

EDUKACJA MIĘDZYKULTUROWA

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Introduction

The current volume is the twenty-third issue of “Edukacja Międzykulturowa /Intercultural Education/”, the journal edited since 2012 by the researchers from the Department of General Pedagogy and Research Methodology and the Department of Social Pedagogy and Intercultural Education at the Faculty of Ethnology and Educational Science in Cieszyn (currently the research staff of the Faculty of Art and Educational Science in Cieszyn, employed in the Institute of Pedagogy) of the University of Silesia in Katowice. Like the previous volumes, the present one contains articles and theoretical dissertations, texts on intercultural education in Poland and around the world, research reports and descriptions of practical activities in the area of intercultural education. The volume ends with three review articles.

“Edukacja Międzykulturowa” – published since 2012, initially as an annual journal, then a semi-annual (from 2017), and finally a quarterly (from 2021) – has become a virtual space for an exchange of thoughts, ideas, as well as practical experiences and suggestions for specific solutions, the use of which can strengthen respect for difference or teach attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of the Other. This becomes particularly important in the times of increased uncertainty and lack of security – as now in the post-pandemic situation, with the in Ukraine and the new phenomena caused by this, such as the migration or economic crisis. As T. Lewowicki notes: “In the difficult situation that affects modern societies, thoughtful and intensified educational efforts are needed. There is still hope that education – such which is based on humanistic ideals, universal values, and supports the development of wise, critical and good people – can protect against cataclysms caused by individuals and groups hungry for power and wealth. This is largely a task

for the community that understands the messages of intercultural education” (Lewowicki, 2017, p. 185).

As J. Nikitorowicz emphasizes (2020, p. 35): “Intercultural education, taking into account the ideas and different ways of reading multiculturalism, has been and should continue to be based on the perspective of emancipation, expressing opposition to the marginalization of minorities, xenophobia and megalomania. The ideas of emancipation have led to the abandonment of concealing cultural difference and to its revitalization (...). Cultural domination and cultural closure were opposed and thus one moved towards autonomy and a sense of dignity in defending one’s own values”. Due to the fact that the authors are representatives of various scientific disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology and pedagogy, the texts collected in this issue are most often interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in nature. The volume presented to readers contains studies diversified in terms of the raised issues (the references to theories or theoretical concepts) and the analyzed categories or methodological perspectives, as well as a multi-sided view of the issues subjected to research analysis.

The prepared volume was developed thanks to the involvement of 29 authors who prepared 18 texts, either individually or in co-authorship.

The introductory text, included in the section *Articles and treatises*, has been prepared by Zbyszko Melosik, who discusses the reconstruction of the fight for linguistic dominance in the world science. Moreover, he analyzes the controversies related to the primacy of the English language in scientific discourse: the accompanying epistemological and cultural invasion related to the Anglo-Saxon values and the marginalization of native languages. The author emphasizes that regardless of the language of publication, scientists can maintain such values as passion and academic freedom. The next text is prepared by an outstanding representative of Ukrainian philosophy – Petr Saukh, who introduces the readers to the specificity of intercultural paradigmatic changes in the philosophical and pedagogical thought of Ukraine in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century, pointing out its specificity and distinctiveness. What seems particularly important when considering the distinctiveness of Ukraine is the author’s emphasizing that the philosophical and pedagogical thought built as part of the socio-political development of scientific and educational institutions has played an extremely important culture-forming function. Additionally, that thought was characterized by a tendency to create an intercultural “philosophy of teaching and educating”, which became the background for the pedagogical structures of our (those?) times.

The section *Intercultural education in Poland and worldwide* presents Slovak, Polish, Indian and Rwandan experiences in the implementation of multi – and intercultural education. Wioleta Gierszewska and Vicente C. Sinining discuss the transformation of civic education in Rwanda and show the effects of colonialism, which have destroyed the previously existing educational system and divided the society. The Itorero program mentioned in the title of the article helps Rwandans learn about their pre-colonial history and cultivate traditions. This, on the one hand, has become an element of civic education, and on the other hand, is conducive to building the national identity. In the next two texts, there are references to the studies carried out in Slovakia. The first study, of a comparative nature, was developed on the basis of the results of the research carried out among Polish and Slovak students with the use of the Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. The aim of the study was to determine which variables, including the country (Poland, Slovakia), field, form, year of study and participation in field internships, correlate significantly with teachers' sense of effectiveness. The authors of the next article – Bronislava Kasáčová and Henrieta Jonek – focus on primary school and kindergarten teachers. The aim of that international research is to learn how teachers cope with the demands of their profession in the early stages of children's education through the lens of specific professional responsibilities. The obtained results are then compared with their sense of life satisfaction.

The section *Research reports* comprises three cognitively interesting texts. The first of them, prepared by Ewa Ogrodzka-Mazur, is a study presenting the results of a comparative study carried out in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine, concerning both the values appreciated by university students and their perception of the possibilities of implementing and realizing them. As the author emphasizes, it can be assumed that young adults learning at university demonstrate a typical of their age cognitive and motivational conceptualization of themselves in the future. Their declarations are characterized by reflectivity typical of the period of early adulthood, manifested not only in the choices they make, but also in their behaviours aimed at implementing their preferred values. Yet, the text by Anna Młynarczuk-Sokołowska is a result of qualitative studies on the experience of everyday life in Polish schools by students of migrant origin (from Ukraine, including Crimea, Belarus, Chechnya, Georgia) and on the optimization of their functioning. The author points out that in the case of children and youth from a migrant background, the priority is to ensure a sense of security and a friendly introduction to the world of their new school. Katarzyna

Ćwirynkało, Monika Parchomiuk, Jess Gregory and Sunitha Ravi prepared a text presenting the results of the research aimed at determining the attitudes of both Polish and Indian teachers towards inclusive education of learners with special educational needs resulting from mild and moderate disabilities, as well as the importance of selected factors for their differentiation. Despite the indicated different approaches to the integration process, both in Poland and in India, the basic condition for the real implementation of integration is the appropriate preparation of teachers.

The section *Forum of intercultural educators* consists of four texts. The aim of the first one *Interculturalism in Polish schools according to teachers from borderlands*, written by Patrycja Młynek, Fabian Andruszkiewicz and Danuta Kulik-Grzybek, was to verify the state of preparation of Polish schools for the implementation of multicultural education, the mutual attitudes of participants in the educational process and the relationships between them, as well as to indicate the relationships between parents, students and teachers. The text was based on the quantitative research conducted among early childhood education teachers from borderlands. In the next article *Internationalization of education: motivations and benefits of academic mobility within the Erasmus+ Program based on the example of Lisbon, Portugal*, Paulina Kłopotowska – on the basis of comparative research – presents some analyses of the motivations determining the decision to participate in the Erasmus+ Program and to choose Lisbon as a city of student exchange, as well as to learn about the benefits of mobility. As she emphasizes in the conclusion, the results obtained can be treated as important factors in planning promotional activities of university offices for international relations. In the next article, Mariana Sokol and Jie Zhang present the improved IVE technology (technology-enhanced international virtual exchanges) and the benefits this program brings to students and lecturers in terms of acquiring communication skills with the use of technology and improving intercultural competences. The section ends with the article *The use of new technologies in education – opportunities and challenges in the era of intense intercultural changes*, in which the authors, Monika Adamczyk, Mirosław Karpiuk and Urszula Soler, attempt to answer two fundamental questions: 1) What are the effects of the use of new technologies in education, including intercultural education? and 2) Can (and to what extent) modern technologies pave the way to the realization of the ideal of education as an activity aimed primarily at shaping an individual capable of effective and creative adaptation to the social reality in which difference, including cultural difference, is common?

The section *Educational practice* opens with a text by Iwona Czaja-Chudyba, in which she presents an extremely interesting curriculum for classes I-III, aimed at creating positive conditions for students who have experienced migration so that they can learn and fully participate in school life. In turn, the study by Katarzyna Kowalczevska-Grabowska and Katarzyna Borzucka-Sitkiewicz present a fragment of the research aimed at determining the changes in the scope of competences related to the use of the DPA (Developing the Power to Act) approach among project participants, as well as their subjective understanding of DPA. The research results indicate the validity of the project implementation by partner institutions, which are universities and non-governmental organizations. In her article, Anna Mańkowska discusses Chinese educational culture in the context of the *guanxi* tradition. The author answers the question of what *guanxi* is and how it is used in the Chinese educational system. The subject of the author's research is the educational system and culture of *guanxi* and its practical implications.

The section *Reviewing articles* contains three studies. The first one, prepared by Zbyszko Melosik, concerns the latest book by Renata Nowakowska-Siuta entitled *Comparative education. Methodology contexts*. The next review article was prepared by Edyta Widawska in relation to the book by Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska and Urszula Markowska-Manista: *Non-inclusive education in Central and Eastern Europe*. The volume ends with a review of the book edited by Marlon Lee Moncrieffe, *Decolonizing curriculum knowledge. International perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches*, prepared by Bogusław Dziadzia.

* * *

On behalf of the Editors and the Scientific Council of the journal "Intercultural Education", we would like to thank all the authors of the prepared texts for their creative contribution to the development of articles, and thus the development of multicultural and intercultural education. The publication of this issue of the journal was possible thanks to the constant favour and help of the academic authorities of the University of Silesia in Katowice, its Institute of Pedagogy and the Adam Marszałek Publishing House.

Scientific Editors

Ewa Ogrodzka-Mazur and Anna Szafrńska

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ARTICLES AND TREATISES



Struggle of languages for domination in science

Abstract: The article contains a reconstruction of the struggle for linguistic dominance in global science over the centuries. In the beginning, the author presents various contexts of the role that Latin played in science in previous centuries. Then he presents the importance of French and German in this regard and the reasons for their decline. In turn, he analyzes the phenomenon of the dominance of English in contemporary global science; from its genesis through its increasing status to nearly its monopoly. What follows is the discussion of the controversies related to the primacy of the English language in scientific discourse: the accompanying epistemological and cultural invasion related to Anglo-Saxon values and the marginalization of native languages. The author also shows the distortion of content, ideas, thoughts and style when translating scientific texts from native languages into English, in order to adapt them to the assumptions of Western culture. However, there are also the views the essence of which is the conviction that publishing in English allows scientists to participate in global science and gain global visibility, as well as those that assume that modern scientific English has got rid of its imperial values and has a neutral nature, it is simply a form of international communication. In conclusion, the author expresses his belief that regardless of the language of publishing, scientists can maintain such values as passion and academic freedom.

Keywords: science, research, language, domination, English language supremacy

Science has been always an international and intercultural space. The exchange of scientific ideas between universities and researchers from different parts of the world has determined and excellerated the development of societies. Yet, science is always some kind of a “battle field” of contradictory paradigms, theories, approaches and views, including languages as well. What is undertaken by me in this article is a reconstruction of the struggle

of languages for the domination in science. From its beginning, science has been articulated not only in local native languages but also in the “global one” – the language of science, and in the course of history various language aspired to receive such a status.

According to Michale D. Gordon, Latin is “the most persistent archetype of scientific language” (Gordon, 2015, p. 24). The domination of Latin between the 13th and 15th centuries is indisputable. Shahid Abrar-ul-Hassan puts it in the following way: “By the end of the 14th century, Europe had 30 major universities including Prague, Florence, Vienna, Oxford, Paris, Rome, Lisbon, and Cologne, in the regions where several different languages were spoken (...) It was intriguing that these medieval universities were situated across multilingual Europe but were linked through one language, that was Latin, as the language of emerging academia and scholarship” (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021, p. 2). This author is convinced that the domination of Latin in this time was related to political, social and cultural factors but, first of all, to power of the Pope and the Church as well as to “the prevalence of Latin manuscripts to document the existing knowledge” (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021, p. 2).

Sietske Fransen emphasizes that Latin was “the hegemonic language for science, hugely important for international communication and exchange in the seventeenth-century scientific community” (Sietske, 2017, p. 635). Moreover, Philipp Roelli writes: “theoretical scientific works were nearly universally written in Latin until the first years of the eighteenth century (...)” (Roelli, 2021, p. 338).

Latin has gradually lost its influence in science in such countries as Germany, French or Italy. One of the external factors of this process was related to the Reformation. Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible into German in 1522 had a symbolic and real meaning in this respect. Generally speaking, as Stanisław Kot puts it: “The Reformation (...) put emphasis (...) on the need to read in the mother tongue” (Kot, 1934, p. 219). This had an impact on the development of writing in vernacular native languages. Kirsi-Maria Nummilla writes: “The ideas of the Lutheran Reformation were spread, above all, by means of texts and as a result of translation into vernaculars. The circulation of Reformation ideas could be seen as textual networks (...)” (Nummilla, 2019, p. 11). This included not only the religious sphere, but also literature, and to some extent science, especially because “particularly important centres for the spread of Lutheranism were the universities of large towns, such as Königsberg University in Prussia and Cambridge in England” (Numilla, 2019, p. 14). Thus, the Reformation had an impact on the creation of an intellectual

culture in national languages. However, it is also necessary to quote Britt-Louise Gunnarsson's words that "The Reformation, with its Bible translation, had of course paved the way for the use of the vernacular in the Northern Europe back in the sixteenth century, but in science Latin retained its hold into the eighteenth" (Gunnarsson, 2011, p. 6).

Even in 1765, Latin was recognized by Denis Diderot in his "Encyclopaedia" as the fundamental language of science: "The Latin language is an indispensable necessity: it is a language of the Catholic Church (...), as much for philosophy and theology as for jurisprudence and medicine. It is moreover (...) the common language of all scholars of Europe, the use of which – it perhaps is to be hoped – will become even more (...) widespread, in order to facilitate further the communication of the respective luminaries of the various nations which today cultivate the sciences" (Roelli, 2021, p. 340).

At the end of the 17th century, French began to play a more important role in science. Yet even earlier, for example, Descartes (1596–1650) wrote only in French. French was also used as a language of international diplomacy and the French life style was disseminated in Europe (Roelli, 2021, p. 343). It is stressed that "the influence of French culture was such that in many areas French became the language of the educated: in Russia the aristocracy adopted French as the language of conversation and correspondence, reserving Russian for communication with the lower classes" (Lingua Franca, 2010, pp. 13–14). In 1751, Jean Le Rond D'Alambert wrote: "As our language [French] had spread throughout Europe, we thought it was time to replace Latin language with it (...) which had been the language of our scholars" (Roelli, 2021, p. 344). In comparison to French, Latin was criticized for its lack of flexibility; Voltaire wrote in 1753: "French which is the common language of Europe and which has been enriched with all these new and necessary expressions is much more appropriate than Latin for spreading all this new knowledge throughout the world" (Roelli, 2021, 348). In the 18th century, French was the main language of intellectual life, including natural sciences (Gordon, 2015, p. 16). This resulted from an international position of France and from its role as a cultural and scientific centre of Europe (Wright, 2006, p. 38).

Yet, also the "intrinsic quality" of the French language was emphasized in an attempt to explain its domination. A French writer and translator Antoine de Rivarol (1753–1801) wrote: "what distinguishes our language from ancient and modern languages is the order and the construction of the sentence. [...] The French syntax is incorruptible. From this that admirable clarity results, the eternal foundation of our language. *That which is not clear is not French;*

that which is not clear is still English, Italian, Greek, or Latin” (Gordon, 2015, p. 17).

However, in those times not all enthusiastically assessed the emerging domination of French and the persistent supremacy of Latin in science. A famous German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) wrote two important texts in defense of the German language in science. He expressed his regret that German had to participate in science in difficult competition with French and Latin. He felt that using foreign languages causes developmental stagnation of the German language (Stickel, 2004, p. 11). He argued that the over-extensive use of Latin has “a detrimental effect both among the scholars and on the Nation itself” (Stickel, 2004, p. 15).

The gradual displacement of Latin as the superior language of science was typical not only of France but also of Germany as well as of England. As a result, at the end of the 19th century, three languages, Latin, French and German, were used in science, with two aspirational languages Russian and Italian in the background (Roelli, 2021, pp. 346–347).

The role of German science in the second half of the 19th century was so profound that Thomas Huxley wrote in 1869: “Ask the man who is investigating any question profoundly and thoroughly – be it historical, philosophical, physical, literary, or theological; who is trying to make himself master of any subject (...) whether he is not compelled to read half a dozen times as many German as English books” (Ammon, 2004, p. 159).

Interestingly, when in 1924 Albert Einstein received from a famous (in the future) Indian physicist Satyendra Nath Bos an article in English, he translated it into German and published it in the prestigious magazine *Zeitschrift für Physik* (Wong, 2007, p. 302)¹. Generally, according to Michael D. Gordon, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were three languages with the well-established scientific nomenclature (Gordon, 2015, pp. 110–111).

Due to the lack of agreement to establish one language of science, artificial languages were constructed. A French scientist Louis Couturat (1868–1914), one of the creators of the artificial language Ido wrote in 1910: “the solution by national languages is the real chimera and utopia; and the solution by artificial languages seems the only practical option” (Gordon, 2015, p. 111). Moreover, the authors of the Esperanto textbooks expressed their conviction in 1907: “This is perhaps the most practical step taken towards the standardiza-

¹ <https://europepmc.org/article/pmc/pmc1852753>, On science and English, Min-Liang Wong, EMBO reports VOL 8 | NO 4 | 2007.

tion of technical terms, which is so badly needed in all branches of science. A universal language offers the best solution to the vexed question, because it starts with a clean sheet. Once a term has been admitted by the competent committee for a particular branch of science into the technical Esperanto vocabulary of that science, it becomes universal, because it has no pre-existent rivals (...)" (Gordon, 2015, p. 126). However, artificial languages were not successful, none of them has been accepted as a universal language of science.

What has been observed since the third decade of the 20th century is the growing dominance of the English language in science. Michael D. Gordon wrote: "On New Year's Day, 2012, science reached the end of its Latin". On this day "The International Code of Botanical Nomenclature", which manages official record of plants species, gave up its previous long-lasting requirement for the necessity to describe every new discovered plant exclusively in Latin; henceforth also the English language could be used (Gordon, 2015, p. 293).

What is the source of the present overwhelming domination of English in science? Many linguists stress that it is not related to its "intrinsic" features. They are sure that English is not better for science than Latin, German, French or Chinese (Englander, 2014, p. 4). According to Michael D. Gordon, "English does not possess specific qualities that make it particularly well suited for scientific research". On the other hand, the same author quotes the German scientist Max Talmey's view that English is "far richer, far more expressive than any other language" (Gordon, 2015, p. 306). The hypothesis of "inner superiority" of English as a language of science relates to its assumed features; it is considered to be "clearer", easier to be learned and "more objective" than other languages (Guardiano, Favilla, Calaresu 2007, 33). It could be recalled that in 1886 a Scottish phonetician Alexander Melville Bell, the inventor of the phone, stated: "no language could be invented for international use that would surpass English, in grammatical simplicity and in general fitness" (Gordon, 2015, p. 296).

Therefore, it is obvious that in the 20th century French gradually lost its enormous status and respect; it was not anymore "the automatic choice for the official language of international organizations" (Wright, 2006, p. 39). What is more, there is growing anxiety in France, not only in science but in the whole society that the defensive position of the French language will ultimately contest the traditional French identity. Adam Robinson writes that for the French "their language defines and shapes both the personal and national identity (...). It has been lovingly and deliberately crafted over centuries by kings, by the Revolution, by emperors and by the Republic as an instrument

of political unity (...)” (Adamson, 2007, p. XVI). Thus, in this context the globalization process accompanied by the growing domination of the English language is in France perceived negatively.

Most authors agree that the main factors of the English language domination result not from “the intrinsic dynamics in the field of science itself, but from socio-economic and political factors” (Hamel, 2007, p. 56). Whereas the decline of French as the language of science occurred a decade after decade, there are more clear reasons for the loss of that status by German. Its fall began after World War I. It was deepened during the rule of German Nazism and World War II. Gerhard Stickel wrote in 2004: “The more English develops into the dominant or even exclusive language of science in Germany (...), the more the German language will lose in value (...): important matters must be said and written in English” (Stockel, 2004, p. 16). He is also convinced that the domination of the English language “develops towards a Euro-English monolinguality and monotony, with languages such as German existing only as backward idioms in folkloristic niches” (Stickel, 2004, p. 16). It should be added that international aspiration of the Russian language was definitively deligitimized by Stalinism, the Cold War and the compulsory teaching of it in socialist countries.

According to Rainer Enrique Hamel, the most important factor in the growing importance of the English language in science was related to the increasing economic and political role of the United States of America in the world (Hamel, 2007, p. 56). Certainly, it was correlated with the increased role of this country in other areas of international life: tourism, business, diplomacy and popular culture. The dissemination of the English language in science is a part of a very broad “language tendency”, currently encompassing the global world (Melosik, 2013).

Because of all the factors mentioned above, as early as in 1953, Theodore H. Savory was able to write: “English shows signs of becoming the language of science” (Roelli, 2007, 347). The 1990s are characterized by the phenomenon called “tsunamis of scientific English” (Gordon, 2015, p. 7). Contemporary science speaks mostly in English. Scientific publications are mostly published in English and conferences are also conducted in English.

As a consequence of this phenomenon, there is an “increasing linguistic hierarchization and the loss of domain for lower ranking languages (...); once English is declared the only international language for science, all other languages not only lose international status but are menaced in their own territories” (Hamel, 2007, p. 64).

Generally, I can agree at least partially with Peter Altbach when he writes: “Indeed, national academic systems enthusiastically welcome English as a contributor to internationalizing, competing, and becoming »world class«. But the domination by English moves world science toward hegemony led by the main English-speaking academic systems and creates difficulties for scholars and universities that do not use English” (Altbach, 2007, p. 2).

Ahmed W. Waheed emphasizes that “hiper-centrality and the imposition of English as the language for the communication of research raises significant hurdles for the periphery scholars (...). It provides western scholars with a comfortable linguistic platform” (Waheed, 2020, pp. 172–173). Yet on the other hand, Scott Montgomery says that “being competent in English does not force these scientists to abandon their mother tongue, whether at home or in the hallways, but makes them feel they are participating members in the international community of their discipline” (Montgomery, 2009, p. 12).

Thus, there is an alternative interpretation of the relationship in science between English and native languages. It is sometimes assumed that translation of scientific work from “small languages” into English empowers the local science, because it shows its achievements to the world. Therefore, the globalization of the English language might not be related to scientific/cultural imperialism but to the creation of a positive form of research cooperation. The proponents of such an approach are sure that English is playing “a central role in empowering the subjugated and marginalized”, giving them an opportunity of “global presence” and “expression of local identity” (Crystal, 2003, p. 24). As David Crystal says: “Languages of identity need to be maintained. Access to the emerging global language – widely perceived as a language of opportunity and empowerment – needs to be guaranteed” (Crystal, 2003, p. 28). Moreover, some research shows that in certain disciplines scientists from non-English societies publish the same article both in English and in the local language (Pérez-Llantada, 2020, p. 366). Davide Simone Giannoni is convinced that English becomes for researchers from the Third World countries an important instrument of participation in the “global struggle for recognition” (Giannoni, 2010, p. 37).

What is more, currently many scientists consider the English language as the universal, culturally and politically neutral language of international scientific communication. Robert B. Kaplan writes that science promotes the common language because “it uses a common set of methods and measurement standards, and is cumulative and self-referential” (Kaplan, 2001,

p. 14). It is often stressed that English just embodies today this common language. Rainer Enrique Hamel is sure that the global reliability of English results from a conviction that it does not belong in science to one country or group of countries. It seems to represent internationality itself (Hamel, 2007, p. 63). Davide Simone Giannoni as well expresses his conviction that in the academic world there is the growing internationalization of English as a generally applicable language, “free of national or culture-specific connotations” (Giannoni, 2010, p. 35).

