these organisations did not admit those who were bad students or misbehaving, so there would be pressure on those who, for whatever reason, did not want to join. It was evident from the interviews that attitudes towards these organisations changed over time

I was encouraged to join the pioneers at the beginning, but my class teacher was very good because her brother had been exiled like my father and she understood. I wasn't hardened much there, and that's how I stayed, that I was neither a pioneer nor a Komsomol member (Lūcija, 83 y.o.)

I thought, well, that it is about discipline; it is compulsory. One has to go to school and one has to join the organization (oktobrēni). And you do. To be honest, oktobrēni did not matter. (Santa, 48 y.o.)

Later, however, other arguments for joining appeared - for example, that membership in the Komsomol was necessary to be able to go to university later.

It was the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union; for example, in grade 8, when the whole class joined the Komsomol, I decided that I was not going to join. And I was treated for a very long time, by my mother, by the class teacher, by other teachers, by everybody, that I had to join the Komsomol because otherwise, I would not have a life, I would not have a career, I would not have anything. If I did not publicly demonstrate my loyalty by taking part in some mass organisations, ideological organisations that could either spoil my life or develop it. This is common knowledge. Maybe it was not spoken about loudly and you could not read it anywhere, but at the whispering level, it was everywhere. You might not want to join, but you ended up being pushed in so to speak. You were treated until ... well, you want to go to university, join the Komsomol (Iveta, 59 y.o.)

Apart from their involvement in these organisations, students who attended school during the USSR period mentioned activities related to them, such as marching, pioneer organizations, and political information lessons. However, not only directly political activities were mentioned, but also being a good pioneer was related to activities such as collecting waste paper, working in a factory, and helping to harvest potatoes. Several studies have also indicated that cultural activities (including folklore-related ones) are common.

Yes, but they were collective [activities]. For example, there were school marchings. They were not like this at an individual level. (...) Some outstanding pioneers went to the camps in Artek that were not offered for me; the rest of the mass was quite well you had to wear that scarf. (Iveta, 59 y.o.)

Well, there was patriotic education for preparing for the atomic war, pulling gas masks, and going to the shelter, which was somewhere in the basement of the school. But in the middle of all that, once a year for Christmas we had folklore events (...) We prepared some kind of performances for Christmas, there with folk songs and things like that (Santa, 48 y.o.)

For participants who attended school during the independence period, social activities were less centralised. The most unifying feature appears to be the celebration of national holidays, although it has also been pointed out that these were celebrated less in minority schools. Other activities mentioned are the Scout movement, the youth guard, volunteering - both compulsory (e.g., within certain curricula) and voluntary–and the involvement of pupils in discussions on local government decisions. Entrepreneurship was also mentioned as a citizenship-related activity, noting that not all of these activities were charitable but that a good citizen must also be an active participant in the national economy.

It should be noted that the participants in the study who grew up abroad also pointed to the scouting movement as an important activity in their view of building citizens.

I went scouting, and I joined the Latvian organization, but there was also a wider scouting movement in Australia and the world in general. What was it like there? A Scout is honest, and a scout is a friend of animals. All that kind of stuff. It was, very, I think, worldwide. Well, something like the pioneers - a similar idea It was certainly a valuable way of setting up structures in society to bring people together around some common denominator of what was normal behaviour and what wasn't. (Pauls, 49 y.o.)

The fact that these are the activities that interviewees can recall is also in line with references to the need to use different methods - to discuss citizenship concerning the environment in which they live, their own and their teachers' experiences, and to practice formal and informal engagement in different civic activities (Pykkett, 2009; Mills, 2013).

It should be noted that Latvians whose parents were forced to flee Latvia after WWII and who grew up in the West as a result recognised Latvian community activities as a very important factor in the development of citizenship, where not only the Latvian language and history were learned, but also practiced in civic and political activities - for example, taking part in protests. It should be noted that it was Latvians from abroad who took part in the protests against COVID-19 restrictions, but here we have to take into account the sample limitations.

Some interviewees pointed to **the negative impact of the school** on their formation as citizens - hypocrisy and concealment of their attitudes not only concerning political activities but also concerning learning and even thinking (see also Wilkins, 2010). It should be noted that this phenomenon was pointed out by both the interviewees who attended school during the Soviet period and by the interviewee who had done so recently.

> *I really did not like her, not only because I was a bad student, but also because I challenged her. When she started saying that you could not have same-sex relationships, it really offended me, and I started riding her high. I asked her why, and then she kept saying, that's not right, then immediately she started pushing religion. She then started to mention Latvia. (..) She sat especially for these people (..) whom she saw as super-good and patriotic, she sat in front, closer to herself. These are the people she unites. And people like me, she put at the end and forgot about them [the privileged readiness to intervene] No, they did not care. If they see that it would be bad for them, why should they intervene? (Sigita, 27 y.o.)*

> *Well, we had intrusive Soviet upbringing here, you know. We learned very well to say one thing and think about how not to say it to anybody and what we do. We thought (...) Yes, we have had a parallel life. We were still small, but we understood very well that you have to say this and that, but you have to keep quiet about what you think if you do not want any trouble. That was normal, that was how we learned to write those compositions, the way we have to, and not what you think. It was an art to learn. (Jelena, 50 y.o.)*

> *I would say human nature is the same to some extent and somewhere it is, but I would like to say that it is not so much at the national level, when we - as there was that famous saying - think "Party," say "Lenin," think "Lenin," we say 'party' and so on all the time - we think one thing, we say another, nowadays - if only because we have this multiplicity of parties, well, then you always have some eyes watching your fingers - opposition to the position, position to the opposition, then that hypocrisy, to a certain extent, is highlighted. I do not want to say that it is not there, but it is being highlighted more than in those days. (Iveta, 59 y.o.)*

Conclusions

Citizenship and its normative aspects are a topic that some people do not think about, nor do they remember what and how they were taught about it in school. The understanding of citizenship and the traditions of teaching it at school are changing. This is primarily due to the stability of the political system but is also influenced by changes in the curriculum and societal agendas.

However, given the amount of time spent at school and the fact that many friends are there, it is acknowledged that school has an important influence on the formation of perceptions of citizenship.

The subjects most frequently associated with perceptions of good citizenship are history, the Latvian language, and literature. Social sciences are also mentioned, but not all participants have been exposed to them due to curriculum changes, or their content varies between interviewees. However, the participants stress that the influence of the school and the teacher is not so much related to the content of the subject as to how it was taught or even to the personality of the teacher.

The role of the school and the teacher overlaps with the contribution of other agents of socialisation, such as the family, which may support or reject what is taught at school about citizenship and its normative aspects (e.g., differences in understanding of history or family apoliticism, disinterest in history, not discussing or silencing family history).

Differences in views and the atmosphere in the educational institution may contribute to behaviour that is not related to the understanding of a good citizen: instead of defending one's own opinion, the pupil learns to be hypocritical (this was most often associated with the Soviet era, but has also been observed in recent times).

The participants had ambivalent attitudes toward social activities at school. Some of them support the involvement in social activities and associate it with the school's contribution to their civic skills (discussions, helping others, interest in politics) (they remember the initiatives that go beyond the

minimum), while others criticise the school and teacher initiatives if they consider them to be exaggerated.

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