In his interesting considerations, Martian A. Kayman reconstructs an approach which is based on the belief that at present English is not saturated with the “imperial history” and imperial values. Now, in its relations with various cultures, it assumes the role of a post-imperial world language (Kayman, 2004, pp. 7–8). In such a situation, English becomes a “»practical« language, divorced from its cultural history”, it seems to be like a typewriter or computer available to anyone. Martin A. Kayman considers the argument that English can become “a technology, a tool, a simple instrument”, “the language of communication par excellence” (Kayman, 2004, p. 10, 13), that it can be “valued primarily in terms of »appropriateness to the situation«” (Kayman, 2004, p. 14). Proponents of the neutrality of the English language certainly would accept such assumptions.

However, the domination of international science by global English brings controversy regarding translation. Lawrence Venuti writes that the translation process “invisibly inscribes foreign texts with British and American values and provides readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other” (Bielsa, 2011, p. 211). He says that there is a “violent effect of translation” – “the reconstitution of a foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that preexist in the translating language and culture” (Venuti, 2008, p. 14). Thus, in translation there is a “rewriting” of original thoughts “in the terms that belong to the receiving culture” (Bielsa, 2011, p. 205).

It is often stressed that one of the purposes of translation, rarely invoked, is its ethnocentric adaptation to the culture of destination. To describe the ethnocentric deformation of the text during translation in order to erase its strangeness, Antoine Berman uses the concept of “normalization”. He distinguished various ways of interference into the text: rationalization, clarification, expansion, qualitative and quantitative impoverishment, destruction of rhythm and networks of signification, as well as “linguistic patterning” and idioms (Goui and Seddiki, 2019, p. 198).

Lawrence Venuti “has produced a critique of what he defines as domesticating translation, which is based on making a translated text read fluently, as if it was an original, thus rendering translation invisible (...) with the translators’ crucial intervention in the foreign text, and to create a recognizable, even familiar, cultural other” (Bielsa, 2011, p. 205). Sometimes these interventions change very important ideas and thoughts of the author.

Lawrence Venuti says critically that the most important goal of translation into the English is to get “fluency”, which “becomes the authoritative strategy for translating whether the foreign text was literary or scientific/technical, humanistic or pragmatic (...)” (Venuti, 2008, p. 6). It seems that translation is to prepare the text for the receivers as a “ready to read” and ready to understand (Venuti, 2008, p. 12). Lawrence Venuti writes about it as follows: “A fluent translation is immediately recognizable and intelligible, »familiarized«, domesticated and not »discordantly« foreign, capable of giving the reader unobstructed »access to great thoughts«, to what is »present in the original« (...) Translated text seem to be »natural«, that is not translated” (Venuti, 2008, p. 5).

In the case of translating texts from very distant cultures, the problem of deformation of the text in translation is much more important. Sometimes a deep cultural adaptation of the translated text to the rules of the English language and culture is consciously proposed. Ming Dong Gu’s view is a good example here: “There is a problem that often embarrasses Chinese translators: A Chinese text is faithfully translated into a Western language, but it does not go smoothly, and certainly does not appeal to the Western reader. As a consequence, we often notice that many <<faithful>> translations of Chinese texts are simply ignored, while less faithful (...) have greater appeal to the English reader (...)”. Ming Dong Gu states directly that a translator should “turn the text into a text readily accessible to recognize by Western reader through the medium of translation”. “Only when a Chinese text is naturalized and achieves a translucence in the Western language can one say that successful translation has been done. Such a translation is more than mere transmission of the content of the originals (...)” (Gu, 2014, p. 13). Thus, there is here a conscious rejection of the commonly accepted idea of the invisibility of translators; they seem to become co-authors.

There are many strong critics of English supremacy in science as well as in the contemporary world. For example, John M. Swales calls English in the academic world as “*Tyrannosaurus Rex*”; he writes about its triumphalism and proposes publishing in local languages (Swales, 1997, pp. 373–382).

Many authors, in their expression of negative feelings towards English, use abusive words such as “Hydra”, “Trojan Horse”, “Cuckoo”, “Killer Language” or “Lingua Frankensteinia” (Hultgren, 2020, p. 25). Davide Simone Giannoni is sure that “even in highly-developed nations, smaller academic languages are under threat and should be treated as endangered systems that deserve protection (...)” (Giannoni, 2010, p. 35). W. Wayt Gibb writes that the results of important research in the Third World countries are “lost science” because they are not published in English (Tardy, 2004, p. 252).

Moreover, Abram de Swam emphasizes that “English may now be a universal medium of social science, it certainly is not a neutral medium – on the contrary, it favors American ideas, and American authors” (Swam, 2001, p. 78). One of the German authors stated: “Since every language affords a different point of view onto reality and offers individual patterns of argumentation, this leads to a spiritual impoverishment if teaching and research are hemmed into English” (Gordon, 2015, p. 314). Miguel Siguan sheds light on a different context: “But the generalization of the use of a language as a means of scientific communication leads to the generalization of its use as a means of scientific production. This is where the problem arises. English is not a perfect language, and exclusively rational instrument, but a language inscribed within a cultural tradition”. For disciplines that are based on their “cultural or linguistic tradition”, it can result in crucially negative consequences (Siguan, 2001, p. 68).

In my article, an attempt was made to reconstruct some ambivalences pertaining to the struggle of languages for dominance in science over the centuries. In my conclusions, I want to support David Crystal’s conviction: “A language does not become a global language because of its intrinsic structural properties, or because of the size of its vocabulary, or because it has been a vehicle of a great literature in the past, or because it was once associated with a great culture or religion” (Crystal, 2003, p. 9). Certainly, as I have tried to show, there has been a centuries-old language struggle in science, with changing configurations of relations between various languages. Yet at present, the domination of the English language in science seems to be impregnable. It seems that it is possible to maintain academic freedom and scientific passion, regardless of the language in which ideas and research results are published (Melosik, 2020).

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Retrospective analysis of an intercultural paradigmatic shift in the philosophical and educational thought in Ukraine in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century

Abstract: The article reveals the peculiarities of intercultural paradigmatic shifts in the philosophical and pedagogical thought of Ukraine in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It has been proven that Ukrainian philosophical and educational thought (despite the fact that it objectively bordered with the Russian one and actively fits into the pan-European philosophical and pedagogical algorithm) had a number of specific national concrete-cultural features and colours. Its image was closely related to the formation of the “soul of the Ukrainian people”, which was formed by a combination of mental, cultural and moral characteristics. The matrix of paradigmatic shifts in philosophical and pedagogical thought of this period was focused on the semantic, ontological dimensions of human spirituality, pedagogical factors of personality development, the formation of the national discourse of educational science as a certain theoretical integrity. It has been confirmed that the philosophical and pedagogical thought, which unfolded within the framework of socio-political development of scientific and educational institutions and which performed a human-creating function in culture, was characterized by a tendency to create an intercultural “philosophy of teaching and education”, which became the background for pedagogical constructions of our (that?) time. On this basis, the most important constants in the development of education of this period are determined, which have heuristic significance and are in many respects compliant with modern educational transformations, which require comprehensive understanding, primarily from the standpoint of pedagogical anthropology.

Keywords: Ukrainian philosophical and pedagogical thought, ethnic self-identification, mentality, national idea, intercultural shifts, philosophy of teaching and education, pedagogical anthropology, syncretism of education and teaching

Introduction

The topics of national self-identification and the conscious choice of the future destiny of the Ukrainian people are gaining special significance today. They became even more acute when the Russian Federation tries to erase the steadfastness of the historical memory of Ukrainians not only through large-scale falsification of history, but also by means of particular crimes in the course of the current military aggression. Russian attempts to inscribe the Ukrainian culture to and dissolve it in the far-fetched theory of Eurasianism, which substantiates the insurmountable gap between Ukraine and Europe (with its norms and values) does not stand up to criticism and is contrary to common sense.

What can be considered the evidence of this is the peculiar image of the Ukrainian philosophical and pedagogical thought of the late 19th–early 20th century, which had a number of distinctive national features and peculiarities, despite the fact that it objectively bordered with the Russian one and that it actively fits into the pan-European philosophical and educational space. The integral image of such thought was closely related to the formation of the “soul of the Ukrainian people”, which was a combination of mental, cultural and moral characteristics of Ukrainians (Kremen and Ilyin, 2020, p. 108). The matrix of philosophical and pedagogical shifts of this period was built on the semantic, ontological dimensions of human spirituality, intercultural factors of personality development and the formation of the national model of educational science as a certain theoretical integrity. In addition, it had a number of features associated with a moderate attitude towards abstract-rational system constructions; it had a positive attitude towards religion and the veneration of spiritual values; it showed an inclination to moral guidelines and life guidance, laying the foundations for the algorithm of the “philosophy of teaching and education”. Finally, this mental matrix was quite strongly integrated into literature, socio-political movements and cultural, historical and educational projects.

In view of the above, it is appropriate to remark that, despite the significance of the period (the second half of the 19th–beginning of the 20th century) in the history of philosophical and pedagogical thought and for modern educational transformations, and despite the heuristic ideas of its representatives, it has not become a subject of systematic analysis until now.

The analysis of some studies and publications proved that, on the one hand, Ukrainian scholars substantiated the role and significance of the philosophical thought of the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the historiosophical understanding of the mental peculiarities and the identity of the character traits of Ukrainians, as well as of the semantic, ontological dimensions of human spirituality (P. Kralyuk, V. Kremen, V. Krysachenko, O. Kulchytskyi, N. Radionova, M. Tkachuk and others), which are highlighted in numerous publications, textbooks and anthologies. On the other hand, the peculiarities of *the philosophical and educational thought* of this period in the creative heritage of many representatives of enlightened communities and societies and their influence on the formation of national education were investigated (L. Berezivska, O. Kvas, V. Petrusenko, M. Pryshchak and others).

What seems quite promising are the results of the scientific research on *philosophical and educational thought*, which was conducted within the framework of scientific and educational institutions, performing a human-creative function in culture and was directly related to the formation of the matrix of the philosophy of intercultural education (Gerasimenko, 2020; Kuzmina, 2013; Mnozhinskaya, 2015; Radionova, 2010 and others).

However, in most studies, there is an avoidance of consistency in the analysis of the image of philosophical and educational thought, the selection of its individual representatives, retelling and relishing their ideas and reflections on the problems of education. Such retransmission of educational imperatives of philosophical and pedagogical thought simplifies the significance of their creative assets in the field of education and educational science.

The purpose of this research is a retrospective analysis of the philosophical and educational thought of the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the context of cultural, educational and ethnically determined events of this period. This is the base on which the system of its intercultural paradigmatic shifts is revealed and the most important educational constants are determined, which has heuristic significance for modern educational science.

Presenting the main material. The existential and categorical identification of national culture was especially significant in the discussed period. It became an important stage in the transformation of views on the problems

of human existence, the spiritual development of an individual, as well as the pedagogical matrix of national education. In the middle of the 19th century the Russian Empire, which included most of the Ukrainian territories, faced the need to carry out large-scale reforms in various spheres of life. Yet, these reforms could not give a positive result without radical changes in the field of education in the times when the period of abolition of serfdom and some cardinal changes in the political, economic, judicial, military spheres started. That is why in the early 60s a series of reforms in the educational sphere began.

During this period, Sunday schools became widespread – in free educational institutions for illiterate adults and children who did not have the opportunity to attend regular school due to lack of funds. Teaching in most of them was conducted in Ukrainian, textbooks and primers were published, including “Southern Russian Primer” by Taras Shevchenko. Substantial support for school education began to be provided by organs of rural self-government called *zemstva*. School committees of *zemstva*, the core of which consisted of people with progressive views, covered about 85% of the school budget the construction of new schools, improved teaching methods, introduced the teaching of such subjects as mathematics, geography, history, etc. A new charter for gymnasiums (secondary schools) was developed and approved, introducing the principle of formal equality in secondary education for all classes and religions. In classical gymnasiums, the emphasis was on teaching ancient languages (Greek and Latin) and logic, while in another type of schools called real schools, the emphasis was on the study of European languages, mathematics and natural science. All graduates of classical gymnasiums received the right to enter the university without exams, and graduates of real schools – to higher technical educational institutions. There were also changes in women’s education, which involved the opening of gymnasiums for women. In general, already at the end of the 70s, every provincial town and even many county towns had their own gymnasiums. There were about 130 of them throughout Ukraine.

Radical changes were taking place in higher education during this period. In particular, in the 70s, higher school was replenished with the opening of the Nizhyn Historical and Philological Institute, Kharkiv Technological and Kyiv Polytechnic Institutes. Institutions of higher education were granted wide autonomy by the “University Statute” (1863), including the right to independent solving scientific, educational, administrative and financial issues. Certain developments in the field of higher education were also achieved

in Western Ukraine, where the University of Chernivtsi, the Lviv Polytechnic Institute and the Academy of Veterinary Medicine were opened. A new phenomenon was the emergence of various scientific organizations. For example, at the Kyiv University of St. Volodymyr, scientific societies (philological, mathematical, physico-medical, historical ones, the Society of Nature Researchers) were created, and in Western Ukraine – Taras Shevchenko Literary Scientific Society, which was headed by Mykhailo Hrushevsky from 1897 to 1913.

The reforms in education led to the large-scale democratization of the educational process, the influence of European philosophical and pedagogical thought, and the strengthening of the struggle against the formal and dogmatic essence and content of education. This, in turn, resulted in the transformation of views on the reality of people's lives, their mentality, understanding, behaviour. It was not accidental that the growth of the national and educational movement periodically caused dissatisfaction with the tsarist authorities, which resorted to harsh political repressions regarding the revitalization of Ukrainian culture. An apt example of these persecutions was the famous Valuev circular of 1863, which forbade the printing of "textbooks and books for the people." In the "Regulations on primary public schools", it was stated that teaching in higher schools should be conducted exclusively in Russian. Throughout this period, the government policy regarding national schools and national languages was extremely reactionary. It was forbidden to conduct theatrical performances in the Ukrainian language, to print books (except for historical documents and works of "red literature") and even lyrics for musical works.

However, it was no longer possible to stop the processes of national awakening. Against the background of intensive economic development and the transformation of consciousness, the demand for educated people was constantly growing and was a serious deterrent to the anti-democratic actions of the authorities. National ideas, having become an element of the consciousness of cultural figures, representatives of academic philosophy and education, were welcomed by wide sections of the Ukrainian society, and despite the oppression of the tsarist government, the Ukrainian national movement was gaining strength.

Firstly, a significant role in the formation of the national paradigm of philosophical and pedagogical thought of the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was played by educational societies, whose active members were V. Antonovych, B. Grinchenko, M. Hrushevskyi, M. Ye-

fremov, M. Kostomarov, P. Kulish, S. Rusova, M. Starytskyi, K. Ushinskyi and others whose main task was the popularization of knowledge, spread of education, development of culture and morality. Their conclusions regarding the definition of the main principles of the Ukrainian national school (teaching in the Ukrainian language, subjects of Ukrainian studies, textbooks in the native language, special training of teachers, national education system, popularization of the national idea) were extremely valuable (Berezivska, 1999; Pobirchenko, 2002). An important contribution to developing the philosophy of the Ukrainian national idea, the national Ukrainian identity, the relationship between thinking and language, language and history, was the activity of M. Drahomanov, O. Potebny and other figures of culture and science. Under their influence, the formation of the Ukrainian literary language, the beginning of which was laid by I. Kotlyarevsky, took place, the theatre acquired the features of national character, thanks to the activities of such artists as I. Karpenko-Karyi, G. Gulak-Artemovsky, M. Kropyvnytsky and others.

The process of Ukrainian national revival was significantly influenced by academic philosophy, which became the “trigger” of philosophical and educational thought and actively produced the national worldview and the perception of the world. Along with pure philosophical theory associated with the German philosophical theory (in particular Schellingism), diverse religious philosophies (J. Schad, A. Novitsky, S. Gogotsky, I. Mikhnevich, P. Yurkevich) and ideas of natural and scientific orientation (M. Lyubovskiy, P. Lodyi, M. Kozlov, D. Kavunnyk, M. Maksymovych), the substantiation of the national identity of the Ukrainian people was revealed in the teachings and works of professors of Kharkiv and Kyiv Universities as well as the Kyiv Theological Academy. This unfolded in the context of understanding the critical cultural-historical memory (Saukh, 2017) and became an important socio-ideological topic of a wide range of thinkers of this period. At the same time, the philosophical self-awareness of the nation was derived from the interpretation of this idea as an imperative of the nation, meanwhile the ethnic unity was defined as a spiritual unity. The initial thesis of the philosophical understanding of the Ukrainian idea was the idea of the identity of the Ukrainian people, which was determined by its natural spiritual features.

The research guidelines of many representatives of academic philosophy were determined by the need for a new “true human”, philosophical and pedagogical discussions about the essence of human being, the spiritual world and freedom. Without denying the semantic determination of a human being by God’s spirit and of the very idea of God, scholars shifted the emphasis

in the search for the very idea of God to the topics of human spirituality. However, despite this religious and anthropological discourse, their activities were permeated with purely secular tasks of educating both children and adults. This means that although the religious paradigm was the basis of the pedagogical views of university philosophers, its essence was not reduced by them to simple definitions of Christian truths. In this context, the opinion of P. Yurkevich, who warned against excessive exaltation and dogmatism in studies, can serve as an example (Yurkevich, 1865). Alongside the drawing of attention to the semantic aspects of human existence and, on this basis, to the problems of moral education, the studies conducted by representatives of philosophical and pedagogical thought emphasize the axiological aspects of human spirituality. In the works of P. Yurkevich, S. Hogotsky, V. Zenkovsky and H. Chelpanov spirituality is discussed as a harmonious combination of truth, goodness, and beauty, and the task of pedagogy is declared to be the development of mind, will, feelings and empathy.

Secondly, the representatives of philosophical and educational thought in this period not only explored the semantic, ontological dimensions of human spirituality, but also analyzed the factors of personality development, in particular the pedagogical ones. They tried to find the “mechanisms” for the actualization of the semantic aspects of human existence, primarily at the personal level, which would contribute to the formation of the national discourse of educational science as a certain theoretical integrity. Academic philosophy of this period was closely connected with pedagogy, it was even believed that the latter is an integral part of philosophy. Philosophical studies in higher educational institutions often ended with the reading of individual pedagogical disciplines. Philosophy, which existed within the framework of scientific and educational institutions and performed a human-creative function in culture, was characterized by a tendency to create a “philosophy of education”, which rightfully became the framework of the pedagogical constructions of our times. In this context, the studies of the Kyiv Academic School deserve special attention, in particular, the professors of the Kyiv Theological Academy (M. Grot, S. Gogotsky, I. Mikhnevich, A. Novitsky, P. Yurkevich, etc.) and the Kiev University of St. Vladimir (O. Gilyarov, V. Zenkovsky, O. Kozlov, G. Chelpanov, G. Shpet and others). At some point in their careers, all of them dealt with teaching of pedagogy or with educational research. A. Novitsky, a former professor at the Kyiv Theological Academy, together with the Department of Philosophy at the Kiev University of St. Vladimir was in charge of the Department of pedagogy. S. Gogotsky and P.

Yurkevich not only taught pedagogy, but also published their textbooks and research on pedagogical science and education (Kuzmina, 2013). On the basis of the fundamental research in the field of human sciences, this allowed them to formulate an important theoretical standpoint on the comprehensive study of the child as a complex developing system. In the context of developing the ideas of child-centrism, the child was considered not only as an object of influence of the social environment, but as a person who is able to actively perceive the phenomena of the surrounding world and process them, on the basis of internal motivation and individual characteristics. This understanding of the child contributed to the justification of new effective methods of teaching and educating, which are based on cooperation and solidarity between a teacher and student.

Thirdly, all this became the basis for determining important pedagogical constants in the development of education, which have heuristic significance and are in many respects compliant with modern educational transformations from the standpoint of pedagogical anthropology. In particular, they comprise:

- the principles of respect and a respectful attitude towards the child's personality, the theoretical and methodological significance of which was to define the child as the initial coordinate system and at the same time the main goal of the educational process. This should be aimed at preserving and developing individuality, creating the necessary conditions for self-development, the disclosure of all the valuable things that have been instilled in the child since birth. The child's right to its own path of development was substantiated, and the "emphasis on the child's individuality is considered the most important principle of pedagogy" (Zenkovsky, 1924);
- syncretism of learning and education, according to which pedagogy is called "the science of educational education" (Hogotskyi, 1879). The relationship between education and training should become a problem of systemic pedagogical activity. After all, what is discussed here is the development of two main dimensions of the whole spiritual world of a person – the ability to learn the world by mastering the earlier acquired knowledge and the ability to evaluate everything that exists (including oneself) with the help of a certain hierarchical system of values developed in the person's consciousness. It is proven that personality is connected with all spheres of life and cannot be imagined outside the physical, mental or social boundaries – everything must be nurtured,

but this should be done under the auspices of spiritual life, which is the “basic principle of personality”. The soul is considered the main object of pedagogical influence. Along with emphasizing the need to educate the “whole personality”, it was emphasized that its formula is determined not only by the harmonious development of nature, but also by an internal hierarchy, and that “education of the empirical component of life activity” is just as necessary as the spiritual one, “since the latter is mediated by it” (Zenkovsky, 1924);

- the principle of an increasing role of the teacher in society. A teacher can have a variety of skills, yet above all, must be a person. Only then they can consolidate the children around them. The teachers’ mission is to teach children to be flexible in change, and their main feature is love for children, who learn from and listen to the one they love. It is confirmed that the professionalism of a teacher depends not only on perfect knowledge of a particular subject, the teaching methods, but first of all on love for children, the belief in the possibilities and uniqueness of each child. Without this, there cannot be any “pedagogical initiative, and hence, there cannot be any pedagogical skill”;
- a critical attitude towards the role and importance of school in society, which is “detached from the needs of social life” and requires a comprehensive understanding, mostly from the standpoint of pedagogical anthropology. The school must perform a double task: on the one hand, it must instill in a person the desire for perfection, bring them closer to the Creator, and thus form a personality; and on the other hand, it must help a person justify their own presence in this world by overcoming evil. The school should both teach a person to self-improve throughout life and be the most important and most necessary institution in human life;
- the transformation of worldview orientations and political preferences of the population, which at the beginning of the 20th century reduced the influence of the religious factor on the spiritual sphere of a person and determined the processes of secularization of education. The development of natural sciences, positivism and materialism during those times expanded the understanding of human spiritual life, giving rise to and consolidating secular culture and secular spirituality. Along with the theoretical substantiation of the methodological and organizational aspects of the creation of the national school, the cultivation of national education, the role and importance of social education was observed. The point is that education should not only give knowledge and instill

the habit of intellectual work, it should also prepare the child for social activities. Therefore, school must take on the task of social education, which consists in the development of social activity, in the education of solidarity, the ability to rise above personal egoistic intentions. Social education is considered to be “a basic factor in the spirituality of the individual, the main form of pedagogical action that ensures the effectiveness of other forms of education” (Zenkovsky, 1920). On this basis, the pedagogical ideal is formed as the system-creating basis of an intercultural life strategy of the national educational space.

Thus, the leading features in the constitution of the educational space in this period were:

- affirmation of universal human values as a priority for education (love and respect for children, faith in them and the good movements of their soul, assertion of the existential nature of freedom);
- democratization of education (creation of conditions for free activity and the child’s life self-determination);
- individualization of the educational process with an emphasis on education which involved taking into account the natural abilities and inclinations, character traits and personal needs of each child;
- actualization of the role of the teacher as a mentor, able to create a viable, friendly atmosphere, organize the educational process on the basis of common interests with students, spiritual closeness, trusting relationships and dialogue;
- public nature of intercultural education, which provided for a close connection between school and life, participation in public associations and organizations, wide publicity at work, multicultural education and social responsibility.

Conclusion

The second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was a turning point in the development of domestic philosophical and pedagogical thought. Despite its objective connections with the Russian one, it declared itself as a system of a new worldview and understanding of the world and it accumulated the best achievements of world culture while maintaining the national identity. Its philosophical and anthropological concept of education has become an independent and distinctive phenomenon of the contemporary culture and education.

An appeal to the origins and historical and cultural heritage of the representatives of the philosophical and educational thought of this period is of great importance for understanding the domestic environment of the modern educational space. This is also marked by our desire to understand our own internal logic and conceptual foundations, which will serve as a framework for further pedagogical searching. Moreover, these assets are surprisingly compliant with the main imperative of the UNESCO International Commission on the Future of Education, declared in the report of its chairman Her Excellency President Sahle-Work Zewde at The Transforming Education Summit on September 19, 2022 at the United Nations in New York (Report of the International Commission, 2022).

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**INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION
IN POLAND AND WORLDWIDE**



Civic education in Rwanda: the impact of the Itorero program

Abstract: The authors discuss the transformation in civic education in Rwanda. Before the arrival of the colonizers, Rwanda had traditions in education and uniting societies. Colonialism destroyed the educational system and divided the society. The re-introduction of the traditional system has been also explored – the example of the Itorero program and its impact on the unity and reconciliation efforts of the government – on the basis of various conducted studies. The main aspects that are taken into account in this study include: the significance of civic education, the Itorero program and the best predictors of success, and the role of civic education in promoting the well-being of communities and nations. The authors not only analyze the functioning of the Itorero institution, but also aim to seek answers to the questions of whether and to what extent the Itorero program affects civic education and to what extent it is an effective tool for uniting the Rwandan society.

Keywords: civic education, citizenship education, Itorero, Rwanda

Introduction

Over its history up to the present day, Sub-Saharan Africa, including the region of African Great Lakes, has been characterized by a series of, sometimes violent, intertribal and interstate conflicts. This is largely due to the nature of the local societies, but also due to the cultural dissimilarity of countries and tribes shaped in the course of historical development. Cultural diversity is an indicator of the identity of societies. The colonial period brought territorial and administrative borders that did not take into account traditional territorial, state-tribal divisions. This has resulted and still results in divisions in the societies of individual countries. These divisions were further escalated

by the colonial administration. To this day, they result in divisions and social conflicts, which in extreme cases turn into armed conflicts.

The leading problem of Sub-Saharan Africa is educating the societies of individual countries in the sphere of searching for common, tribal, and supra-ethnic cultural values. The problem also affects the region of African Great Lakes. Rwanda is a special case of conflicting societies with tribal cultural differences. The country has a long history dating back to the early Middle Ages. What has been dealt with in its history is, among other things, an initiative that is extremely important from the point of view of civic education – the Itorero program. It was implemented in the first half of the 16th century by King Ruganzu.

Currently, the Rwandan authorities attribute great importance to the elimination of the still-existing ethnic and cultural divisions and the civic education of society in the spirit of national unity and patriotism. This is mainly done by the contemporary Itorero program, referring to the idea of King Ruganzu. In 2007, while striving to reconcile the feuding ethnic groups and searching for common cultural values of the society, the implementation of the Itorero program, rooted in the country's tradition, began.

It should be emphasized that the society of Rwanda was in conflict during the colonial period due to the policy of the Belgians based on opposing individual social groups. The conflict was fueled after gaining independence by both the country's political leaders and international factors. After 1994, the Rwandan authorities adopted the unification of society through civic education as a priority goal, in which intercultural education plays an important role.

Intercultural education in the Rwandan society is related to the issue of reconciliation and building national unity, which take into account social and state self-identification. The goal of education is a sense of national awareness considered superior to tribal affiliation. It aims to shape the sense of national identity as superior to tribal affiliation.

The process of civic education in Rwanda is carried out through the implementation of a series of initiatives aimed at uniting the antagonized society. One of the first was the "Ingando Solidarity Camp" program, which served to shape the desired civic qualities and the sense of being Rwandan. Another long-term program covering the whole society, especially children and youth, is the Itorero program.

The article aims to seek answers to the questions of whether and to what extent the Itorero program affects civic education and to what extent it is an effective tool for uniting the nation of this country.

Methods and research procedures

Preparing to solve the research problem formulated in the title, the authors adopted the following research procedure:

- after the initial formulation of the topic, purpose, research questions, and structure of the article, the general methodological assumptions of the article were defined;
- in the course of the discussion, they selected and analyzed some scientific studies on the explored subject matter and conducted an ongoing discussion on the considered issues in terms of their use in the article;
- on the basis of specific methodological assumptions, using the content comprised in the literature on the subject, a series of interviews and discussions was conducted among academic teachers and students of two Rwandan universities. The University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) in Byumba is technical and agricultural. The Protestant Institute of Art of Social Sciences (PIASS) in Butare is a university representing social sciences.

Due to the specificity of Rwanda's socio-political landscape, the country's authorities in many cases do not publish detailed results of the implemented social programs. As a principle, they are limited to the mass dissemination of theoretical assumptions as well as techniques and tools for implementing these programs. The same applies to the Itorero program. The inclusion of students into the study by the authors' team guarantees (to a high degree) the possibility of tracking the process of educating the society and its effects. On the other hand, the political reality in Rwanda means that society is not used to openly expressing itself as regards socio-political issues. Therefore, in the course of the research, the authors ensured full anonymity of the respondents' statements, both oral and written ones. The authors made every effort to ensure that the students and academic teachers involved in the research were randomly selected. No importance was attributed to specific fields of study. The material collected in the course of empirical research consists of oral and written statements from about 60 academic teachers and about 200 students from both universities. This study includes those research results that were most often repeated in the statements, with which the majority of people participating in the debates agreed or which were confirmed by the statistics of the collected surveys. In the opinion of the authors, they consti-

tute sufficient research material, which, together with the literature on the subject, was used to solve the scientific problem raised in this article.

In the methodological sphere, it was assumed that the use of a case study would be particularly useful in achieving the research goal. The object of study was the society of Rwanda. Since the examined object is internally complex and heterogeneous, it was necessary to use techniques for collecting and applying data, which, using the monographic method, had the character of qualitative approaches. They gave a fairly comprehensive picture of the assessment of the impact of the Itorero program on the process of uniting the Rwandan society.

The authors used the research techniques involving the analysis and criticism of the expert literature, but – above all – primary sources in the form of recorded interviews and statements in the course of discussions with academic teachers and university students. At the final stage of the work, the authors used some forms of thought processes in the form of analysis and synthesis of the statements collected during the research and inductive reasoning.

The implementation of successive government programs can significantly contribute to building national reconciliation and to eliminating social divisions. Some researchers believe that by changing the configuration of collective memory, the conditions for reconciliation can be created, in which education plays a leading role.

Rwandan civic education

Civic education is an important element in nation-building, as well as in developing the character of the youth as the future generation of leaders in Rwanda. Bailey defined citizenship as “the membership of, and participation in the activities of a community or group communities” (Bailey, 1998, p. 14).

Civic education is an important responsibility of schools. The consensus still exists that it is the school’s responsibility to prepare students to be active and informed democratic citizens (Elam, Rose, 1996). With today’s technological advances, young people use social media for civic engagement (CIRCLE, 2021). Most of us have largely neglected the fact how civic education can support youth’s civic participation via social media by favoring more traditional approaches to civic education.

Before the arrival of the colonizers, Rwanda and Burundi had beautiful traditions on education and in uniting their societies. Itorero is a good ex-

ample. In the pre-colonial period, in the kingdom of King Ruganzu, two institutions were established as pillars of his power: Itorero and Ubuhake. Itorero was a training system (Byanafashe and Rutayisire, 2016, p. 90).

Education at Itorero was a formal training in Rwanda's rich pre-colonial political culture. Each new king trained a new army to defend the nation. The recruits, known as "Intore", underwent long-term sport and military training at the royal court. They also learned the art of dance, rhetoric, poetry, and perseverance. Another goal was also to acquire the qualities of generosity, tolerance, and courage (Byanafashe and Rutayisire, 2016, p. 142). Thus, it must be said that Rwanda's culture was already rich in the pre-colonial period. Its pillar was the study of patriotism and civic education. These principles lay the foundation for building a united, strong state even before the arrival of the first Europeans.

During the colonial period, Germany adopted a system of indirect government, limiting interference in the affairs of local societies and local rulers to the most important matters. The power of the colonizers was symbolic for a long time (Bar, 2013, p. 48). The first contacts of the colonial administration with the local people of Rwanda and Burundi were somewhat reminiscent of the Portuguese colonization in Congo. The local society was divided. Some were against the invaders, while others cooperated. The Germans struggled in particular with the lack of qualified office staff and the lack of financial resources. This resulted in their limited power in the colony. Nevertheless, local leaders were used and the educational system was interfered with.

It should be noted that it was the German colonizers who laid the foundations for the construction of the Hamit myth in the region of African Great Lakes. German researchers – Africanists, revised both the existing classifications of languages and their origin on the continent. As a result of these works, Carl Meinhof, following his racist theory that divided societies in terms of anthropology, created an independent family of Hamitic languages. (Piłsiewicz and Rzewuski, 2005, pp. 34–37). At the same time, the colonial administration favored the Tutsi ethnic group, which led to its strengthening in the sphere of local government (Check, 2015, pp. 231–235). This affected the educational system and had important consequences in the further stages of the Belgian colonization in the region.

Taking over the management of the colonies by the Belgian government did not mean any significant changes in the internal policy pursued in the colonies. It was reduced to the exclusion of the majority of the native population from political, economic, and social life. Indeed, the extermination on the same scale as it had taken place during the reign of Leopold II was

stopped, but the economic goal remained unchanged – the exploitation of natural resources and of the local population. Belgians managed the colonies in a more sophisticated way, “in white gloves”. By initiating antagonisms between tribes, they pursued a policy of dividing societies. Some tribal chiefs collaborated with the Belgian administration, seeing it as a benefit both for their subjects and for themselves. Others resisted. Under the decree of May 2nd, 1910, the traditional chiefs were recognized by the government administration in the Belgian Congo, and in 1912 they were given further powers of maintaining order and collecting taxes in their territories (Batory and Vircoulon, 2020). Gaining authority by the chiefs was not easy. The subordinated population to a large extent considered them collaborators. By contrast, the Belgian administration had limited confidence in the indigenous peoples. The lack of trust in the chiefs, but also the lack of their skills of fulfilling the imposed tasks, resulted in the creation (by the colonists) of a system of possibly full control. For this purpose, among other things, customary courts have been established. They included rural areas and neighborhoods inhabited by indigenous peoples in urban areas. As a rule, the courts applied customary law as long as it did not conflict with the law and public order established by the colonial administration.

In Rwanda and Burundi, Belgians exercised power through local leaders, thereby maintaining the former political and social structure in which the Tutsis had long held a privileged position while discriminating the Hutus. Identity cards with a record of ethnicity were introduced. The policy towards the society was caused by racism. The changes took place just before the liberation. In fear of losing their rule, the Belgians suddenly began favoring the Hutu.

This policy of division was dominant in the educational system at the time. Through “propaganda” education in the missions, efforts were made to keep control over the local population. During the colonial period, education was based on the science of division and racism. It was the Belgian rule that left the greatest mark on the mentality of the inhabitants of the WJA region. Ethnic manipulation and the introduction into political practice of pseudo-scientific theories that recognize the superiority of some over others turned out to be destructive for the societies of the entire region. The colonizers were guided by the principle that better injustice than any violation of the established order.

After the genocide, reconstruction, social cohesion, and peace-building were given top priority by the new government. In the field of education,

the issue of citizenship played a major role. (Nzahabwanayo, 2018). Davies pointed out that citizenship education is a crucial facet of reconstruction in post-conflict societies (Davies, 2005, pp.17–13).

For this reason, today the government of Rwanda refers to the pre-colonial traditional culture of unity. Today, the national motto in Rwanda is unity, work, love, and the state. Thus, nowadays the term “state-appropriate education” means: providing education that is appropriate for the state. The aim of this education is the pride, love, and respect for the state, and the building, strengthening, and maintaining of citizens’ knowledge about the state (Republika Y’u Rwanda, Komisiyo y’igihugu y’itorebo, Ubutore Development Centre 2014, p. 2) The pillars of civic education include history, culture, national values, and the vision of the state (ibidem). Effective citizenship education in Rwanda leads to unity, community, national pride, stability, and development.

In the case of Rwanda, the principles and canons of the local political culture are set out in the Value and Love for the Country Training Guide issued by the National Church Commission and the Electoral Development Center (ibidem, pp. 50–62).

It contains the canon of national patriotism and refers to the linguistic and cultural community of the nation and the state. According to the guidebook, the Rwandan culture is a legacy left by ancestors. The society has a sense of its own identity that sets it apart from other nations (ibidem). The representatives of Rwandan political parties emphasize that the political culture is built mainly on the values derived from the pre-colonial culture and on a specific type of analysis and interpretation of the events in 1994.

For contemporary Rwandans, citizenship education is teaching and activity aimed at creating a better Rwanda. Learning is about popularizing the content of Rwandan people’s equal rights, their culture of simplicity, peace, mutual respect, love for the state, and truth. This method of education is being implemented by the government of President Paul Kagame (statement by a participant in the debate on 15th December, 2018).

“Itorero program” – a case study

Since the launch of the Itorero program, its content and the vision of its impact on society have remained the same. However, the number of people covered by the program and the range of its impact are increasing.

In addition, an important element of civic education is learning the pride and respect for the state, learning to be Rwandan. Particular attention should

be paid here to the perception of international relations and foreign cooperation. Civic education teaches that Rwandans are to demand from others equal treatment, respect, and cooperation on an equal footing (Statement by a participant in the debate on 15th December, 2018).

A contemporary example of the government's reference to the pre-colonial tradition is the Itorero program. The Government of Rwanda (GoR), during its 12th of November 2007 cabinet meeting, decided to revive its traditional civil education program – “Itorero” – to enable Rwandans to reacquaint themselves with the values and taboos of their culture (NIC, 2012). The program was officially launched on the 16th of November 2007, and in 2013 was presided over by the National *Itorero* Commission (NIC), compliantly with Law N° 41/2013 determining its mission, organization, and functioning. The objective of *Itorero* consists in: “Bringing up a patriotic Rwandan who has values and taboos of the Rwandan culture and who has the culture of *Intore*”. The program is compulsory for all students. The scheme designed for this category comprises two phases: (i) the theoretical phase called *Gutozwa* (getting trained) involving moral, political, and cultural education which lasts three months; and (ii) the practical phase named *Urugerero* (a camp) in the form of national service or volunteering service that lasts seven months (NIC, 2012).

Civic education is an ongoing process of teaching and sharing cultural values mostly for post-genocide governance. The Itorero citizenship education program is one of the government's initiatives to train Rwandans into becoming patriotic citizens and engage in the country's development process. It should be emphasized that civic education is an important element in building the unity of the nation, as well as in shaping the sense of identity and patriotic attitudes of young people. In the centuries-long process of state development, Rwanda has formed cultural traditions that served to unite society. Nowadays, politicians refer to these values by using them in the process of civic education, the overarching goal of which is to build unity and shape the sense of national identity in the society.

The Itorero program is an effective tool for civic education. It shapes the sense of national identity and citizens' duties towards the state and society. It develops the desirable features of patriotism. It is undoubtedly the greatest and extremely effective tool for cultural education in the Rwandan society. In the course of the research, the authors raised the question: What is Itorero for Rwandans? Most of the respondents answered: “A traditional cultural institution plays an important role in promoting values such as the unity

of our nation”, “It is a civic education program. The guiding values are the education of cultural traditions and training”, and “Traditionally, Itorero has been a center for leadership training. Nowadays, it is a program of learning the language, dance, songs, traditions of Rwanda and a program of learning leadership and patriotism”, “Itorero promotes the values of patriotism”, “The program accelerated the reconstruction of the Rwandan nation after the Tutsi genocide of 1994” (debate held on 18th December, 2018).

When asked how Itorero’s values affect the everyday life of Rwandans, most of the respondents answered: “Itorero promotes the values of unity and reconstruction among Rwandans. The aim is to convey the value of respect to authorities and their leaders and to instill common work without ethnic divisions, a common sense of responsibility of the whole society for the development of Rwanda”, “Itorero strengthens unity, solidarity, respect, discipline, patriotism and a sense of national identity” (statements collected on 3rd November, 2022).

When asked whether and how Itorero unites the nation, all the respondents replied that the program plays an important role in uniting the nation: “It promotes the values of unity, respect for authority and leadership”, “The program is designed to instill Rwandans’ collective work and responsibility”, “The program promotes common values of solidarity, unity and national identity” “The program aims to instill the values of helping the elderly”, “It mobilizes Rwandans to cherish traditional cultural values and understand the importance of unity”, “It teaches love for the nation”, “The program helped unify and rebuild the country after the 1994 Tutsi genocide” (statements collected on 3rd November, 2022).

Being asked what has changed in the country thanks to Itorero, most respondents answered: “The united nation, the instillation of values of unity, reconciliation and leadership protection led to unity, and working together led to economic development”. “People’s cooperation has increased”, “The awareness of Rwanda’s traditions, learning about history and cultural traditions has increased”, “All Rwandans work together to develop their country”, “The program brought closer the values of working together and these led to the development of the country” (statements collected on 18th December, 2018).

When asked whether the Itorero program provides military training and what is the purpose of the training, the respondents gave extremely different answers. Some claimed that such training existed, others that it did not. However, the vast majority confirmed that military training is organized as

part of the program. The respondents replied: “The purpose of military training is to instill discipline, patriotism, a sense of duty, and unity among Rwandans”; “In the tradition of Rwanda, this program included a military element in the form of practical training. Traditionally, the Itorero has been used as a training platform for warriors and leaders in the Rwandan society. Military training was accompanied by civic education on culture, traditions, social norms, values, and civic responsibility”; “The Itorero program does not provide military training. Its primary goal is not to focus on the military but on civic education and culture”; “The Itorero program provides military training to ensure the security of the country”; “The program does not provide military training. The goal is to learn cultural values and discipline”; “The Itorero program provides military training to strengthen state security”; “The Itorero program does not provide military training. It aims to present cultural values and teach national identity, discipline, and patriotism”; “The program sometimes includes military training. The goal is to protect the public. Thanks to Itorero, Rwandans can protect what they have”; “The goal is to develop the culture of Rwanda, to build solidarity”; “The purpose of military training is to protect the country”; “Military training is important. If by chance we are at war with another country, thanks to the training we will be able to defend our homeland” (statements collected on 3rd November, 2022).

For Rwandans, “Itorero” is a civic education institution whose main purpose is to teach the preservation of their culture through its various values such as national unity, social solidarity, patriotism, honesty, courage, tolerance, the society’s dos and don’ts, etc. Through this instrument, Rwandans are kept informed about government policies and programs that aim to promote the importance and role of the society in the implementation of these socioeconomic development programs (statements collected on 3rd November, 2022).

The authors’ research shows that the process of civic education, especially the Itorero program, covered the entire society. There are many indications that Itorero will continue to be the main tool for educating and shaping civic attitudes in the Rwandan society, especially among children and youth. The program is a government priority and is constantly developing. This state of affairs is confirmed by the Rwanda Statistical Year Book of 2018. It shows an increase in the access to education and the number of learners and university students is systematically increasing (<https://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/1918>). Participation in citizenship education has also been increasing since 2007. Between 2007 and 2017, over 1,700,000 Rwandans were covered

by the Itorero program, of which 160,875 are university students (<https://rwandapedia.rw/hgs/itorero/how-it-works>; <https://itorero.nic.gov.rw/>).

The Itorero program was open to all Rwandans from the age of seven. All respondents (academic teachers and students of both universities) who were interviewed and discussed had undergone the Itorero training. There are no permanent Itorero schools. However, the program is implemented at different levels and is especially based on schools as extracurricular activities (excerpt from the interview of 13th December, 2018). The village-level Itorero consists of 6 categories that train residents according to their age: Ibirezi (Imyaka 0–5 years), Imbutu (6–12), Indirira (13–18), Indahangarwa (19–35), Ingobokarugamba (36–55) and Inararibonye (Imyaka 55 years old and more) (excerpt from an interview of 13th December 13, 2018).

Moreover, the topic of patriotism is discussed at all levels, especially as a cross-cutting issue, at the primary and secondary levels and the level of university through extracurricular activities (excerpt from an interview of 18th December, 2018). Taking into account the Education Statistical Yearbook 2021/22, approximately 4,159,782 citizens learned what patriotism is (<https://www.mineduc.gov.rw/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=70540&token=39669c8607fe9bcc6b5d44f46ec879a4d4bc5634>).

Conclusions

The current policy of the Rwandan government is aimed at even greater public involvement in the Itorero program. It should be concluded that in the coming years the number of people covered by the program, especially among young people, will systematically increase. It is estimated that around 10 million Rwandans, including school children, have been trained under the Itorero program since its introduction.

The process of rebuilding the state and uniting ethnic groups after the genocide was not and is not a simple process. The memory of the wrong done, the desire for revenge – these feelings inherent in the majority of the society could not be eliminated overnight. The trauma and memory of these events have remained for a long time. Wound healing is a long-term process. Despite this, the Rwandans managed to bring about peace and harmonious cooperation within the state. In this case, the return to tradition and pre-colonial values, including the Itorero program, turned out to be extremely helpful. The joint work of the nation and sticking to the values that unite the society make it possible to effectively implement the process of rebuilding

the state. Regardless of the criticism of military training under the program, it should be emphasized that Itorerero teaches discipline, working together, and caring for the values of traditional culture. This seems to be the key to Rwanda's development. The program helps Rwandans learn about their pre-colonial history and cultivate their traditions. It is believed that this is the most important element of civic education and building national identity. In the coming years, the program will increase national awareness, the need for unity, and joint work for the country.

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Pre-service teacher self-efficacy in Poland and Slovakia

Abstract: The level of preparation of teachers before they enter the profession is an important factor affecting the level of culture of future generations and, consequently, the society as a whole. This preparation requires not only the proper implementation of the curriculum, but also the acquisition of self-efficacy skills. So far, the self-efficacy of pre-service teachers has been studied with respect to different variables. However, there is a lack of satisfactory comparative research among students from Poland and Slovakia, the countries of slightly different approach to preparation of pre-service teachers. To fill this gap, a comparative study of 355 Polish and 198 Slovakian university students was conducted using Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. The purpose of the research was to determine which variables, including the country (Poland, Slovakia), course, form, year of study and participation in the field experience correlate significantly with the sense of efficacy of pre-service teachers. The obtained results indicate a satisfactory consistency between the Polish and the Slovakian version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. The research revealed a significantly higher self-evaluation among Polish university students and students of early childhood education. Part-time students with field experience evaluated themselves higher than full time students. The results emphasize that it is important to place high demands on future teachers and create appropriate conditions to improve their teaching and self-evaluative abilities.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, self-efficacy, Poland, Slovakia, course of study, year of studies, field experience

Introduction

The fact that teachers should have appropriate competences is stressed not only in the expert literature but also in the fundamental documents related

to the international educational policy. On the one hand, the World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise indicates the significance of education in providing children and youth with the competences they need to function in the world of rapid social and economic changes (World Bank, 2018). On the other hand, the report mentions a learning crisis, the immediate causes of which include, for instance, that "teachers often lack the skills or motivation to be effective" (World Bank, 2018, p. 10) and that the "poor management and governance often undermine schooling quality" (World Bank, 2018, p. 11).

The guidelines included in the documents of the European Union also advocate taking action on this matter. The "Interim evaluation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training" (ET, 2020) (European Commission, 2014) indicates that the quality of teachers' work is a significant factor affecting students' academic performance.

Meanwhile, the Council Recommendation of the 22nd May 2018, on key competences for lifelong learning, emphasizes that "training and learning should be supported by establishing good practices for better support of educational staff in their tasks and improving their education" (Council of the European Union, 2018, Recital 10). Therefore, not only the quality of teachers' work needs to be urgently evaluated but also the preparation of future teaching staff with respect to the crisis areas outlined in the report.

Studies conducted by researchers from different countries conclude that a teacher's sense of efficacy is an extremely useful psychological construct (Capa-Aydin and Woolfolk Hoy, 2005; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007). A number of studies observed that self-efficacy correlates strongly with the indicators of success for educational institutions, including students' academic performance. A meta-analysis of 16 studies involving 4130 teachers revealed a significant correlation between teachers' efficacy and students' academic performance (Kim and Seo, 2018). In another study, "reciprocal indirect relations were obtained, such that (...) initial teachers' self-efficacy predicted later work satisfaction via engagement" (Granziera and Perera, 2019, p. 75). Furthermore, the results of studies covering 73 100 teachers in 23 countries revealed positive correlations between teachers' self-efficacy, and field experience and job satisfaction (Vieluf, Kunter and Van de Vijver, 2013).

Thus, the context of international comparisons is useful for identifying factors relevant to modeling students' sense of efficacy, it allows one to enrich the results of scientific research by identifying variables relevant to the studied phenomenon in a transnational context, as well as to identify those

solutions adopted in another country that serve to raise the level of future teachers' sense of efficacy. For this comparative study, two polarized teacher education systems from a similar cultural area, the Polish and Slovak ones, were deliberately selected. These systems, despite significant similarities, differ, however, in their approach to practical teacher training – a factor important to the sense of efficacy. For a broader context, other variables related to the course of study were also taken into account in the studies. Therefore, the purpose of the research was to determine which variables, including the country (Poland, Slovakia), course, form, year of study and participation in the field experience correlate significantly with the sense of efficacy of pre-service teachers.

The study

The results of international studies on pre-service teachers' efficacy and legal requirements for future teachers' training in Poland and Slovakia point to the importance of the development of students' ability to adequately assess their teaching predispositions. However, no comparative studies on Polish and Slovakian pre-service teachers with the use of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale have been conducted so far. Both countries have adopted similar assumptions for the education of future teachers, except that in Slovakia field experience lasts more hours, and more emphasis is placed on student self-reflection. Thus, there is a need to determine whether this differentiation is reflected in students' self-efficacy assessment. In both countries, teacher training for early childhood education is offered as a five-year program as opposed to students preparing to become teachers of subjects. It is therefore reasonable to examine whether this correlates with students' self-reported efficacy.

Some international studies (Brown et al., 2015; Ma and Cavanagh, 2018; O'Neill and Stephenson, 2012; Oğuz Başokçu and Öğretmen, 2016) which is one of structural equation models on real data. Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) show that field experience significantly correlates with students' self-efficacy evaluation. Hence, it seems well-grounded to examine the relationship of field experience and students' self-efficacy evaluation. Another significant variable may be the type of field experience: student practice in the initial years, and student teaching, in subsequent years. Thus, it is advisable to examine the relationship between year of study and student efficacy.

The form of study may also be important in assessing students' self-efficacy. Part-time master program is typically selected by in-service teachers,

and full-time program by pre-service ones. In consideration of the variables discussed above, it seems well-based to pose the following research question: Do Efficacy in Student Engagement (ESE), Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (EIS), Efficacy in Classroom Management (ECM), and total efficacy differ depending on the country, course of study, year and form of studies as well as participation in field experience (practice and student teaching)?

Taking into account the above assumptions, the research problems were formulated in the form of the following questions:

- Are there differences in Efficacy in Student Engagement (ESE), Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (EIS), Efficacy in Classroom Management (ECM), and total efficacy between Slovak and Polish students?
- Are there differences between respondents in ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy depending on their course of study?
- Are there differences between respondents in ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy depending on their form of study?
- Are there differences between respondents in ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy depending on their year of study?
- Are there differences between respondents in ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy depending on their participation in field experience (practice and student teaching)?

Methodology and methods

Sample

The group of study participants comprised students from four Polish universities (Kazimierz Pulaski University of Technology and Humanities in Radom, Polish Naval Academy of the Heroes of Westerplatte in Gdynia, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, and University of Silesia – faculty in Cieszyn) and Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia.

In total, 553 people participated in the study: 468 women (84.6%) and 85 men (15.4%). Most of the study participants were from Poland ($n = 355$, 64.62%), a smaller number of students was from Slovakia ($n = 198$, 35.8%). Women were the majority in the group of students from both Poland and Slovakia ($n = 309$, 87.0% and $n = 159$, 80.3%). The study involved an analysis of the homogeneity of the studied groups according to the students' gender, course of study, cycle, form, year of studies, and the type of completed field experience. The comparison of the structure of the studied groups indicates their heterogeneity in terms of gender, course of study, year of studies, and

the type of completed field experience. The groups were combined of bachelor degree students in teacher training courses who followed the same curriculum in accordance with teacher education standards for teaching a particular subject (physical education and English philology). The differences in size between the groups of men and women result from the character of teacher training courses, which are dominated by women.

Among all participants, most studied early childhood education ($n = 317$, 57.3%), followed by English philology ($n = 215$, 38.9%) and physical education ($n = 21$, 3.8%). Most of the participants from Poland studied early childhood education, and most of the participants from Slovakia studied physical education and English philology ($n = 265$, 74.6% and $n = 146$, 73.7%, respectively). The vast majority of pre-service teachers were students of bachelor degree programs ($n = 349$, 61.3%) and full-time studies ($n = 446$, 80.7%). As far as the year of studies is concerned, the majority of the participants were in their second ($n = 168$, 30.04%), third ($n = 126$, 22.8%), or fourth ($n = 139$, 25.1%) year of studies. The majority of the study participants from Poland were first – or second-year students ($n = 149$, 42.0%), and in the Slovakian group, most of the participants were students of the later years of studies ($n = 149$, 75.3%). Among all respondents, most (355 people, 64.2%) completed student teaching, 129 people (23.3%) completed only the practice, and 69 people (12.5%) had not yet participated in any field experience. In both the Polish and the Slovakian group, the majority of students completed their student teaching ($n = 206$, 58.0% and $n = 149$, 75.3%, respectively).

Research design

The study involved the analysis of self-efficacy levels in pre-service teachers with respect to the aforementioned variables. The dependent variables were the total level of self-efficacy and the subscales scores on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. The independent variables were (1) country, (2) course of study, (3) year of studies, and (4) completion of field experience.

The Polish students were assessed using the abbreviated version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001) translated into Polish by Hreciński (2016). The scale comprises 12 items grouped into three subscales: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Strategies, Efficacy in Classroom Management.

To collect empirical material from the Slovakian students, the TSES questionnaire was translated from English to Slovakian. The translation maintained linguistic faithfulness to the original; however, priority was given to

maintaining the meaning of each item. The translation was faithful except for instances where it could create expressions that would be unacceptable in Slovakian pedagogical terminology, in which cases the expressions were changed. Following these guidelines, four persons who knew English prepared four independent translations of the original version of the TSES. Two of the translators were trainers of pre-service teachers of English. The effects of their work were discussed to create the initial proposal for each item. The version of the scale prepared in this way was then consulted with four university teachers conducting classes on pedagogy and psychology for future teachers.

The study was carried out in a traditional way, using paper versions of the test distributed among the students.

Data analysis

The study employed the following methods of statistical analysis:

- a) Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega for measuring internal consistency of questionnaires;
- b) chi-squared test for evaluating the interdependence between two categorical variables;
- c) the MANCOVA test to compare countries based on the subscale (ESE, EIS, and ECM) scores and the total score with covariates: course of study, form and level of studies, years of studies and field experience or MANOVA test to compare other independent variables based on the subscale and the Total score.

The statistical significance of differences was expressed as the p -value, which constitutes the lowest level of significance at which the hypothesis is rejected. The differences are considered significant for $p < 0.05$. The calculations were conducted with the SPSS software. Outliers above 3 SD ($N = 6$) were excluded from the analyses.

For MANOVA analysis results of evaluation assumptions of normality (The K-S test turned out to be significant, but the skewness was in range $-1;1$ for all variable), homogeneity of variance (Levene's test $p > .05$), linearity and multicollinearity were satisfactory.

Results

The reliability of the Polish and Slovakian versions of the scale was evaluated by assessing the internal consistency of the questionnaires using Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega. Table 1 presents the factor loadings for each item.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega indicators

| Country | Poland (n = 355) | Slovakia (n = 198) | Difference be- tween Poland and Slovakia | Poland (n = 355) | Slovakia (n = 198) | Difference be- tween Poland and Slovakia |
|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| DV | Cronbach's alfa | | | McDonald's Omega | | |
| ESE | .776 | .641 | .135 | .779 | .657 | .122 |
| EIS | .781 | .664 | .117 | .782 | .669 | .113 |
| ECM | .812 | .796 | .016 | .814 | .799 | .015 |
| Total | .904 | .854 | .050 | .904 | .859 | .045 |

The obtained results indicate a satisfactory consistency between the two scales because of Cronbach's alpha range between min. .641, max. .904 for each position and McDonald's Omega range between min. .657, max. .904 for each position. The difference between the Polish scale and the Slovakian scale in only .050 (Cronbach's alpha) and .045 (McDonald's Omega).

The results obtained for the Polish group and the Slovakian group were compared according to each of the subscales used by the authors of the test, i.e., ESE, EIS, and ECM.

Comparison of self-efficacy between the Polish and the Slovakian group.

An inter-subject multivariate analysis of covariance was performed on four dependent variables: ESE, EIS, ECM and the total score, after controlling for course of study, form and level of studies, years of studies. With the use of Wilks' criterion, the combined dependent variables were significantly different by the country (Wilk's $\lambda = .93$, $F(3,538) = 13.35$; $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$), after controlling course of study, form and level of studies and years of studies.

To investigate the impact of each effect on the individual dependent variables, a univariate F -test was performed. The main effects on country was significant on EIS, $F(1,540) = 26.71$; $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$, ECM, $F(1,540) = 14.46$; $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$ and the total score, $F(1,540) = 13.31$; $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Pairwise comparison indicates that Polish students had significantly higher mean EIS, ECM and the total was higher than of Slovakian students.

The main effects on the country were insignificant for ESE, $F(1,540) = 0.35$; $p = .556$; partial $\eta^2 < .01$. The estimated marginal means were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Estimated marginal means for the main effects on the country

| DV Country N | | M | SE | 95% CI | | |
|-----------------|----|-----|------|--------|------|------|
| | | | | LL | UL | |
| ESE | PL | 351 | 6.83 | 0.06 | 6.71 | 6.95 |
| | SK | 196 | 6.76 | 0.09 | 6.60 | 6.93 |
| EIS | PL | 351 | 7.30 | 0.06 | 7.18 | 7.41 |
| | SK | 196 | 6.76 | 0.08 | 6.60 | 6.92 |
| ECM | PL | 351 | 7.25 | 0.06 | 7.13 | 7.36 |
| | SK | 196 | 6.83 | 0.08 | 6.66 | 6.99 |
| The Total | PL | 351 | 7.12 | 0.05 | 7.02 | 7.22 |
| | SK | 196 | 6.78 | 0.07 | 6.64 | 6.92 |

In response to the first research problem, it can be concluded that there are differences both in Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (EIS), Efficacy in Classroom Management (ECM), and total efficacy between Slovak and Polish students, as Polish students had significantly higher mean EIS, ECM and the total was higher than of Slovakian students.

Comparison of self-efficacy of students doing different courses of study

The next table (Table 3) contains the scores obtained for students of different courses of study. The research took into account two groups of students: a) pre-service early childhood education teachers and b) pre-service subject teachers (English and physical education) who, in addition to courses related to their field of study, also undergo teacher training.

The Wilks' criterion was statistically significant (Wilk's $\lambda = .95$, $F(3,543) = 9.60$; $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$). The main effects on study fields were significant on all subscales and the total score: ESE, $F(1.545) = 11.08$; $p = .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$; EIS, $F(1.545) = 18.98$; $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$; ECM, $F(1.545) = 26.48$; $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$ and the total score, $F(1.545) = 25.04$; $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Pairwise comparisons showed that the pre-service teachers of early childhood education evaluated their efficacy higher on each of the subscales (ESE, EIS and ECM) and the total score than the pre-service teachers of physical education and English.

Table 3. Estimated marginal means for the main effects on courses of study

| DV Courses of study N | | | M | SE | 95% CI | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|------|------|--------|------|
| | | | | | LL | UL |
| ESE | Early childhood education | 315 | 6.94 | 0.06 | 6.82 | 7.06 |
| | Physical education and English | 232 | 6.63 | 0.07 | 6.49 | 6.77 |
| EIS | Early childhood education | 315 | 7.27 | 0.06 | 7.16 | 7.39 |
| | Physical education and English | 232 | 6.88 | 0.07 | 6.74 | 7.01 |
| ECM | Early childhood education | 315 | 7.30 | 0.06 | 7.18 | 7.42 |
| | Physical education and English | 232 | 6.82 | 0.07 | 6.68 | 6.96 |
| The Total | Early childhood education | 315 | 7.17 | 0.05 | 7.07 | 7.27 |
| | Physical education and English | 232 | 6.77 | 0.06 | 6.66 | 6.89 |

While answering the second research question, it can be stated that there are differences between respondents in both ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy according to their course of study.

Comparison of self-efficacy based on the form of studies

The study analyzed both students of full-time studies, taking place from Monday to Friday, and part-time studies, taking place at weekends.

With the use of Wilks' criterion, the combined dependent variables were significantly different by the form of studies (Wilk's $\lambda = .98$, $F(3.543) = 3.09$; $p = .027$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$).

The main effects on studying forms were significant on ESE, $F(1.545) = 8.82$; $p = .003$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$, ECM, $F(1.545) = 5.13$; $p = .024$; partial $\eta^2 = .03$ and the total score, $F(1.545) = 7.66$; $p = .006$; partial $\eta^2 = .01$. According to the data presented in Table 6, the part-time students evaluated their efficacy on the ESE, ECM subscales and the total score significantly higher, primarily due to the fact that the majority of them had experience in teaching, which meant that the master studies only supplemented the qualifications they had already acquired. The effect on forms of study on EIS was statistically insignificant, $F(1.545) = 3.54$; $p = .060$; partial $\eta^2 = .01$.

Table 4. Estimated marginal means for the main effects on the form of studies

| DV Form of studies N | | | M | SE | 95% CI | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----|------|------|--------|------|
| | | | | | LL | UL |
| ESE | Ful-time | 440 | 6.74 | 0.05 | 6.64 | 6.84 |
| | Part-time | 107 | 7.08 | 0.11 | 6.88 | 7.29 |
| EIS | Ful-time | 440 | 7.06 | 0.05 | 6.96 | 7.16 |
| | Part-time | 107 | 7.28 | 0.10 | 7.08 | 7.48 |
| ECM | Ful-time | 440 | 7.04 | 0.05 | 6.94 | 7.15 |
| | Part-time | 107 | 7.31 | 0.11 | 7.10 | 7.52 |
| The Total | Ful-time | 440 | 6.95 | 0.04 | 6.86 | 7.04 |
| | Part-time | 107 | 7.23 | 0.09 | 7.05 | 7.40 |

Considering the third research problem, it can be stated that there are differences between respondents in ESE, ECM and total efficacy depending on their form of study.

Comparison of self-efficacy of the students based on the year of studies

As the next step, the study analyzed the self-efficacy of students in the first two years and the last three years of studies (years three, four, and five). The students followed both five-year-long cycle studies (early childhood education) and first – and second-cycle studies (B.A. and M.A.). In both cases, the first two years of studies were propaedeutic, teaching basic subjects, such as pedagogy, psychology, interpersonal communication, and the last three years of studies focused on methodological knowledge and field experience.

With the use of Wilks' criterion, the combined dependent variables were not significantly different by the year of studies (Wilk's $\lambda = .99$, $F(3.543) = 2.13$; $p = .096$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$). The estimated marginal means results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Estimated marginal means for the main effects on the years of studies

| DV | Years of studies | N | M | SE | 95% CI | |
|-----|------------------|-----|------|------|--------|------|
| | | | | | LL | UL |
| ESE | Year 1 + 2 | 196 | 6.74 | 0.05 | 6.64 | 6.84 |
| | Year 3+4+5 | 351 | 7.08 | 0.11 | 6.88 | 7.29 |
| EIS | Year 1 + 2 | 196 | 7.06 | 0.05 | 6.96 | 7.16 |
| | Year 3+4+5 | 351 | 7.28 | 0.10 | 7.08 | 7.48 |

| DV | Years of studies | N | M | SE | 95% CI | |
|-----------|------------------|-----|------|------|--------|------|
| | | | | | LL | UL |
| ECM | Year 1 + 2 | 196 | 7.04 | 0.05 | 6.94 | 7.15 |
| | Year 3+4+5 | 351 | 7.31 | 0.11 | 7.10 | 7.52 |
| The Total | Year 1 + 2 | 196 | 6.95 | 0.04 | 6.86 | 7.04 |
| | Year 3+4+5 | 351 | 7.23 | 0.09 | 7.05 | 7.40 |

In response to the fourth research problem, it can be concluded that no significant differences were detected between respondents in ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy depending on their year of study.

Comparison of students' self-efficacy based on participation in field experience

Finally, the scores for students who participated in any field experience were compared with those who had not. The analysis did not indicate that significant differences in self-efficacy existed between the scores of the students who participated in any field experience and those who did not (Wilk's $\lambda = .99$, $F(3.543) = 2.13$; $p = .096$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$). The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Estimated marginal means for the main effects on participation in the field experience (2)

| DV Field experience | | N | M | SE | 95% CI | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----|------|------|--------|------|
| | | | | | LL | UL |
| ESE | No field experience | 196 | 6.68 | 0.08 | 6.52 | 6.83 |
| | Field experience | 351 | 6.88 | 0.06 | 6.76 | 6.99 |
| EIS | No field experience | 196 | 7.05 | 0.08 | 6.90 | 7.20 |
| | Student teaching | 351 | 7.13 | 0.06 | 7.02 | 7.25 |
| ECM | No field experience | 196 | 6.97 | 0.08 | 6.81 | 7.12 |
| | Student teaching | 351 | 7.17 | 0.06 | 7.05 | 7.28 |
| The Total | No field experience | 196 | 6.90 | 0.07 | 6.77 | 7.03 |
| | Student teaching | 351 | 7.06 | 0.05 | 6.96 | 7.16 |

Answering the final research problem, it can be stated that no significant differences were detected between respondents in ESE, EIS, ECM and total efficacy depending on their participation in field experience (practice and student teaching).

Discussion

The study was aimed at assessing correlations between self-efficacy and the selected variables. The first variable was the country where the participants conduct their studies. The presented research shows that the Polish and the Slovakian students declared a similar level of efficacy in student engagement. It is likely that those university students who were interested in the subject matter are motivated for gaining knowledge and skills in their future.

Differences between the students from both countries were found in the next two subscales. Polish students declared a higher level of efficacy in instructional strategies and efficacy in classroom management than Slovakian students. The higher assessment of teaching efficacy among Polish students compared to Slovakian students was indicated previously in a study by Rubacha and Sirotová (2013). Slovakian students have a more extensive educational system and, thus, are more aware of their own knowledge and competences. They are, therefore, more aware of the potential difficulties that they might encounter in their future profession. The differences may be a result of a more advanced system of teacher training in Slovakia, which encompasses extensive field experience requiring an increasingly higher teaching skills and critical self-reflection from students. To help students meet the high demands, they are provided good conditions for field experiences, with well-selected schools, supervising teachers, and duration of practical training; and in-depth analysis of their field experiences both at university and at school. Furthermore, the supervising teachers are adequately compensated. The goal is to ensure a continuous increase of requirements combined with building students' self-reflection and self-evaluation skills. At every stage, a student is assisted by an expert teacher. No subsequent comparative studies have been conducted in this regard, but research conducted on both Polish (Kwiatkowski, 2028) and Slovak (Gavora, 2010; Gavora and Wiegerová, 2017), students indicates their positive assessment of self-efficacy.

Interestingly, no significant difference in self-efficacy was observed between students in their first two years and last three years of studies, and between students who had participated in field experience and those who had not. The high self-evaluation of students in their first years of studies may be a result of a lack of experiences verifying their preparation in this respect. The existence of only slight differences in the assessment of the self-efficacy of students of different semesters was also demonstrated by Gavora

and Wiegerová (2017) in their study of Slovak students. The authors report the obtained results concerning high self-assessment already in those students who start their studies. In contrast, the majority of prospective early childhood education teachers surveyed by Pękala and Mączka (2021) claimed that the level of confidence in a teacher's professional performance is felt after working at least 10 years in an educational institution. However, 14.5% of the respondents identified the beginning of a teacher's career as the moment of the highest level as regards their sense of self-efficacy. This lack of discernment, according to the authors, may be due to the small number of teaching experiences of the surveyed students.

The pre-service teachers of early childhood education evaluate their effectiveness on each of the subscales higher than the pre-service teachers of physical education and English. The former likely identify themselves to a greater degree with the profession of a teacher, while for subject teachers, it is simply one of the options they are being prepared for during additional classes. The positive results on self-efficacy in the case of future early education teachers are confirmed by the research of other authors. The results of Kwiatkowski's (2018) study of Polish students indicate their sense of efficacy at an average level, and the results of the study conducted on a group of Slovak students indicate their sense of efficacy at a relatively high level (Gavora and Wiegerová, 2017). Slovak teachers rated most positively their ability to organize teaching, manage children's classrooms and cooperate with colleagues and parents. On the other hand, they rated lower the elimination of children's problem behavior and professional cooperation.

The higher scores obtained in the case of students of part-time studies are also reflected in the studies of other authors, who indicate a higher level of self-efficacy in students having more field experience (Brown et al., 2015; Ma and Cavanagh, 2018; O'Neill and Stephenson, 2012; Oğuz Başoğlu and Öğretmen, 2016) which is one of structural equation models on real data. Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES).

Conclusion

The results of the research presented in this paper have important cognitive and practical implications. Firstly, they indicate the possibility of using the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale for comparative studies of Polish and Slovak pre-service teachers, and, due to the development of the Slovak version of the tool, also for comparative studies conducted by Slovak researchers. Sec-

ondly, they provide an opportunity to analyze the results of Polish students in a broader, international context of comparison with students from Slovakian universities, in which the system of teacher education shows great similarities to the Polish system, but has more advantages in terms of preparation of reflexive practice. Thirdly, the results of the research indicate areas that require practical action and further, in-depth scientific analysis as these results show a relatively high self-efficacy of teacher candidates in both countries. This gives rise to a question about the accuracy of self-evaluation, particularly in the case of students in their first years of studies. Many teacher-training programs, especially in the early period of students' education, provide mostly general pedagogical knowledge that is not strongly connected with beliefs concerning self-efficacy (Depaepe & König, 2018). This makes it more difficult for students in their first years of studies to evaluate themselves accurately. It is important that teacher-training programs take into account these personal competences, which will allow students to develop a strong sense of efficacy in their profession. It is, therefore, advisable at this stage to relate the curriculum to school practice more extensively, to analyze various educational situations, and to present models of behavior. Through participation in various pedagogical situations, students develop and interpret their actions and, through this, stimulate their own personal growth.

Field experiences provide students with an opportunity to use the obtained knowledge and translate it into appropriate actions, developing their personal mastery. Moreover, students have the opportunity to reflect on their own preparation and gain inspiration for new actions. Field experiences allow students to develop their professional skills and gain knowledge, which ensures good preparation for working as teachers. They also allow students to verify their choice of career.

In the future, teacher preparation programs should provide teacher candidates with more opportunities to gain hands-on experience in teaching, perform individual work with students and engage in various aspects of classroom management, in progressively complex educational situations, and with support and specific feedback from expert teachers (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

The reflexive practical approach should accompany the classes carried out both at universities and schools. Students are advised to measure their self-efficacy when performing these actions in order to shape and improve their reflection and self-evaluation skills and set personal mastery goals in a professional community under the guidance of a mentoring teacher (Sim, 2006).

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International research on teachers and their job satisfaction – an analysis of research approaches and intents

Abstract: The study presents theoretical starting points and research approaches dedicated to the teaching profession in an international context. It provides interesting insights into the relationship between teachers' workload and their life satisfaction. The research presented in this study is focused on primary and pre-primary teachers. The authors present the results of a theoretical survey of the current studies and identify the intents of the research objective. They plan to expand the research objective to include a comparison of cross-cultural data between teachers from Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic. The findings are intended to provide valuable knowledge and inspiration for improving the working conditions of teachers. In addition, they can contribute to the innovation of undergraduate teacher education and lifelong teacher education programs. The current international research is aimed to find out how teachers in the early stages of children's education, i.e. teachers of primary and pre-primary education, manage the demands of their profession through the lens of their specific professional activities. Subsequently, the obtained results are compared with the feeling of satisfaction in their life. The aim of this research is to provide an international comparison of teachers from Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Keywords: international comparison, teaching as a profession, subjective workload, teachers' life satisfaction, research on teachers' job satisfaction

Research on teachers, the teaching profession and teachers' views and opinions on various areas related to their work is a relatively frequent topic of educational, psychological, and sociological studies. The significance of international comparative research in both education and social sciences is in-

creasing, and as pointed out by Nowakowaska-Siuta (2023), pedagogy follows the trend of established methodological concepts of important philosophical schools. This is a review article focused on presenting the theoretical foundations of the planned project.

The co-authoress of this paper has published articles on these research topics (Kasáčová, 2017; 2018). This subject has a significant impact both at the national and international level. The department the authoresses work at is currently conducting a scientific research project: VEGA 1/0415/22 Subjectively Perceived Difficulty Of Teachers' Professional Activities Versus Their Life Satisfaction. The research aim of international comparison is deeply rooted in academic traditions. There have been several international research projects carried out in recent years. The current project follows up on the research *The Profession of Pre-primary Education Teacher and Primary Education Teacher within Dynamic Concept* (by Kasáčová et al., 2011), which provided a detailed analysis and comparison of findings from a professiographic survey focused on how much of their time the teachers from the three countries dedicated to their particular work activities. The aim of the current international research is to determine how teachers in the early stages of children's education, i.e. teachers of primary and pre-primary education, cope with the demanding nature of their profession through the lens of their particular professional activities. After that, the state determined by the research is going to be compared with the sense of fulfillment in their lives. This research aspires to provide an international comparison of teachers from Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The choice of these three countries has several reasons: 1. similar cultural, social and pedeutological traditions; 2. previous joint international studies and research comparisons; 3. inspiring research carried out in Poland and the Czech Republic

Theoretical background for the research into the sense of life satisfaction and workload

There are different interpretations of the terms: *(teachers') professional workload, teachers' fitness, teacher's burnout syndrome, (teachers') job satisfaction and (teachers') life satisfaction*. Kravčáková et al. (2013, p. 124) in general defines *job satisfaction* as a psychological category, "as a work attitude expressing a person's ability to cope psychologically with their job and work, with the work attributes and features. It affects the sense of well-being at work, loyalty, and employees' health. It determines their behavior and performance."

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (via Pardee, 1990), on the basis of their studies on job satisfaction, created the motivation-hygiene theory, otherwise known as the Two-Factor Theory. It distinguishes two factors influencing job satisfaction – motivational factors (motivators) and hygiene factors (frustrators). Motivators acting as inner stimulators include: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, career progression, professional growth; frustrators, coming from the influences of the outside environment, include: company policy, supervision as means of control, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, job security, personal life.

Job satisfaction is the subject of psychological research, but our intention will be to determine the level of teachers' job satisfaction and its relationship to other defined constructs. Valica (2001, p. 6) defined teachers' job satisfaction as *"a complex psychological phenomenon based on a subjective assessment of the conditions and requirements of the teaching profession"*. He attributes the level of teachers' job satisfaction to the attitude teachers have towards their profession and the related motivation to become and remain a teacher, despite previous negative experiences. Průcha (2002, p. 75) considers *job satisfaction to be an important determinant affecting the way the teaching profession is being performed*. He claims that in the case of teachers dissatisfied in their job, one cannot expect them to succeed in their profession. Teachers' job satisfaction is a more complex construct filled with various characteristics.

The authors specifying the factors that cause the decline in the attractiveness of the teaching profession and teachers' (dis)satisfaction with their job, defined some common areas influencing this. Looking at the older studies, the research analysis by (Kika, 1993) brought a very inspiring insight into the areas that significantly affect teachers' job satisfaction:

- *remuneration* – in particular teachers' salaries, financial appreciation of the quality of their work,
- *material and technical equipment of schools* – poor personal equipment of teachers, insufficient equipment of learners – including teaching texts or textbooks, special equipment for certain subjects,
- *work environment* – number of students in the classroom, lack of space for high quality teaching, space for teachers,
- *selected characteristics of the teaching profession* – the psychological stress in teachers' work, insufficient opportunities for professional development and career advancement, the limited financial resources of schools for the professional growth of their teachers,

– *failure to meet teachers' professional expectations* – these result from the above factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction (Kika, 1993).

In the text, the context will be presented in which teachers' job satisfaction has been studied by using an international level research. The overview also provides the determinants affecting the level of teachers' job satisfaction highlighted by the research findings. At the same time, our aim is to present various research procedures and tools the authors used in the relevant research endeavors.

The job satisfaction of teachers can be a subject of qualitative or quantitative research, as well as of a combined inquiry. The table below presents the current research tools that focus on investigating teachers' work and life satisfaction, as well as their professional competence. The analysis of approaches to the research into the teaching profession was the inspiration for the current research project.

Table 1. Overview of the tools for researching life and work satisfaction

| Author source | Year | Title | Item focus/questionnaire form |
|--|------|--|---|
| Weiss, D.J., Dawis, R.V., England, G.W. Lofquist, L.H. | 1967 | Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) | Is developed in two different variants – Short-Form and Long-Form. The Short-Form contains 20 items focusing on: employees' work activities, confidence in employees' abilities (independence), colleagues, career development, the employer, working conditions, salary conditions and getting feedback ((<i>MSQ</i>) <i>Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire</i> , n.d.). Scale Questionnaire 1–5 (1 I am very dissatisfied with this aspect of school; 5 I am very satisfied with this aspect of school). |
| Maslach, CH. Jackson, S.E. | 1981 | Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (MBI – Educators Survey) | Is focused on professional burnout and is used to measure three factors: emotional exhaustion (9 questions), depersonalization (5 questions), lower work performance (8 questions) (Křivohlavý, 1998). For measuring teachers' burnout, the MBI tool has been specially modified into the form of an MBI-ES from 1986 (<i>Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ES)</i> , n.d.; Szigeti a kol., 2017). Scale Questionnaire time scale 1–6 (1 a few times a year or less; 6 every day) intensity 1–7 (1 very mildly, barely noticeable; 7 very intensely, significant). |
| Gibsonová, S. Dembo, M, H. | 1984 | Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) | Is used to self-report the level of professional efficacy perceived by teachers, there are 2 dimensions of professional self-efficacy: <i>The teachers' belief in their abilities</i> and <i>Potentialities of teaching as perceived by teachers</i> . Scale questionnaire 1–6 (1 fully disagree; 6 fully agree). Slovak adaptation by Gavora (2012). |

| Author source | Year | Title | Item focus/questionnaire form |
|---|-------------|---|--|
| Lester, P. E. | 1987 | Teacher's Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) | Contains 66 items (9 dimensions) – 14 items on management, 10 items on colleagues, 7 items on working conditions, 7 items on salary, 8 items on responsibilities, 9 items on the work itself, 5 items on professional growth, 3 items on safety and 3 items on feedback (Lester, 1982; Paula E. Lester a Lloyd K. Bishop, 2000; Troeger, 2021). <i>Scale questionnaire 1–5 (1 fully disagree; 2 partly agree and disagree; 3 agree; 4 fully agree; 5 unable to assess).</i> |
| Fahrenberg, J., Myrtek, M., Schumacher, J. Brähler, E. | 2001 | Life Satisfaction Questionnaire | Monitors 10 factors: <i>health, work and job, financial situation, spare time, marriage and partnership, relationship with one's own children, own person, sexuality, friends and acquaintances, housing</i> – each of these areas contains 7 items for measuring the level of satisfaction (Fahrenberg a kol., 2001). <i>Scale questionnaire 1–7 (1 very dissatisfied; 5 very satisfied).</i> Czech adaptation: Rodná, K. – Rodný, T (2001) |
| Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy | 2001 | The Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) | Focused on issues in teaching, that include the following areas: <i>ability to motivate learners, ability to apply teaching strategies, ability to manage classroom.</i> <i>Scale questionnaire 1–9 (1 nothing at all; 9 very much).</i> Slovak adaptation: Gavora (2011). |
| Pepe, A., Addimando, L., Veronese, G. | 2011 / 2017 | Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSS-9) | Contains 9 items, focused on determining the level of satisfaction <i>with colleagues, with learners' behavior and with learners' parents</i> (Pepe at al., 2017) and this has carried across to the field of education, leading to a research focus on the work-related satisfaction of teachers. Today, a myriad of organizations continue to assess employees' job satisfaction on a routine basis (Liu, Borg, & Spector, 2004). <i>Scale Questionnaire 1–5 (1 I am very dissatisfied with this aspect of school; 5 I am very satisfied with this aspect of school).</i> |
| IEA – TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center | 2016 * | Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale PIRLS | Focused on the reading literacy of learners in the fourth grade of primary education, includes items that determine the job satisfaction of teachers while investigating the school climate (Mullis at al., 2017). <i>Scale questionnaire 1–4 (1 very often; 2 often; 3 sometimes; 5 never or almost never).</i> |
| OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development | 2018 * | Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS | Monitors the working environment and conditions of teachers and principals in schools. Focused on examining the evaluations of teachers' work, qualification requirements, work duties, attitudes they hold (<i>TALIS – The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey – OECD, n.d.; TALIS 2018: Teacher Questionnaire, 2018</i>). <i>Scale questionnaire, simple and multiple choice of answers, filling in answers, dichotomous questions.</i> |
| https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/XZGST6L | 2022 * | Teachers Dropout – Job satisfaction questionnaire for school principals | Focused on determining satisfaction of school principals using 22 items – working conditions, relationships at school and outside of school, teacher-oriented questions, benefits and challenges within fulfilling the principal's role (<i>Teachers Dropout – Job satisfaction questionnaire for school principals, n.d.</i>). <i>Questions – scale, open questions, dichotomous questions, simple choice.</i> |

| Author source | Year | Title | Item focus/questionnaire form |
|---|------|----------------------------|--|
| Kasáčová, B., Babiaková, S., Cabanová, M, Lynch, Z. | 2022 | Perception Of Job Workload | Focused on the subjective perception of physical and mental stress during individual activities in the teaching profession. The scale includes descriptions of 18 activities – always from the perspective of mental and physical stress (Kasáčová, Babiaková, at al., 2022). <i>Scale questionnaire 0 and 1–4 (0 Does not apply to me/I don't know; 1 No burden; 4 Unbearable burden).</i> |

* Does not refer to the year the measuring tool was compiled, but the year in which the measuring tool acted as a source for acquiring data within that research

Source: own elaboration.

A brief overview of relevant research in the national and international context

What seemed the closest to our research aim was the inquiry into job satisfaction in correlation with life satisfaction of teachers in primary schools (a research sample of 50 teachers) and special primary schools (a research sample of 53 teachers) in Slovakia (Kačmárová, 2011). This research confirmed “a positive correlation of the overall job satisfaction with life satisfaction and with all exogenous and endogenous factors of job satisfaction” (Kačmárová, 2011, p. 94). The research did not confirm the predicted negative correlation between the length of teaching experience and teachers’ job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Furthermore, no significant differences were found in the overall satisfaction based on gender (Kačmárová, 2011; Kačmárová and Baraniová, 2010). Although the research sample was small, the aim was to settle whether the findings would remain consistent after thirteen years. Specifically, we aimed at monitoring closely the correlations between the perceived burden of specific activities and life satisfaction. Afterwards, individual subjective factors will be examined which contribute to life satisfaction and the overall perception of workload.

The review study (Kasáčová et al., 2022) examined the factors affecting job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of teachers by analyzing 48 foreign studies. On the basis of the analyses of selected studies, it can be stated that the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction include: salary, social status, administrative workload, and working conditions. Apart from the above factors, many authors associate job dissatisfaction with the burnout syndrome, but this lacks a clear description of the cause-effect relation. On the contrary, job satisfaction is attributed to the quality of school management and administration.

Teachers' job satisfaction is also the subject of research in an international context, either as the primary research subject (Baroudi et al., 2020; Crisci et al., 2019; Fuming and Jiliang, 2007; Guoba et al., 2022; Lam and Yan, 2011; Lopes and Oliveira, 2020; Ma and MacMillan, 1999; OECD, 2020; Shabbir et al., 2014; Schroder, 2008), or as a subject studied in different contexts – in connection with working conditions at schools and teachers' personality traits (Toropova et al., 2021); with life satisfaction and job workload (Paulík and Gajda, 2006); with professional efficacy, life satisfaction and teachers' burnout (Pyżalski and Merecz, 2010; Telef, 2011); with the school environment (Marinette and Hui, 2021) or in connection with the balance in personal life (Gedvilienė and Didžulienė, 2019), management, quality of the working environment and the curriculum. Jakimiuk (2022) also notices the link between teachers' working conditions and job satisfaction, considering it a crucial factor influencing the quality of their work performance. Other authors (Adamek and Bałachowicz, 2019) described the specific qualities of work of a teacher of small children and the creative nature of teacher's competences. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak (Madalinska et al., 2022), Head of the Department of Didactics and Pedutology at the University of Warsaw, is engaged in international teacher research. Among other pedeutological topics, she investigated (via mixed methods of international and cross-cultural study) the motivation factors for choosing the teaching profession and staying in it.

International measurements as an indicator of comparable data

These phenomena also play an important role at the international level, where job satisfaction is monitored via TALIS studies (NÚCEM, n.d.). The measurements monitor the working environment and conditions of teachers and principals in schools. Apart from the above, they are also aimed at exploring the methods for assessing teachers' work performance. They monitor the qualification requirements teachers must meet, their job responsibilities, and the attitudes they present. TALIS studies are conducted cyclically at 5-year intervals. The Slovak Republic already participated in these studies when they were conducted initially in 2008. The study involves all persons engaged in regular and independent teaching at the 2nd level of primary schools and the corresponding grades of eight-year grammar schools /*gymnasiums*/ (ISCED 2). As there is still not enough information about teachers of pre-primary and primary education, our aim is to study this category of teachers within our research.

The findings of the TALIS 2018 measurement, including 3,300 teachers from Slovakia (NÚCEM, 2023), prove a close connection between the motivation to become a teacher and teachers' satisfaction with how they do in their job. This connection is primarily observed in the context of their first choice when selecting a preferred career.

Conclusion

A comprehensive set of electronic research tools is currently in the final stages of development. In addition to the Faculty of Education at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, the research will involve colleagues from the Faculty of Arts and Educational Science at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, and the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Ostrava, Czech Republic. The collection of respondents' data (approx. 2,000) is to be conducted between June and December 2023 using an e-questionnaire. The research tool was created on the basis of the analysis of various tools (Table 1) with the aim of obtaining answers to the question *how factors of life satisfaction correlate with the subjective feeling of burden due to work activities*. The findings will help to understand the phenomena that cause the negative facts occurring in the teaching profession.

Table 2. Planned set of tools for researching teachers' workload and life satisfaction

| Author | Title | Number of items | Areas | Form: e-form combined with a printed form |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Kasáčová, B., Babiaková, S., Cabanová, M, Lynch, Z. | Perception Of Job Workload | 19 | Professional activities in 5 subgroups | Scale questionnaire 0 and 1–4 0 It does not apply to me; 1 No load; 4 Unbearable load). |
| Fahrenberg, J., Myrtek, M., Schumacher, J. Brähler, E. | Life Satisfaction Questionnaire <i>CZ adaptation</i> <i>Rodná, K. Rodný, T (2001)</i> | 63 9 factors, each containing 7 statements | Health, work and employment, financial situation, free time, marriage and partnership, relationship with own children, own personality, friends and acquaintances, housing | Scale questionnaire 1–7 1 Very dissatisfied 5 Very satisfied |

| Author | Title | Number of items | Areas | Form: e-form combined with a printed form |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Kasáčová, B., Babiaková, S., Cabanová, M., Lynch, Z. | Demographic data of respondents | 7 factors | Age, professional age, gender, degree of qualification, job position, place of operation, region, marital status e.g. | a choice of options |

Source: own elaboration.

The long-term monitored problems of the teaching profession: feminization, exodus from the profession, financial undervaluation, work under stressful conditions, decreasing social status of teachers, increasing qualification and lifelong learning requirements, increasing administrative workload in the profession as well as the increase of new challenges for the teaching profession – such as: inclusive education, digital transformation of educational processes and communication and especially the ongoing efforts of constant reform (Szafránska, 2022) – seek insights from teachers who play a key role in education. Hence, we firmly believe that investigating the relation between life satisfaction and subjectively perceived workload in professional activities can provide valuable insights in an international comparative context. This research will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of pedeutology, while also offering valuable insights for enhancing and developing university curricula. The obtained results can be linked in a meaningful context with previous research findings of other authors or international measurements, e.g. TALIS.

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RESEARCH REPORTS



Towards axiological maturity – the implementation and fulfilment of values by academic youth from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine

Abstract: The outlining of the values appreciated by academic youth and their perception of the possibilities of implementing and fulfilling them was based on the international comparative research conducted in 2019–2021 in the Polish-Czech-Slovak-Ukrainian borderland. In the pedagogical analysis undertaken in the study of this subject matter, some theoretical and methodological conceptualizations were applied, which referred to: (1) Ronald F. Inglehart's concept of changes of values, (2) the objectivistic approach to values and axiological maturity according to Adam Węgrzecki and (3) comparative analysis in international studies. Comparing the declarations of student groups in the investigated environments reveals significant differences in all value assessments, except for the implementation of moral values and a respectable life. The analysis and interpretation of the collected empirical material also indicate that the image of university students' axiological preferences is characterized – in the context of Inglehart's theory – mainly by secular-rational authority and post-materialism aimed at achieving a particular quality of life.

Keywords: values, axiological maturity, academic youth, Polish-Czech-Slovak-Ukrainian cultural borderland, comparative analysis in international research

Of all the possible identity reference points in the human world, the values found in it seem to be the most durable. They constitute the most reliable horizon of meaning for the interpretation of events and subjective experiences, allowing one to define oneself through conscious choices of goals and actions consistent with values, because ultimately a human being is who one will be, thanks to what one is heading for.

Staś-Romanowska, 2004, p. 58

Political and sociocultural transformations and axiological awareness of the young generation

The process of political transformation, which began in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine over three decades ago, caused a number of significant changes in the sociocultural sphere, in individuals' systems of values, and in behavioural patterns. The prospects of radical changes in economy increased the optimism of many people – they expected a “bright” future resulting from the restructuring of the state economy and the introduction of free market mechanisms. The reality verified these expectations – the rapid enrichment of some was accompanied by the stagnation and sometimes even pauperization of others. What emerged was the issue of unemployment and the feeling of politicians' lack of interest in the problems of ordinary people, as well as numerous social dilemmas pertaining to education.

After a rather turbulent period of the transition from real socialism to real democracy, the contemporary youth is continuing social changes, by taking part in them and partly shaping them. How young people perceive a particular state/states and society/societies and the changes taking place in them, what criteria they use in making their assessments, how they would like to build their private and social lives, what they consider worthy of imitation and what they firmly reject – largely results from the impact of various directions and thought trends that clash in the environments in which young people exist and learn (Plopa, 2009; Długosz, Niezgodna and Solecki, 2014; Grabowska, 2021; Mariański, 2022).

In this context, some important questions arise, especially from the standpoint of university students:

- What is the picture of the axiological preferences of academic youth living in culturally diverse environments/communities over time, after the political and sociocultural breakthrough?
- Are university students more aware and sensitive to values, or rather sceptical – without an orientation and life prospects for the future in their country of residence?
- Can it be said that, similarly to Western countries, in the case of the young generation currently living in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and in reference to the theory formulated by Ronald

F. Inglehart, one deals with a “silent revolution” of values that is taking place? – a revolution that consists in moving from preferences for material values related to the needs of (physical, economic, etc.) security to the development of post-material values related to the needs of affiliation, recognition and affirmation. Moreover, this is also a positive change, consistent with the transformation of an industrial society into a service society.

- Are Inglehart’s hypotheses of deficiency and socialization confirmed in culturally diverse environments, and to what extent? They assume, firstly, that individuals’ priority values reflect their socio-economic environment, and that items that are relatively scarce in it are given a subjectively higher value. Secondly, it is assumed that the basic structure of individuals’ values reflects the conditions in which they were brought up (Inglehart, 2004, 2007)¹. In his analyses, Inglehart drew attention to the important fact that post-material values become particularly important among young people who, unlike older generations, have been shaped through different experiences. The observed tendency seems to be irreversible, though in the case of a long-term economic crisis, it is possible to reverse the current effects of modernization, which ultimately means another increase in the significance of material values (Inglehart, 2000, pp. 215–225; Inglehart and Baker, 2000, pp. 19–51).

As indicated by the results of numerous studies on the values appreciated by the contemporary young generation, many people show great variability and confusion in their understanding of values (Hildebrant-Wypych and Kabacińska, 2010; Galas, 2013; Cybal-Michalska, 2013; Lewicka, 2015; Wolska-Długosz, 2019; Uklańska, Kotowska-Wójcik and Chomczyński, 2020; Przybylski, 2021; Mariański, 2021, pp.163–184). This confusion results from the ongoing changes that favour specific axiological transformations (axiological reductionism, differentiation, broadening or narrowing the object of fulfilling a particular value, absolutization of values, revaluation of values, instrumentalization of values, axiological crisis), in the scope of which it is necessary to distinguish the changes in values taking place in life from the

¹ R.F. Inglehart placed values in two dimensions: (1) the type of recognized authority: traditional (mainly religious) vs. secular-rational one and (2) the dimension of materialistic values (experience) vs. post-materialistic values (quality of life). Quoted in: Lewicka, 2005, p. 17; Zdziech, 2010.

transformation of values objectified in culture and contained in the objects created within it (Łojewska-Krawczyk, 2001, pp. 20–47). Moreover, what has spread in contemporary axiological literature are some approaches that reject the possibility of full implementation of various values, as well as some proposals emphasizing other, new values, such as heuristics or openness – recognized as both psychological and cognitive values (Brzozowski, 2007; Oleś and Bartnicka-Michalska, 2022, pp. 1–9).

The analysis and interpretation of the current results of international comparative research in the field of education, psychology and sociology (including Matulnik, Kratochvíla and Kyselica, 2008, pp. 163–184; Ogrodzka-Mazur, 2013, pp. 106–127; Malinauskas, Dumciene and Lapeniene, 2014, pp. 285–293; Swadźba, 2015, pp. 101–122; Długosz, 2016, pp. 100–124; Rogulska and Antas-Jaszczuk, 2017, pp. 59–67; Riberio, Pereira, Freire, Oliveira, Caso-tii and Boery, 2018; Rabušić and Chromková-Manea, 2018; Saukh, 2019, pp. 66–70; Ogrodzka-Mazur and Saukh, 2020, pp. 11–23) allows one to outline the typical features of the image of the qualities valued by the current young learning generation, namely:

- it is characteristic of the social knowledge of the “transformation generation” that, within this knowledge, there is no awareness of one’s own generational distinctiveness,
- on an intergenerational scale, there is a decline in the level of the overall system of values and an intensifying tendency to focus on life for oneself,
- the importance of individual and private values is increasing, as opposed to social values promoted by various institutions (including educational ones),
- a new type of personality is being formed, for which the ideal is self-fulfilment, understood as acting in accordance with the individual’s own capabilities and needs and at the same time as rejecting all ideologies, including religious ones.

On the one hand, this image fully reflects the noticeable phenomena of axiological transformations taking place primarily in the field of revaluation of basic values and their instrumentalization. It also creates the opportunity to define the worldview horizon of academic youth, as well as the formation of their new axiological preferences. Therefore, it will be interesting from the angle of the conducted considerations to learn the opinions of the surveyed

students from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine regarding the possibility of achieving and implementing their declared life goals, and therefore learning about their “efficiency” in reference to selected values.

Theoretical-methodological context of the own research

In the pedagogical analysis of the issues related to values appreciated by academic youth and their perception of the possibilities of pursuing and implementing them, a theoretical conceptualization was adopted, referring to the aforementioned Inglehart’s concept of changes of values. It still serves – despite both theoretical additions and critical positions – to explain contemporary changes in systems of values, especially in the context of the scarcity and socialization hypothesis. Moreover, relating it to the analyses of the value systems of post-communist countries systematically undertaken since the 1990s, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine (Rabušic, Chromková-Manea, 2018; Halman, Reeskens, Sieben and Zundert, 2022) makes it possible to indicate similarities and differences in the value systems chosen by the young generation currently living and learning in these neighbouring countries.

The understanding of the category *axiological maturity* was adopted in compliance with the standpoint of Adam Węgrzecki, who treats it as “efficiency in relation to values, which is devoid of one-sidedness, [...] which concerns various values and which, depending on the type of values, may be slightly differentiated, manifested also as a certain type of fidelity to selected values conditioned by a sense of internal freedom” (Węgrzecki, 1994, pp. 19–21; 2012, pp. 47–56). Acquiring axiological maturity takes place in the process of evaluation, which includes, among other things: free choice, choosing from alternative possibilities, supporting the choice after considering the consequences of each of the options, accepting values appreciated by the individual, positively assessing values that were freely chosen, acting in accordance with the choice of values and consistent orientation with selected values in various situations and behaviours (Oleś, 2002, pp. 53–75). Therefore, the application of an objectivistic approach to values and axiological maturity in pedagogical analyses has important theoretical-cognitive implications:

- the objectivistic approach to values is, from a cultural point of view, universal in nature – despite the significant range of differences existing in individual cultures in the contents of actually recognized moral

- norms or the adopted cognitive images of the world and humanity – everywhere people treat cognitive and moral values objectively,
- axiological objectivity introduces the concept of normative order into an individual's life – the sphere of values defining what is and should be valuable, distinguished from what actually is (also the object of desires and preferences), creates a specific perspective that not only allows the assessment of what is currently or has been previously produced, but also allows the formulation of new goals and the creation of new goods that are carriers of values,
 - what stems from objectivistic theories of values are the institutions existing in social life and the human rights recognized in our contemporary culture, as well as the universal imperative of protecting cultural heritage, which applies to all cultures and people today – every culture, regardless of its specific character, contains goods that are valuable not only for members of a particular culture, but also for the whole humanity (Łojwska-Krawczyk, 2001, pp. 18–19).

Due to the comparative nature of the research, references were also made to comparative analysis in international research, which meant the process of selecting research samples in different countries and analyzing the investigated phenomena compliantly with appropriate criteria in order to determine the same, similar or different degrees in intensity of the examined features (Szarucki, 2010, p. 55; Cowen and Kazamias, 2019; Nowakowska-Siuta, 2023, pp. 75–152). Moreover, the most important preliminary conditions concerning data comparability were met, namely: conceptual comparability – the measurements refer to the same concepts and categories, statistical comparability – the data collection methods accepted in statistical research were used for all categories, and interpretative comparability – the investigated categories were interpreted in a similar way in all the surveyed countries, yet at the same time, they took into account the conditions existing in selected countries (Kordos and Szulc, 2020, pp. 15–34.).

The main problem addressed in the own research is comprised in the questions:

- What values do academic youth from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine who study pedagogy in the full-time system appreciate?
- To what extent do students' living and learning environments determine the possibility of implementing and realizing the values they declare?

- Are Inglehart's hypotheses of deficiency and socialization confirmed in the examined environments, and to what extent?

The comparative research was carried out in 3 stages. Stage I included monographic (field) studies aimed at familiarization with the inherited and currently created sociocultural capital of the Polish-Czech-Slovak-Ukrainian borderland. In stage II, quantitative research (survey) was carried out based on standardized authorial tools. In the final stage III, qualitative research was carried out using individual, semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to deepen the obtained data in the investigated areas.

In the analysis of the empirical material, the reducing and expanding way of data processing was used. Moreover, the assumptions of the interpretive approach to the analysis of statement senses were taken into account in the context of: understanding the respondents' thoughts, critical common sense understanding and theoretical understanding (Kvale, 2004, pp. 213 – 231; Miles and Huberman, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2009). In preparing a full description of the phenomena, the phenomenological approach was also used (consisting in moving from individual textural-structural relations of meanings and the essence of the respondents' experiences to a synthesis in the form of a universal description of cultural experiences), representing the group (groups) as a whole (Moustakas, 2001, pp. 147–149).

The obtained empirical data were subjected to quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis. For this purpose, statistical analysis programs included in the computer package STATISTICA Advanced Package 13 PL were used. In order to present the degree of diversity of the investigated environments, the method of hierarchical cluster analysis was used, and to determine the relationship between conditional variables and the obtained research results – the method of one-factor and multi-factor ANOVA analyses. Descriptive statistics were also used to characterize the study groups.

The research, conducted in 2019–2021, covered a total of 709 students, including 164 in Poland (97% women and 3% men), 166 in the Czech Republic (72.3% women and 27.7% men), 174 in Slovakia (90.8% women and 9.2% men) and 205 in Ukraine (85% women and 15% men). 7% of the respondents are aged 17–18 (48 people, including 46 in Ukraine), 46% are 19–22 years old (324 people), 27% (193) of respondents are 23–26 years old, and 20% of students are 27 years and over (144 people). The surveyed group is representative of pedagogy students, studying full-time at the first and second degree studies at the University of Silesia in Katowice/Cieszyn (Poland), the Univer-

sity of Ostrava² (Czech Republic), Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) and Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University (Ukraine).

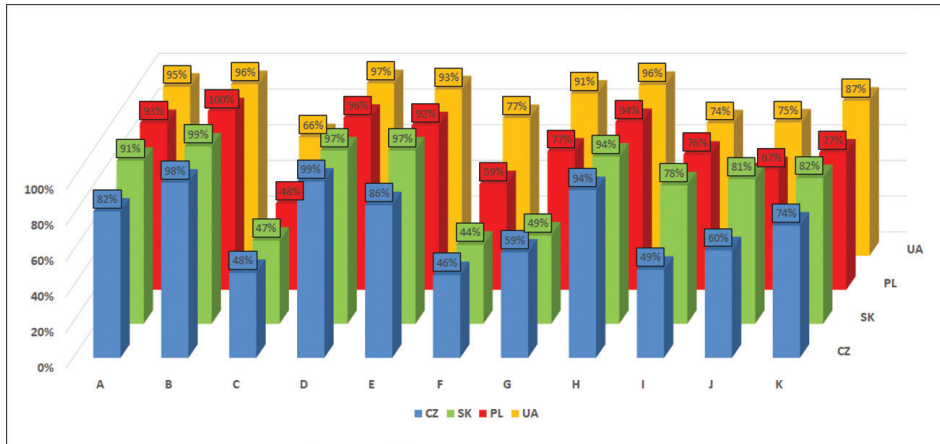
Implementation and fulfilment of values by academic youth

The investigated groups of university students are people in an intensive period of shaping their sense of self-identity, which includes, firstly, the process of interpersonal and interpsychic comparisons, during which the sense of one's own individuality (separate Self) develops. Secondly, this period includes the process of intrapersonal, intrapsychic comparisons, strengthening both the sense of one's own individuality and the sense of coherence (integrity), and thirdly – the process of temporal comparisons, underlying the sense of continuity of the Self. These processes determine the individual's search for answers to three fundamental identity questions throughout the entire individual life cycle: What am I like?, Who am I? and Why am I here? (Wojciszke, 2010, p. 184). Especially in response to the second question, there is a need for axiological self-determination, i.e. conscious choice and acceptance of values, as well as taking actions consistent with the selected values, i.e. their implementation and fulfilment. They lead to the individuals' achieving, apart from intellectual, emotional and social maturity, also axiological maturity, which is an important determinant of their identity.

In the current structure of values preferred by all investigated groups of students, three qualitatively similar subsystems can be distinguished (cf. Figure 1). The first, clearly dominant subsystem includes the values they appreciate the most – family life (98.25%), exciting work and professional career (97.25%), the implementation of moral values and a respectable life (94.5%), knowledge and education (92%) and a comfortable problem-free life (90.25%). Family values occupy the highest position in the choices made by young adults, which indicates a kind of generational continuity – the family is still the value they appreciate the most, being the basic educational environment and the place of transmission of values.

² The studies carried out in the Polish-Czech borderland are more broadly presented in: Ogrodzka-Mazur, E., Szafrńska, A., Malach, J. and Chmura, M. 2021.

Figure 1. Values preferred by students from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine (percentages)



Legend: a – comfortable, problem-free life; b – life among family and friends; c – popularity, fame, success; d – exciting job, professional career; e – knowledge, education, scientific achievements; f – high position, supervising people, decision making; g – fortune, high living standards; h – implementation of moral values, respectable life; i – social engagement, civil activity; j – participation in culture, artistic activity, creativity; k – life full of changes, adventures and attractions.

CZ – Czech Republic; SK – Slovakia; PL – Poland; UA – Ukraine

Source: own research.

In their individual statements, the surveyed students, being in the so-called phase of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000, pp. 470–479) – similarly to their peers in most European Union countries – declare entering into their first marriage at a later age (women – 27–28 years; men – 29–30 years) or deciding to have children. They make this dependent primarily on the economic, political or sociocultural situation of the country of residence, which currently most often reduces their motivation to engage in adult family roles and leads to their postponement.

Work and professional career also occupy a high position in the structure of the values appreciated by academic youth. Such a high position of this group of values may indicate the proper implementation of developmental tasks of early adulthood. Starting professional work determines, to a large extent, success in achieving other goals emerging in a particular period of a person's life, at the same time leading to satisfaction and success in fulfill-

ing goals in later stages. Valuing work and professional career is conditioned – in the opinion of 94.5% of the respondents – by the moral attitude and a respectable life, as well as knowledge and education (92%) – i.e. the values shaped primarily in the family environment and in the course of secondary socialization. Compared to the beginning of the transformation period in the 1990s, currently three times as many Polish, Czech, Slovak and Ukrainian young adults continue their education at university, constituting over 50% of the total population aged 19–24.

The subsystem of the most appreciated values is closed by a very positive attitude of the respondents towards the implementation and fulfilment of a comfortable life, free from problems, currently and in the future (90.25%), as evidenced by respondents' individual statements obtained in the interviews. Aware of their capabilities and needs, university students are – from the sociological point of view – the so-called generation Y, also called the “Millenium generation”, “next generation” or “digital generation”. Being born at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, they value independence, free time and comfort. They are characterized by, among other things: active use of media and digital technologies, a good level of education and readiness for further self-development, a high opinion of their own abilities, the belief in their own uniqueness, excessive expectations and strong aversion to criticism (Laird, Harvey and Lancaster, 2015, pp. 87–100). The obtained research results are also similar to the set of values appreciated by young people created on the basis of the research conducted over a decade ago in seven European countries (Great Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Greece, Sweden). The set includes: *tradition* (recognizing the importance of family and parental authority), *individuality* (a sense of autonomy and independence), *honesty* (expressed by the attitude of friendship and loyalty towards others), *effort* (attributing importance to work ethic and focus on success) and *optimism* (positive thinking as the key to success and a happy life)³.

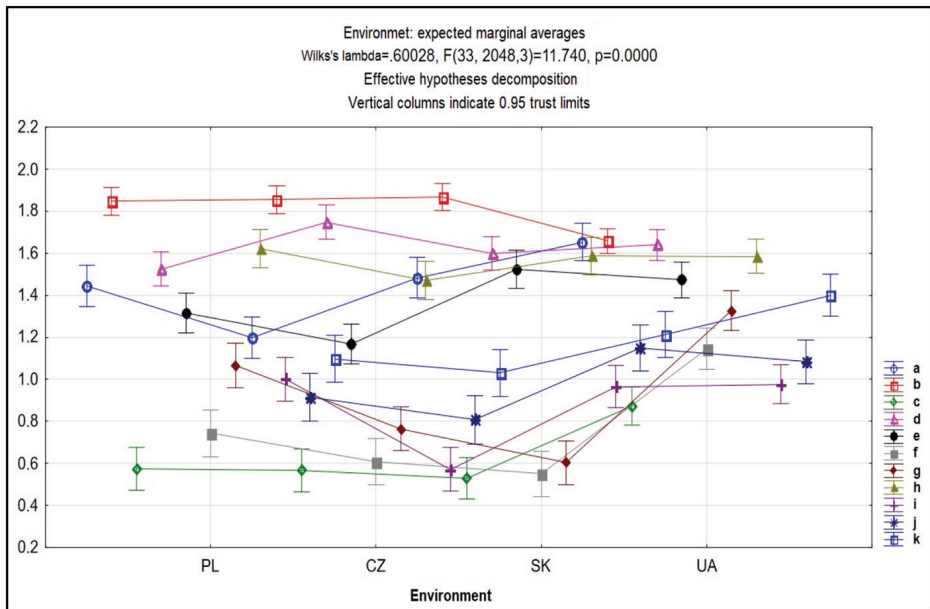
The second, lower ranked subsystem included choices concerning the implementation of a life full of changes, adventures and attractions (80%), participation in culture and artistic activity (70.75%), involvement in social affairs and civic activity (69.25%), and possessing and acquiring large fortune (69%).

³ “*Youthopia*”, the research conducted in 2009, commissioned by *MTV Networks International*. <https://mmponline.pl/artykuly/131285,mtv-mlodzies-jest-dobra> (accessed: 28.08.2023).

All the surveyed students attribute the least importance to the values forming the third subsystem, related to holding high positions and managing people (56.5%) and popularity, fame and achieving success (52.25%).

A comparison of the declarations of student groups in the four studied environments reveals significant differences in all assessments of values (cf. Figure 2), with the exception of the implementation of moral values and a respectable life. At the same time, the thesis is confirmed that the objectivistic approach to values is, from a cultural point of view, universal in nature – people most often objectively treat moral values, which also occupy a high position in the entire system of preferred values.

Figure 2. Values preferred by students from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine (one-factor analysis ANOVA)



Legend: a – comfortable, problem-free life; b – life among family and friends; c – popularity, fame, success; d – exciting job, professional career; e – knowledge, education, scientific achievements; f – high position, supervising people, decision making; g – fortune, high living standards; h – implementation of moral values, respectable life; i – social engagement, civil activity; j – participation in culture, artistic activity, creativity; k – life full of changes, adventures and attractions.

PL – Poland; CZ – Czech Republic; SK – Slovakia; UA – Ukraine

Source: own research.

Ukrainian students significantly more often than their peers from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia indicate higher values related to:

- popularity, fame and success (Kruskal-Wallis test: $z = 4.23$; $p = 0.00$),
- holding high positions, managing people and making decisions ($z = 6.97$; $p = 0.00$),
- having large fortune and a high standard of living ($z = 8.81$; $p = 0.00$),
- a life full of changes, adventures and attractions ($z = 4.5$; $p = 0.00$).
- In turn, they attach significantly less importance to life with family and friends ($z = 3.01$; $p = 0.02$).

Academic youth from the Czech Republic – compared to Polish students – declare significantly higher assessments of values related to exciting work and professional career ($z = 3.16$; $p = 0.01$), but significantly lower assessments than peers from Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine:

- comfortable problem-free life ($z = 5.87$; $p = 0.00$),
- knowledge, education and scientific achievements ($z = 4.51$; $p = 0.00$),
- involvement in social issues and civic activity ($z = 5.15$; $p = 0.00$),
- participation in culture and artistic activity and creativity ($z = 3.90$; $p = 0.001$).

Such a diversified image of values currently appreciated by the learning generation of young adults indicates changes taking place in their axiological awareness, determined by their social sensitivity that is particular to this age and, at the same time, by the perceived difference in the economic and cultural condition of each of their countries of residence. Students are primarily aware of the importance of knowledge and education in the conditions of free market economy and the fact that the quality of the obtained qualifications will determine their life fate, future profession, job, position, living conditions, as well as the fulfilment of their own life aspirations.

As their individual statements provided in the interviews indicate, university students from Poland – to a much lesser extent than their peers from Slovakia and Ukraine – are interested in the implementation of religious values, and more precisely, religious practices. This is also confirmed by the latest research results in this area, according to which in the age group 18–24 years the percentage of regular practitioners dropped from 69% to 23% (Grabowska, 2022). Yet, a characteristic feature of the Czech society is its secularization – 91% of young people aged 16–29 declare themselves as non-believers (Bullivant, 2018, p. 6). The results of the research conducted by Petr Sak and Karolina Sakova also confirm that in the Czech society “there are relatively stable life scenarios accepted by people – obtaining education,

qualifications, using these elements at work, a partner, a marriage, starting a family” (2004, p. 159). These phenomena determine the axiological preferences of Czech youth, who – unlike their peers from Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine – associate their goals and future life plans exclusively with their country of residence. Moreover, Inglehart’s socialization hypothesis is more strongly confirmed in this environment, assuming that the basic value structure of individuals reflects the conditions in which they were brought up.

Summing up, it can be assumed that young learners demonstrate a cognitive-motivational conceptualization of themselves in the future, which is typical of their age. Their declarations are characterized by reflectivity specific to the period of early adulthood, reflected not only in the choices they made, but also in the undertaken behaviours aimed at implementing the appreciated values. What is more, the respondents’ opinions obtained from the interviews indicate that they are aware that they will repeatedly verify their own life aspirations, depending on new social challenges.

In reference to Inglehart’s theory of changes of values, the image of values appreciated, implemented and fulfilled by academic youth in the investigated countries is characterized mainly by secular-rational authority and post-materialism aimed at achieving a specific quality of life. Maybe this young generation – as a kind of social “barometer” – is heading towards a “quiet revolution” in values, which is a positive change consistent with the transformation of an industrial society into a service society? Although the obtained research results are not unequivocal, it can be assumed that Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine, previously treated in international research into values as post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, have a chance to educate an axiologically mature young generation, open to the world and new ideas. However, taking into account the fact that the declarations of students from Ukraine were obtained in 202, before the Russian aggression in this country, it should be also assumed that the current image of their axiological preferences may be different, as in the case of other groups of young adults from the analyzed environments. This as well encourages researchers to continue their studies.

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Daily routine of Polish school from the perspective of students with the migrant background. “Hearing their voice” research results¹

Abstract: The aim of the article is to present selected results of research on the experience of everyday routine in Polish schools by students with a migrant background (from Ukraine (including from Crimea), Belarus, Chechnya, Georgia) and optimization of its operation. The theoretical field for research was Alfred Schütz’s concept of everyday life (2008), Geert Hofstede’s theory of cultural dimensions (2010) and some analyses of school everyday life (Krzychała, 2010, Cierzniewska, 2014, etc.). The research was participatory. It consisted of two stages (educational workshops and narrative interviews). Twenty people aged 10 to 14 years old attending four public elementary schools took part in it. The research results indicate that students with the migrant backgrounds positively perceive Polish schools (peers, teachers, their space, etc.). Despite the fact that in the initial period of education they experienced language and educational difficulties, discrimination from their peers, they spent time mainly in the company of their own group, etc. The research participants revealed a huge personality potential. However, their narratives shown that optimizing the education and integration processes of children and youth with a migrant backgrounds requires help from the teaching staff (e.g. teachers, intercultural assistants) and peers. Some learners felt the lack of adequate support.

Keywords: education, integration, participatory research, everyday routine of Polish school, students with a migrant background

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1. Introduction: theoretical and social contexts of the research

The aim of this report is to show both some selected aspects of experiencing the everyday life of Polish school by students with the migrant background and some selected possibilities of optimizing its work. As a part of the conducted research, the migration environment was understood as a community of interacting people who share similar, sometimes convergent experiences related to migration, and often a common national and ethnic affiliation, and language/languages of communication. School is a specific kind of reality, which is embedded in the wider context of everyday life. The reality of school is structured by three elements, i.e. time, space and relations (Krzychała, 2010). School exists in everyday experience of students, among ordinary and exceptional activities that are interpreted in a way characteristic of a particular individual. This means that the school reality not only imposes ready-made sequences on the order of each day, but also affects the individual biography (Cierzniewska, 2014). A number of processes determining the way an individual functions, as well as their life choices, take place at school. School can strengthen self-confidence, a sense of agency and self-esteem. It can also develop resources, competences and talents of children and youth, or destroy them as a result of various situations. The school can therefore be perceived as an autobiographical place. Meanings of the social world are constructed by interactions with Others. Thus, the understanding of social action is possible when the nature of the intersubjective social world is revealed (Schütz, 2008).

During the process of socialization and upbringing, each participant of the everyday world is equipped with the knowledge which provides reference schemes, i.e. the first set of categories used to view this world and to achieve subjective goals. Biographical experiences are intersubjective. This means that a person can create social and cultural life while acting with others and among others (Schütz, 2008).

The world of Polish schools has been changing dynamically under the influence of migration and sociocultural processes. The specificity of a given region, city or even a housing estate in which a school operates determines the compilation of groups forming culturally diverse classes. A group of students from a migrant environment consists of both people with a cultural affiliation similar to the host society (e.g. from Belarus and Ukraine) and from distant corners of the world (e.g. from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria), often

characterized by diametrically different “cultural software” (cf. Hofstede G., Hofstede G.J. and Minkov, 2010, p. 4).

2. Legal aspects of supporting children and youth from a migrant background in Polish school

Children and youth residing in Poland, regardless of their nationality, ethnic origin, religion or legal status, have the right to free education. The guarantee of participation in education is provided by Art. 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws, 1997). In addition, the basis for free education of people with a migrant background and taking of actions to support the processes of their inclusion, education and integration are regulated by the provisions of the Act of 14th December 2016, Education Law (Journal of Laws, 2022) and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23rd August 2017 on the education of non-Polish citizens and Polish citizens who studied in schools operating in the education systems of other countries (Journal of Laws of 2017).

In Poland a model of educational policy assumes inclusivity. Education is supposed to serve all learners by providing conditions for developing their individual potential, so that in the future they will be able to fully develop their personal skills and be totally included in social life (Edukacja dla wszystkich..., 2020).

In accordance with the Polish educational legislation, it is possible to support students from a migrant environment by allowing them to study in preparatory classes (welcome classes), to cooperate with the help of a teacher (intercultural assistant) and to participate in classes of Polish as a foreign language but also in classes compensating for curriculum differences/school backlog and developing cultural identity, as well as in religion lessons. In justified cases, in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9th August 2017 on the principles of organization and provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions, it is also possible to use free psychological and pedagogical support (Journal of Laws, 2020).

3. Outline of research methodology

3.1. Research subject and purpose

The research was focused on the experience of everyday life in Polish schools by students with the migrant background. Its goal was to identify those aspects of the school world that are important from the students' perspective and the ways of optimizing the school's work seen through the eyes of these students. In the course of the research, experiencing the reality of Polish school was understood as a process of acquiring new knowledge and (re)constructing the roles of a student and peer in different sociocultural realities.

3.2. Approach and research methods

The studies became a turn towards participation and narration in the research process. Their main goal was to give voice to children and young people from the migrant environment and to "validate" this voice, i.e. to give it a meaning. A narrative interview was the primary research method. Photography and qualitative observation were also used. The research was carried out until the theoretical saturation was reached. The report presents the results of the analysis of interviews conducted among students with the migration experience. The analytical work concentrated on the differences and similarities between the cases.

3.3. Participants and research area

Twenty students with the migrant background were involved in the study. All of them attend four different primary schools located in Białystok and are members of families of economic and forced migrants. The study participants were selected purposefully, on the basis of their age (10–14 years: grades IV–VIII), period of their stay in Poland (over 6 months) and school achievements (very good and good). During the recruitment of students, their readiness/willingness to participate in the research process was crucial. The students taking part in the research came mainly from Belarus and Ukraine (including Crimea), as well as Chechnya and Georgia. The process of collecting the research material took place at the University of Białystok, one of Białystok cultural centers and schools attended by students. The rooms

selected for work guaranteed children and young people a sense of security and privacy.

3.4. Organization and course of research

The research was carried out from October to December 2021, in accordance with the assumptions of Roger A. Hart's Participation Model (1979, see 1992) and the principles of the negotiation model of the research process (Pittaway, Bartolomei, Hugman, 2010). The participants of the research could influence its course and decide not to participate at every stage of the research. The research process consisted of two stages. The first one involved integration, photography and intercultural workshops that developed learners' self-awareness. At the second stage, interviews during which students could share their experiences of everyday life in Polish schools (including those related to their thoughts from the workshops) were carried out.

4. Polish school from the perspective of migrant background students in the light of the research

The analysis of the empirical material shows that children and youth with the migrant background, despite the difficulties associated with functioning as a student and peer in different sociocultural realities, perceive Polish schools in a positive way, taking into account such elements of school reality as: the educational contents, peer relations, relations with teachers, school space. For the majority of students participating in the research, starting education in Polish schools was preceded by learning Polish in the country of origin and/or during the initial period of their stay in Poland. Children and teenagers developed their language competences during classes organized by non-governmental organizations, individual tutoring, additional classes at schools and thanks to activities initiated by their parents.

(...) I studied Polish with my mother at home. (...) Before and after coming here, I took extra classes. (...) To the "X" Foundation (...). (...) And we had extra classes with our Polish teacher. There were lots of different activities. Then I studied with my dad at home (...). Int.1.

Starting to learn Polish as a foreign language in the home country and during the initial period of stay in Poland indicates a deliberate nature of migration and the need to integrate into a new society (including the education

system). In the situation of children and youth with a migrant environment, language enables learning about the world of school, embedded in different sociocultural realities, and over time (co-)constructing this world. The experiences of students from different countries, regardless of their geographic location, show that thanks to developing communicative competences, their sense of psychological well-being increases, peer relationships become more and more satisfying, and often their educational achievements are at an increasingly higher level (Sidhu, Taylor and Christie, 2011, Młynarczuk-Sokołowska, 2019). In most cases, students with a migrant background began fulfilling their compulsory education in Polish schools without prior familiarization with the rules and customs applicable in them. The introducing of students with a migrant background into the reality of a new school is not regulated by the education system. This is at the discretion of individual schools. Lack of preparing to starting education in a new school caused a surprise, stress (sometimes enormous) and the perception of the rules respected in schools in the countries of origin as inadequate to the realities of Polish ones. The entry into the new school environment took place through the “rapid joining” of a student with migration experience to a new class. Education in welcome classes until February 24th, 2022 (the outbreak of war in Ukraine) was relatively rarely organized in Polish schools.

(...) For example, they said you had to wear elegant clothes. And somehow different, because I was in my national costume (Ukrainian national costume – supp. A.M.-S.). (...) In Ukraine, there is a custom that at the beginning of the school year you should come in a national costume. (...) I did not know how they would react to the fact that I dressed differently (...). Int. 3.

The narratives of research participants demonstrate that the inclusion of students with a migrant background into the community of a new class only in some cases was associated with activities initiated by teachers or other students. These included: public introduction of the student to the new class by the teacher and a tour around the school initiated by peers (of Polish nationality or from the migrant community).

(...) Well, I just sat there and I was very shocked. Later, during the break, I was sitting at the door in the corridor and the point is that Michał and Paweł came to me. They started translating and talking to me, and they did a tour around the school for me. And I am very grateful to them for that (...). Int. 2.

Study participants said that from their perspective, they were “thrown” into a new school reality, deprived of knowledge about the rules in Polish schools and had no opportunity to familiarize themselves with the school space (e.g. classrooms) beforehand. Starting education in a new school is one of many situations in which children and youth require special kind of support. To achieve psychological well-being, most people need time, kindness of peers and teachers, and an organized rite of passage. Spending time and energy on building relationships, for example by taking special care of students entering school education, brings long-term benefits (Jaskulska, 2018). Beginning their education in Polish schools, students from the migrant environment noticed a number of differences in the scope of the curriculum. The content of education implemented at the stage of early childhood education and some subjects in grades IV–VIII seemed to many people to be easier than in their countries of origin, while to others, combined with the new language of education, seemed more difficult.

(...) There are differences in the curriculum, because children learn Computer Science here from the first grade, and in Belarus from the sixth grade. Biology is also from the fifth grade, while in Belarus from the sixth (...). (...) It was difficult to get used to it, because other children already knew a lot, and I was just starting and I didn't know it at all (...). Int. 7.

The implementation of the curriculum in the new language was the greatest challenge pertaining to the functioning in Polish schools for students with the migrant background. The students had a lot of difficulties with humanities, i.e. the Polish language, history. In the opinion of children and youth from the migrant environment, it was easier to assimilate the contents of general science subjects, which do not require the analysis of extensive texts in Polish. In the case of general science subjects, instructions written in the new language of education were problematic. The statements of students with the migrant background show that many teachers tried to individualize the educational process, adapting the content of education, school requirements and the method of assessment to their abilities and needs.

(...) They understand that we are from other countries and they do not want to impose too much on us... Because it is difficult, we do not understand everything yet, they know it – we learn from small steps up and that is very good (...). Int. 19.

Some activities in this area were intuitive in nature and caused, in a sense, school failure among the study participants.

(...) I got a bad mark and the teacher didn't put that grade in the register, because it was a test for everyone and I didn't understand the language, so I just tried to write it (...). Int. 4.

According to children and youth, some teachers did not try to apply an individual approach.

(...) For example, when I had to learn a poem, and for the first two years I still couldn't express myself well, the teacher understood that I couldn't really say it. She evaluated me according to the usual system. She paid attention to whether I was trying, that was important (...). Int. 20.

The statements of the study participants show that the individualization of learning in Polish schools and additional support sometimes took the form of a "reaction" towards school difficulties of children and youth with the migrant background noticed by teachers. The students' narratives do not indicate that individualization was preceded by an earlier diagnosis of their school abilities and needs.

(...) I remember that the first lesson was Maths or Geometry, something like that. And the Math teacher said, "You're on your first day. I won't ask you much for two weeks. You have some time to learn Polish." Well, I guess it was good (...). Int. 1.

Students with a migrant background often have special educational needs (Strekalova and Hoot, 2008). In the light of the educational legislation in Poland, special educational needs are understood quite broadly. A factor of special educational needs may be a change in the learning environment and the unfamiliarity with or poor knowledge of the new language of education (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9th August, 2017 on the principles of organization and provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions, *Journal of Laws*, 2020). This is the basis for the individualization of the educational process (educational contents, school requirements, working methods, partial and final assessment systems), as long as it is needed. It is also common to adapt the content of exams to the abilities of students with a migrant background and to assess them during exams at the end of a given stage of education (Młynarczuk-Sokołowska, 2022).

From the perspective of the research participants, the space of Polish schools was perceived as modern (e.g. school building). In their opinion, classrooms and other rooms located there were well equipped (e.g. projec-

tors, interactive boards). According to children and youth with migration experience, Polish schools were much friendlier to students than those they know from their countries of origin. This involves e.g. no obligation to wear uniforms, less homework, the possibility of spending time freely during breaks, and dialogic attitudes of Polish teachers, respecting the subjectivity of the student. Learners with a migrant background, in the context of experiences from countries of origin, perceived Polish teachers as more democratic in their actions, kind, open to dialogue, motivating to learn, following students, considering their individual educational needs, etc.

(...) Everyone is nice, they help a lot, they really want to help those who came from another country, with their studies and grades, so that we don't get stressed here (...). Int. 3.

In the context of relations with teachers, children and youth with the migrant background also emphasized much stricter discipline prevailing in educational institutions in their home countries than in Polish schools. The students' statements indicate that discipline in schools which they remember from their countries of origin was often respected in a negative way, i.e. by means of patronizing orders and prohibitions, messages insulting students' dignity, and even physical punishment.

(...) Exactly, if a letter was a bit crooked, my teacher said that I wrote it like some invalid (...). (...) For example, my teacher always told me this when she took my notebook. Although I always studied well and I wrote well. But it was a bit of ugly handwriting. (...). Int. 2.

Despite the fact that Polish teachers were positively perceived by students with the migrant background, in some narratives there were also threads of teachers' behavior based on verbal aggression (shouting), humiliating treatment of students, signalling little involvement in work. The issue of lack of sensitivity of Polish teachers to the situation of students with the migrant background and their misunderstanding was present in a few statements. Learners from one of the schools signalled the problem of feeling significant reluctance of a teacher towards students with a migrant background, combined with the public manifestation of this negative attitude. The participants positively perceived relations with peers of both Polish nationality and others, forming a group of the so-called "their own". In their opinion, they received significant help from their peers, which was mainly related to explaining the content of the lessons.

(...) I am friends with buddies from Poland and other countries. (...) I have three best friends from Poland. They are cool. At first, they explained everything to me during classes (...). (...) After lessons we stay in the yard, then we go home together and to the bus, and then we go to different places and home (...). Int. 5.

Despite the fact that relations with peers of Polish nationality were perceived positively, in some of the narratives of the research participants there was information about incomprehension and experiencing direct discrimination from Poles or the awareness/observation of discrimination acts against people in a similar situation.

(...) They called names, said something nasty about my country, talked all the time, harassed me all the time, and just like that, when there was a fight, I didn't want to, but I had to hit somebody (...). (...) Now it's better, since I've moved to another class, it's good. I talk to my friends, because in that previous class I had almost no friends (...). Int. 3.

The narratives of students with the migrant background show that they most often spent time at school among their own people (especially at the beginning of education in Poland), i.e. people of the same nationality, ethnic origin, speaking the same/common language of communication (Belarusian, Ukrainian, Chechen, Russian). For children and youth with the experience of migration, a peer group constructed of their own can be an important support environment. Giving a sense of security and psychological asylum, especially in the initial period of learning at a new school, helps in dealing with the challenges arising in a different socio-cultural reality (cf. Grzybowski and Idzikowski, 2018). As a rule, "their own people" do not evoke negative emotions, i.e. fear or anxiety. Thanks to their cultural and linguistic proximity, their behavior is largely predictable.

In the light of the statements provided by students with a migrant background, the work of Polish school (in the context of optimizing education and integration processes) can be optimized i.a. by: multifaceted learning of the Polish language; participating of all students in classes on cultural and linguistic diversity; participating in classes developing competences in the using of the mother tongues and cultural skills; providing a safe space for meetings with an intercultural assistant².

² For more on the results of the research presented in this article and the ways of optimizing the work of the Polish school, see: Młynarczuk-Sokołowska, A. 2022.

5. Conclusions

The aim of the report was to show some chosen elements of experiencing the everyday life of Polish school by students with the migrant background (such elements that are important from the perspective of this group of children and youth) and the selected possibilities of optimizing its work. The voice of students experiencing migration was placed in the centre of the discussion, which, as educational practice shows, is not always (sufficiently) heard and considered.

Most of the students participating in the research were learning Polish in the period preceding the beginning of their education in Polish school. Starting their education in Polish schools, they did not know the rules applicable there. Only some of them were introduced by teachers and/or students into the community and reality of the new class/school (e.g. public introducing to other students). This caused them to experience stress. In the course of education, students with a migrant background experienced many curricular differences. Their special educational needs were not always taken into account by teachers (or they answered them intuitively, not methodically). From the perspective of the research participants, the space of Polish schools was perceived as modern (e.g. school buildings, equipment). Students with a migrant background saw Polish teachers as more democratic in their actions, kind, open to dialogue, motivating to learn, following students, considering their individual educational needs, etc. However, some of them signaled unprofessional behavior of teachers (e.g. verbal aggression). The respondents positively perceived relations with peers of both Polish nationality and others, forming a group of the so-called “their own”. In the students’ opinion, they received significant help from their peers, which was mainly related to explaining the content of lessons. Despite the fact that relations with peers of Polish nationality were perceived positively, in some of the narratives of the students with a migrant background, there was information about lack of understanding and about experiencing direct discrimination from Poles or the awareness/observation of discrimination acts against people in a similar situation. The narratives of the research participants show that they most often spent time at school among their own people (especially at the beginning of education in Poland), i.e. people of the same nationality, ethnic origin, speaking the same/common language of communication (Belarusian, Ukrainian, Chechen, Russian). Despite the encountered difficulties, students

with a migrant background perceive Polish school well. The early beginning of learning Polish by them, the support of the family, NGOs and/or school and peers, as well as a strong motivation to education, can be considered as important success factors in terms of education and integration in the new school environment.

The narratives of the research participants show that optimization of education and integration is possible thanks to the multifaceted learning of the Polish language; participation of all students in intercultural activities (including language diversity issues); participation in classes developing competences in the use of the mother tongues and cultural skills; providing a safe space for conversations with an intercultural assistant.

The work of Polish schools usually focuses on activities aimed at supporting the human capital of students and thus, preparing them for dynamic “climbing up the educational ladder”. Therefore, the (necessity of) intensive acquisition of new knowledge and skills is placed in the centre of the educational process. Taking care of students’ psychological well-being is often a secondary issue. In the case of children and young people with a migrant background, the priority is to ensure a sense of security and friendly introduction to the world of a new school. Students with a migration experience have great potential. The quality of education in Polish schools can largely determine whether and how this potential will be used by them and the host society. Therefore, when designing educational activities, it is worth taking into account the perspective of students with the migrant background.

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Attitudes of Indian and Polish teachers towards inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in regular classrooms. A comparative analysis

Abstract: Education of children with disabilities across the globe has been gradually evolving from segregation towards inclusion. The systems in Poland and India have also been following this path, yet due to their own unique historical, cultural, and social contexts, these countries have adopted rather dissimilar approaches to the process of inclusion. What is presented in this report are the results of the study, which aimed to explore both the attitudes of Polish and Indian teachers towards inclusive education of students with special educational needs resulting from mild to moderate disabilities and the significance of selected factors for their differentiation. Polish teachers generally declared more positive attitudes than Indian teachers. Two variables in Indian teachers (*the location of the school where the respondents worked* and *personal contacts with people with disabilities*) and one variable in Polish teachers (*seniority*) turned out to be important in differentiating their attitudes towards inclusion. Implication for practice and further research are discussed.

Keywords: inclusion of students with disabilities, teachers, attitudes, India, Poland

Introduction

Education of children with disabilities has been evolving as many countries across the globe stepped on a path the aim of which was to improve their education by turning the inclusion of all children, regardless of their abilities or any other traits, into reality (Sailor et al., 1986; Szumski et al., 2020). The development of inclusive education in India and Poland has been influenced

by the same international inclusion campaigns and policies, such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) or the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). The latter was ratified in India in 2007 and in Poland in 2012 and led to implementing further steps towards the implementation of inclusive education, especially on the provision of educational opportunities for children with disabilities (Ćwirynkało et al., 2017; Singal, 2019). The systems of education for children with disabilities in Poland and in India are based on a multi-option model. Thus, in both countries, students with different types of disabilities have the right to free education either in a neighbourhood school or alternative educational settings (such as special school in Poland and India, integrative schools in Poland or home-based education in India), compliantly with their parents' or legal guardians' choice (Szumski et al. 2020; Singal, 2019). Moreover, the number of students with disabilities have been steadily growing both in India (Katz and Mirenda, 2002; Singal, 2019) and Poland (Ćwirynkało and Bartnikowska, 2016; *Edukacja dla wszystkich...*, 2020). Yet, due to their own unique historical, cultural, and social contexts, these countries have adopted rather dissimilar approaches to the process of inclusion.

In Poland, the legislation and policies concerning inclusive education have been formulated in the late 20th century. Although the Polish system of education has never been totally segregated, it was the *Act on the Education System* (1991) that gave parents the right to choose the form of education for their children with disabilities, be it general education (mainstream/inclusive and integrated schools/classes) or special education (segregated schools/classes). An increasing percentage of Polish children and youth diagnosed with disabilities (reaching 70%) attend general education (mainstream or integrated) schools (*Edukacja dla wszystkich...*, 2020). Importantly, in each form of education (segregated, mainstream, and integrated), schools and teachers are obliged to adjust their teaching and requirements to students' special needs (Ćwirynkało et al., 2017) and make education accessible to everyone, without barriers, not only architectural but also social ones. School is responsible for creating an inclusive environment where diversity is accepted and the rights of every student to quality education are fulfilled, adequately to the needs of support and freedom from discrimination (Żyta et al., 2017; Gajdzica, 2021). Despite the satisfactory regulations and generally positive attitudes of all educational entities towards inclusion (Ćwirynkało et al., 2017; Domagała-Zyśk, 2018), the process of providing all learners with equitable educational opportunities is still considered a challenge. The identified

problems include: the competences of teachers, diagnosis (focused mainly on deficiencies), insufficient number of specialists, working conditions (large class size, lack of adequate didactic aids for students with disabilities), unsatisfactory and asymmetrical peer relationships between typically developing students and students with disabilities (Domagała-Zyśk, 2018; *Edukacja dla wszystkich...*, 2020; Gajdzica, 2021).

The Indian system of education faces concerns related to increased dropout rates, low regular attendance, and relatively low enrolment and completion rates for street children, children with disabilities (especially those with autism spectrum disorder or cerebral palsy), girls, children in rural areas, and children of scheduled (the lowest) caste or tribes, minorities, and other cultural, linguistic backgrounds (Singal et al., 2017; Singal, 2019). There are opportunities, in terms of inclusive practices for children with disabilities in schools, teacher training, infrastructure, teaching aids, etc. to ensure high quality education (Bhatnagar and Das, 2014). Offering states and districts a wide range of flexibility in implementing education for children with disabilities (which depends on the number of children identified and the resources available) resulted in many different models across the country, which, as Singal (2019) notices, raises concerns about quality and effectiveness. Nonetheless, after a long journey passing through phases of no education at all, special education, and integration, the system has been gradually evolving into inclusive education (Balasunderam, 2005; Kumar, 2022). Indian policies and legal acts (e.g., the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016; National Education Policy, 2020) have promoted inclusive education and guaranteed education as a fundamental right for all children aged 6–14, including children with disabilities (Singal, Ware and Khanna-Bhutani, 2017).

The results of numerous studies and analyses (e.g., Katz and Mirenda, 2002; Szumski et al., 2017) conducted in different countries indicate that there are numerous challenges and benefits of including these children in regular settings. They are associated with rewards and difficulties encountered by teachers as well as academic achievements and social interactions and the development of both typically growing students and students with disabilities. For example, studies comparing students with and without developmental disabilities in inclusive vs segregated classrooms have indicated either nil difference or positive effects in academic outcomes of students attending regular classrooms. Another interesting observation among these integrated systems was a stronger sense of connected community along with the social and behavioral adaptations of children with developmental dis-

abilities by spending more time with other students and special education teachers (Katz and Mirenda, 2002).

The effectiveness of inclusion depends on various factors, among which a vital role is attributed to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms (Berlach and Chambers, 2011). These attitudes are commonly conceptualized as an aggregate of three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1972). Some prior research (e.g. Hurley and Horn, 2010; Berlach and Chambers, 2011; Bhatnagar and Das, 2014) has demonstrated the importance of teachers' attitudes for bringing about inclusive education. The positive attitudes of regular teachers, their acceptance and readiness to teach diverse students specifically have positive impact on the academic and social achievement of students with disabilities (Bhatnagar and Das, 2014). Alternatively, teachers with a negative attitude to inclusion may contribute to poor academic performance of children with disabilities. Researchers are of the opinion that a comprehensive teacher training on inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms increases their self-efficacy (Bhatnagar, 2009). Yet, comparatively little is known about teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in countries with rich historical and cultural backgrounds that may contribute to these attitudes. The current study aims to fill this gap.

Research aims

This paper reports the data obtained from a survey carried out in Poland and India. The aim of the research was to explore both the attitudes of Polish and Indian teachers towards inclusive education of students with special educational needs resulting from mild to moderate disabilities and the significance of selected factors for their differentiation. To achieve this aim, the following research problems were investigated:

- What are the attitudes of Polish and Indian teachers towards inclusive education of students with mild to moderate disabilities with respect to the following dimensions: believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms, developing personal and professional relationship, creating an accepting environment for all students to learn?
- Are there differences of Polish and Indian teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education of students with mild and moderate disabilities?
- Are there correlations between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education of students with mild and moderate disabilities and certain

sociodemographic and work-related variables (seniority level, school location, preparation to work with students with disabilities, maintaining personal contacts with persons with disabilities)?

Methodology

The study was of cross-sectional character. Two instruments were used to achieve the aim of this study: Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS-mm) scale (Gregory and Noto, 2012) and a demographic questionnaire. The authors of the instrument conducted factor analyses and determined three components with three items identified for each component of the attitude: 1) believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms (Subscale 1 – the cognitive dimension of attitude); 2) developing personal and professional relationship (Subscale 2 – the affective dimension of attitude) and 3) creating an accepting environment for all students to learn (Subscale 3 – the behavioural dimension of attitude). The items consist of positively worded statements to which respondents select their level of agreement (from 1-*agree very strongly* to 7-*disagree very strongly*). The reliability of the scale was greater than $\alpha = 0.70$ level (Cronbach Alpha between 0.72 and 0.93 for different subscales and the full scale), which was defined as acceptable (Gregory and Noto, 2012). The instrument was used in comparative international study and was found to be reliable and accurate to explore attitudes towards inclusion (Gregory, 2018). The reliability coefficients for the scale and the subscales in this study were relatively low: from 0.77 for the full scale to 0.54 for Subscale 1 (India) and from 0.66 for the full scale to 0.45 for Subscale 3 (Poland). Similarly, relatively low coefficients in some subscales of ATTAS-mm were obtained by Charitaki et al. (2022). In the expert literature, a lower than conventionally accepted alpha level is allowed – 0.70. Nevertheless, it suggests the need for further research to test the psychometric properties of the tool (Taber, 2018).

Overall, 517 teachers took part in the study: 211 from India and 306 from Poland. Most respondents were women. More detailed information about respondents' characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' characteristics

| | Polish teachers | | Indian teachers | |
|--|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 277 | 90.52 | 139 | 65.88 |
| Male | 26 | 8.49 | 72 | 34.12 |
| Age | | | | |
| ≤ 30 years of age | 51 | 16.67 | 99 | 46.92 |
| > 30 ≤ 40 years of age | 105 | 34.31 | 58 | 27.49 |
| > 40 years of age | 148 | 48.37 | 54 | 25.59 |
| Seniority | | | | |
| ≤ 5 years | 57 | 18.63 | 102 | 48.34 |
| > 5 ≤ 10 years | 54 | 17.65 | 48 | 22.75 |
| > 10 years | 195 | 63.73 | 61 | 28.91 |
| <i>School location</i> | | | | |
| Urban (city: more than 100 thousand population) | 106 | 34.64 | 130 | 61.61 |
| Urban (town: up to 100 thousand population) | 119 | 38.89 | 30 | 14.22 |
| Rural (up to 2000 thousand population) | 70 | 22.88 | 51 | 24.17 |
| Formal preparation to work with children with disabilities | | | | |
| Yes | 219 | 71.57 | 39 | 18.48 |
| No | 85 | 27.78 | 172 | 81.52 |
| <i>Experience in working with children with disabilities</i> | | | | |
| Yes | 205 | 66.99 | 55 | 26.07 |
| No | 97 | 31.70 | 155 | 73.46 |
| <i>Personal contacts with persons with disabilities</i> | | | | |
| Yes | 243 | 79.41 | 72 | 34.12 |
| No | 58 | 18.95 | 139 | 65.88 |

Data were analyzed with the use of STATISTICA 13.3.

Results

The results of the Student's t-test (Table 2) showed that both groups of teachers differ significantly in terms of the overall result and in the area of Subscale 2 – developing personal and professional relationship. For the overall score, Cohen's d indicates a weak effect and for the Subscale 2 – a strong effect. The results indicated more favourable attitudes in Polish teachers.

Table 2. The results of the Student's t-test: subscales and overall result of ATTAS-mm

| | Polish teachers | | Indian teachers | | t | p |
|------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|------|--------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | |
| Subscale 1 | 10.60 | 4.39 | 10.82 | 2.95 | 0.61 | 0.543 |
| Subscale 2 | 6.98 | 2.26 | 8.71 | 2.24 | 8.03 | 0.000* |
| Subscale 3 | 8.99 | 2.97 | 9.03 | 2.12 | 0.17 | 0.867 |
| Total | 26.58 | 7.27 | 28.56 | 6.07 | 3.26 | 0.001* |

*statistically significant; lower mean – more favourable attitudes

Subscale 2, Cohen's d = 0.77; Total, Cohen's d = 0.27

What was tested in further analyses was how variables relating to specific professional and non-professional experiences and the age of teachers differentiate their attitudes towards educational inclusion. Due to the unequal representation of individual categories, non-parametric tests were used (the Kruskal-Wallis test [H] and the Mann-Whitney U test [Z]). The significance of the gender variable was tested only in the group of Indian teachers. In the Polish group, the vast majority of respondents were women.

Few statistically significant differences were found. In Subscale 1 (believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms), analyzed in a group of teachers from India, no differentiating significance of any of the variables related to the respondents' experiences with people with disabilities, the location of the school where they worked, or their age was found. The results of Subscale 2 (developing personal and professional relationship) were significantly differentiated in this group by the school location variable ($H=10.3$; $p=0.006$) and preparation to work with students with disabilities ($Z=-2.52$; $p=0.011$). The highest scores belonged to the group of teachers working in cities ($M=9.05$), the lowest in those working in schools located in rural settings ($M=7.90$). This component of attitudes also showed significance in differences between teachers who were not prepared to work with students with disabilities ($M=8.85$), and those with formal preparation ($M=8.08$). A less favorable tendency was observed in the case of teachers with no experience in working with students with disabilities ($M=9.28$), as they differed significantly from those with such experience ($M=8.35$) ($Z=-3.12$; $p=0.002$). Non-professional contact with people with disabilities also turned out to be significant for this component of attitudes ($Z=-2.59$; $p=0.010$). Teachers who did not have such contacts showed a less favorable attitude ($M=9.37$) compared to those with such experience ($M=8.38$). The location of the school where teachers from India worked was also found to be significant for the results of Subscale 3: creating an accepting environment for all students to learn ($H=11.96$; $p=0.003$). In this case, the tendency was consistent with the one described earlier – people working in large cities achieved the highest mean ($M=9.42$), while teachers whose schools were located in rural settings received the lowest mean ($M=8.20$).

For the overall scale, the *location of the school* turned out to be significant ($H=12.02$; $p=0.003$) and *non-professional contacts with people with disabilities* ($Z=-2.26$; $p=0.024$). Teachers working in cities achieved relatively least favorable results ($M=29.65$); respondents employed in rural settings – relatively most favorable ($M=26.25$).

The tendency determined in relation to the variable: *contact with people with disabilities* was consistent with the previously described variable: *school location* – teachers who maintained such contacts obtained a significantly lower, more positive, overall score of attitudes towards inclusion ($M=27.10$) compared to those who did not engage in non-professional contacts with people with disabilities ($M=29.32$). For the overall score of the scale, also the gender of the respondents turned out to be significant ($Z=-2.13$; $p=0.033$) – women, compared to men, achieved higher means, indicating a less favorable tendency ($M_K=29.22$; $M_M=27.29$).

The attitudes of Polish teachers towards inclusive education are differentiated by the variables: *work experience* ($H=7.36$; $p=0.025$) and *preparation to work with students with disabilities* ($Z=1.77$; $p=0.078$). The tendencies found in the study indicated that teachers with the shortest work experience showed the least favourable beliefs included in the Subscale: believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms ($M=11.21$). The lowest mean value in this case, indicating positive beliefs, was obtained by people working for 5 to 10 years ($M=9.04$). In the case of the other variable – preparation of teachers – it was found that respondents with formal preparation to work with students with disabilities showed a less favorable attitude in Subscale 2 ($M = 7.14$), compared to teachers without such preparation ($M = 6.52$). However, this difference remains at the level of a statistical tendency.

Discussion

The present research was aimed to compare the attitudes towards inclusive education of Polish and Indian teachers and test the potential significance of selected variables in their scope. Few differences were found in respondents in the two countries, in favor of Polish teachers in the area of the Subscale: developing personal and professional relationship and the global score. Polish teachers, compared to Indian teachers, showed a stronger belief in the effectiveness of inclusion of students with a mild to moderate disabilities in regular settings, which, in their opinion, created the opportunity to acquire social competences important for success.

The analysis of the importance of selected socio-demographic and work-related variables of the respondents showed that they more often had a significant share in differentiating the intensity of attitudes towards inclusive education in teachers from India. Two variables: *the location of the school where the respondents worked* and *personal contacts with people with disabili-*

ties turned out to be important. Yet, both variables did not differentiate the attitudes of Polish teachers. In both groups, however, *professional preparation focused on working with disabled students* turned out to be significant. Moreover, in the case of Polish teachers, *level of seniority* was significant.

The analysis of the obtained trends allows one to conclude that Indian teachers working in schools located in cities, as opposed to those who work in towns and rural settings, showed less favorable attitudes towards inclusive education of students with mild and moderate disabilities. This is expressed in their relatively weaker beliefs in the positive effects of inclusion of these students in the environment of a mainstream class and the possibilities of developing their social competences. Indian teachers from cities expressed the most negative responses about having the competences necessary to create favorable conditions for an educational environment, appreciated by others, and about the universality of inclusive education.

The variable: *preparation for work with students with disabilities* showed different patterns in differentiating teachers' attitudes in both groups. While Indian teachers with such preparation received significantly lower scores in Subscale 2, indicating a favorable trend, Polish teachers with professional preparation to work with students with disabilities revealed less favorable attitudes in this subscale.

The respondents from Poland who just started their professional career (seniority level: less than 5 years' work experience) showed the least favorable attitudes compared to other groups. They are the least convinced of the need to eliminate special classes for students with mild and moderate disabilities and their lower effectiveness compared to mainstream classes. This finding is not consistent with the results of other studies (e.g., Avramidis and Norwich 2002; de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert 2011; Vaz et al. 2015; Butakor, Ampadu and Suleiman, 2020; Charitaki et al. 2022), which found that older teachers tend to exhibit negative attitudes towards inclusive education. It was observed that the groups of participants with the most years of experience (15–19 and > 20) had the least positive attitudes towards teaching all students across all factors. A potential explanation may be that older teachers are less willing to reform their educational approaches (Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto, 2009).

The result seems surprising, but might indicate that younger teachers in Poland are less prepared to work with students with disabilities if they have not received an academic degree in special education. It is plausible that more experienced teachers might have already been trained to deal with the challenges associated with teaching these students.

The gender variable, due to the distribution, was analyzed only in the group of Indian teachers. Its differentiating significance for the global score of the scale was shown, informing about a more favorable trend in men. This finding is not in line with the results of other studies, which indicated that men exhibited more negative beliefs (Butakor, Ampadu and Suleiman, 2020), less favourable and less tolerant attitudes (Ellins and Porter 2005; Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou, 2014) towards inclusive education than females and showed that females tend to acknowledge more benefits of inclusion than males (Romi and Leyser, 2006).

Expectedly, both in the group of Polish and Indian teachers, age was not found to be significant in differentiating respondents' attitudes towards inclusive education. This corresponds with earlier research (Ellins and Porter, 2005).

The presented research provides an initial insight into the specificity of teachers' attitudes resulting from their nationality and selected socio-demographic and work-related variables. Undoubtedly, the analyses taking into account specific competences of teachers, including their personal or social competences, would be of value. Casting a wider sample, purposefully ensuring the representativeness of both female and male teachers from different educational backgrounds and having different professional experiences would create an opportunity to conduct complex analyses that would offer the possibility of planning multi-variable models. Factors such as teachers' competences or access to support at school might also be investigated as possible determinants of teachers' attitudes. One can believe that factor analysis of the ATTAS scale would be useful, though less favourable in the model of comparative studies, due to the likelihood of obtaining different factor structures.

The study offers some implications for practice as well. Although it is clear that educational inclusion of children with disabilities has become an imperative across the nations, there is still a lot to be done as far as teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are concerned. The study has indicated that educating students with disabilities creates a challenge for teachers in mainstream schools. Teachers, especially those with less experience, need trainings to be able to adapt the school environment to their students' special needs and feel more confident to implement inclusive education.

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FORUM OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATORS



Interculturalism in Polish schools according to teachers from borderlands

Abstract: Global cultural exchange is a well-known, boundless phenomenon. Therefore, it is fundamental for countries to promote mutual understanding and tolerance of cultural diversity, to prevent stigmatization and social hermetization from migrant backgrounds, and to foster social inclusion, thus fulfilling the assumptions of sustainable development. Polish society is considered to be relatively homogenous in terms of culture, however, the increasing influx of immigrants, especially from Eastern Europe, poses a new challenge for its national schooling system and multicultural education. That is why the aim of the article was to verify the state of preparation of Polish schools for multicultural education, mutual attitudes of the participants of the educational process, and the relationships between them, as well as to indicate dependency between parents, students, and teachers. The article presents the results of quantitative research carried out in a group of early childhood education teachers from border regions. The results of the conducted research showed the state of intercultural education in Polish schools before the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine. The study is barely the attempt of monitoring the condition of intercultural education, especially in the current “new multicultural reality” in Polish schools.

Keywords: education, acculturation, cooperation, social integration, interculturalism, multiculturalism

Introduction

The socio-political changes of the last decades have contributed to global cultural exchange. Nowadays, various types of problems can be observed and, at the same time, some attempts to solve them, which are related to the functioning of culturally diverse societies.

Certainly, meeting people from different cultures carries a number of positive and negative implications in relation to various areas of social life (Cantle, 2012; Berry, 1997; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara, 2009; Wilson, 2014). Regardless of the reasons for settling in a new place, their consequence is the organization, and implementation of the systems that enable social integration understood as structural, social, and cultural integration (Wessendorf and Phillimore, 2019).

One of the areas in which the process of integrating diverse cultural environments takes place is the school environment. School is one of the first places where a student – regardless of age – has the opportunity to interact with culturally diverse peers. Thanks to the educational system that implements the assumptions of intercultural education, it is possible to obtain positive results in reducing racial prejudice or cultural diversity contestation (Osada et al., 2016).

A properly functioning education system, implementing the assumptions of intercultural education, is the basis for the development of an individual who is open to discovering and respecting all forms of cultural diversity (Portera, 2019). The process of intercultural education also enables shaping a democratic society (Veugelers, 2019). Effective education develops intercultural communication competencies, values and attitudes that prepare for living in a democratic society (Huang, 2015) which promotes understanding and respect for cultural diversity (Lourenço, 2018).

Intercultural education also partially implements the goals of Sustainable Development, such as: promoting a culture of peace, non-violence, global citizenship, and the appreciation of cultural diversity (United Nations, 2015).

In many countries, intercultural education has been taking place for many years. Examples of countries in which cultural integration is the everyday life of educational work may be the Scandinavian countries (Mikander et al., 2018), the United Kingdom (Hearnden and Sundaram, 2011) or Germany (Berg, 2011).

So far, Poland has been a country with little cultural diversity – at the start of implementing the assumptions of multicultural education. Poles have been the nationality which used to emigrate to other countries (Spigelman, 2013; Krings et al., 2013; Janicka and Kaczmarczyk, 2016; Cyrus and Vogel, 2006; Lustanski, 2009). However, over the last few years, Poland has seen a significant increase in the number of immigrants, especially from Eastern Europe and, in particular, as a result of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

The article presents the results of the research showing the image of multiculturalism in Polish schools.

Methodological assumptions of the own research

The research was aimed at verifying the readiness of Polish schools from the point of view of multicultural education, to recognize the mutual attitudes of students, parents and teachers, and to identify dependencies in the relationships of the indicated educational entities. The following research questions specify the research goals in detail:

- What is the role of the intercultural assistant and the preparation of teachers to work with children of different nationalities?
- What are the relations between students and parents of different nationalities in the opinion of teachers?
- What is the cooperation between teachers and parents of other nationalities like?
- Are there any relationships between parents, students and teachers, and what relationships are they?

The scientific approach to the research is characterized by the systematic collection of data in order to obtain a clear and unbiased picture of the aspect (Tolmie et al., 2011). This study was a quantitative research that showed the image of multiculturalism in Polish borderland schools. The data obtained from the survey presented a picture of the investigated area from the perspective of junior class teachers.

The study used quantitative survey data to which statistical analysis was applied. The statistical analysis was carried out in R software, version 3.5.1 (<http://cran.r-project.org>). The variables are presented as count n and % frequency. For the comparison of groups, questions using Likert's scale were treated as quantitative variables. The normality of distribution in subgroups was evaluated with Shapiro-Wilk test and was based on skewness and kurtosis values. The analysis between two groups was made with independent t -test while the correlation between variables was analyzed with Pearson's correlation coefficient. Since some researchers treat Likert scale as ordinal measurement scale, all tests were repeated using their non-parametric equivalents, adequate for ordinal measurement scale (Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman's correlation). In all cases, conclusions from parametric analysis were confirmed in non-parametric tests. The final results present the data from parametric analysis. All tests were based on $\alpha = 0.05$.

The survey was conducted on a population of 74 teachers of junior primary schools. The participants are employees of institutions from the borderland and industrial areas, where people of different nationalities reside more often. The surveyed teachers definitely most often indicated the presence of students from Eastern Europe, mainly Ukraine, a few cases from Belarus and Russia, and isolated cases of students from China or other Western European countries.

All surveyed teachers are of native origin and have higher education.

Results

The first area of the survey related to checking the preparation of teachers to work with children of various nationalities. The obtained data showed the teachers' opinion on the level of preparation for work in a multicultural class obtained during their university studies. In the opinion of 52 respondents (70.3%), higher education did not prepare them to work with children of a different culture. 15 (20.3%) of the surveyed teachers indicated that the preparation for work in a multicultural classroom acquired during higher education was sufficient. On the other hand, 7 respondents (9.4%) indicated a high assessment of preparation for work in a multicultural class obtained during university studies.

The surveyed teachers were also asked to indicate where they gained experience in working with children of a different culture. The biggest number of respondents' indications (57 times) pointed to work in school as a place of gaining experience. Additional training as the part of professional development was indicated much less frequently (14 times). On the other hand, the least numerous were: gaining experience outside school, as part of private contacts (9 times) and during studies (7 times).

As regards the preparation of schools to work with children of different nationalities, the presence of an intercultural assistant in the educational process was verified. In the results obtained, 8 surveyed teachers (11%) indicated the presence of an assistant, while 66 teachers (89%) indicated the absence of an intercultural assistant in the process of educating children from a different culture.

The research results also showed the mutual relations between students of Polish origin and students of a different culture in the opinion of teachers – Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers' opinions on mutual relations between Polish students and students of different nationality

| The assessment of the level of students' mutual acceptance | Very positively | Positively | Indifferently | Reluctantly | Distrustfully |
|---|-----------------|------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| The acceptance of children from a different culture by Polish peers | 25.7% | 57.1% | 17.1% | 0% | 0% |
| The reactions of culturally different children to Polish peers | 17.1% | 64.2% | 17.1% | 0% | 1.4% |

Source: own research.

The obtained research results indicate that in the vast majority of cases, the mutual relations of children are positive (57.1% among students of Polish nationality and 64.2% among students of other nationalities). Behaviours showing mutual distrust or dislike are only isolated cases.

There was a significant correlation between the way children of another culture are accepted by Polish peers (Likert scale, 1 – very negatively, 5 – very positively) and the way children from another culture react at Polish peers (Likert scale, 1 – very negatively, 5 – very positively), $\rho = 0.66$, $p < 0.001$. The correlation was positive and strong, meaning that the more positively Polish peers welcomed children from other cultures, the more positive reactions from foreign children they received.

The collected research material also showed the teachers' opinions on the cooperation with parents of culturally different children. The respondents most often (41 teachers – 55.4%) assessed the cooperation with parents of a different culture as good. 16 teachers (21.6%) evaluated the cooperation very well. Negative evaluations were much less frequent – 10 respondents (13.5%) gave poor opinions about cooperation, and only 3 (4%) expressed the view that there was no cooperation.

There was also a significant correlation between the way children from another culture react at Polish peers (Likert scale, 1 – very negatively, 5 – very positively) and the quality of cooperation between the teacher and parents of children from another culture (Likert scale, 1 – no cooperation, 4 – very good cooperation), $\rho = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$. The correlation was positive and moderate, meaning that the better the cooperation between the teacher and parents of children from another culture was, the more positive the reactions from foreign children towards Polish peers were.

The obtained results were also verified in terms of the relationship between the source of the gained experience and the quality of cooperation with parents of a different culture.

Table 2. The cooperation between the teacher and parents of children from another culture against the source of teachers' experience in work with children from another culture

| Source of teachers' experience in work with children from another culture | Cooperation between a teacher and parents of children from another culture | | | | MD (95% CI) | P |
|---|--|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | n | Source of experience = YES | n | Source of experience = NO | | |
| University studies | 7 | 3.43±0.53 | 63 | 2.95±0.75 | 0.48 (-0.03;0.98) | 0.062 |
| Work in school | 57 | 2.98±0.72 | 13 | 3.08±0.86 | -0.10 (-0.64;0.45) | 0.719 |
| Additional trainings within professional development | 14 | 3.29±0.61 | 56 | 2.93±0.76 | 0.36 (-0.04;0.75) | 0.076 |
| Outside the work, within personal network | 9 | 3.56±0.53 | 61 | 2.92±0.74 | 0.64 (0.21;1.07) | 0.007 |

Source: own research.

The data on cooperation between the teacher and parents of children from another culture are presented as mean±SD based on Likert's scale (1 – no cooperation, 4 – very good cooperation). Groups with and without a given source of teachers' experience are compared with the use of independent t-test. MD – mean different between groups is calculated as the group with teachers having a specific source of experience minus the group without teachers having that source of experience with 95% confidence interval.

The cooperation between the teacher and the parents of children from another culture measured on 4-point Likert scale was also significantly differentiated by gaining experience by teachers in the work with different cultures from their personal network outside their work. The cooperation teacher – parents from another culture was better in the group with teachers gaining experience from their personal network (M = 3.56, SD = 0.53) than in the remaining cases (M = 2.92, SD = 0.74), MD = 0.64 CI₉₅ [0.21; 1.07], p = 0.007. The remaining sources of teachers' experience in work with children from another culture (university studies, additional training, work) did not significantly differentiate the level of cooperation between the teacher and parents of children from another culture (p > 0.05).

Recognizing the state of multiculturalism in schools, the reactions of parents of Polish children towards culturally different children and parents were examined. The surveyed teachers did not indicate the occurrence of negative behaviours manifested by discrimination, negative attitude, or opposition to joint learning. The respondents (37 surveyed teachers – 50%) most often indicated the attitudes of parents of Polish nationality, proving their indifference towards culturally different children and parents. Less frequently – 26 teachers (35%) – indicated the fact of establishing relationships with parents of a different culture. On the other hand, the general lack of establishing relationships with parents of different nationalities was indicated by only 8 of the surveyed teachers (11%).

The reactions of parents of Polish children towards culturally different children and parents were also analyzed in terms of the relationship with the acceptance of children of a different nationality by students of Polish nationality – Table 3.

Table 3. Acceptance of children from another culture by Polish peers in school class against parents' reaction at children and parents from another culture

| Parents' reaction at children and parents from another culture | Acceptance of children from another culture by Polish peers in the school class | | | | MD (95% CI) | P |
|--|---|-------------------------|----|------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | n | Parents' reaction = YES | n | Parents' reaction = NO | | |
| Making relationships with other parents | 26 | 4.35±0.49 | 44 | 3.93±0.70 | 0.42 (0.13;0.70) | 0.005 |
| Not making relationships with other parents | 8 | 3.75±0.71 | 62 | 4.13±0.64 | -0.38 (-0.98;0.22) | 0.185 |
| Indifference to children and parents from another culture | 37 | 4.00±0.75 | 33 | 4.18±0.53 | -0.18 (-0.49;0.12) | 0.240 |

Source: own research.

The data on acceptance of children from another culture by Polish peers are presented as mean ±SD based on Likert's scale (1 – very negatively, 5 – very positively). Groups with and without a given parents' reaction are compared with the use of independent t-test. MD – mean different between groups is calculated as the group with parents' reaction minus the group without parents' reaction with 95% confidence interval.

The level of acceptance of children from another culture by Polish peers in the school class measured on 5-point Likert scale was significantly differentiated by making relationships with other parents in the responses provided by parents of Polish children. The acceptance of children from another cul-

ture by Polish peers was higher when their parents made relationships with other parents ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.49$) than in the remaining cases ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.70$), $MD = 0.42$ $CI_{95} [0.13; 0.70]$, $p = 0.005$. The remaining parents' reactions at children and parents from other cultures did not differentiate the level of acceptance of children from another culture by Polish peers ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

Intercultural education is an excellent tool for overcoming stigma or a sense of alienation. Thanks to it, it becomes possible to shape a multidimensional identity (Ogrodzka-Mazur, 2018). However, conducting intercultural education requires constant monitoring. In this study, the aim was to determine the state of preparation of Polish educational institutions for multicultural education in the opinion of teachers from borderlands. Our findings show that there are apparent shortcomings and positive aspects of multiculturalism in the school environment.

Some noticeable shortcomings occur in pedagogical studies and in improving teachers' professional skills. Another organizational problem of the educational system is also the cultural assistant, who is rarely employed in schools. Despite the fact that, according to the provisions of the law in force since 2009 (Dziennik Ustaw [*Journal of Laws*], 2009), schools may employ a person who speaks the student's native language as a teacher's assistant, in practice, these persons are rarely employed. According to the research on the sense of self-efficacy among Polish teachers, there was no positive correlation between the sociocultural diversity in the classroom and the sense of self-efficacy. According to the authors of the study, this situation may result from worse organizational conditions of Polish education, such as: working conditions, a group size, professional development resources, facilities, etc. (Romijn et al., 2020). These assumptions are correct, because – according to the current research – the organization of the multicultural education process shows many shortcomings.

In addition to the identified problems, the research results made it possible to identify those areas of multiculturalism that predict the success of the ongoing social changes. These are the attitudes of teachers and students. It can be concluded that despite the shortcomings and system imperfections, the participants' attitudes in the educational process favour the implementation of the assumptions of multicultural educa-

tion. Similar attitudes have been shown in studies conducted in other countries. Despite organizational problems (other than in Poland), the involvement of teachers or mutual relations between students testifies to a positive attitude towards culturally diverse students (Zotou, 2017, Karacabey and Ozdere et al., 2019). The attitudes of students of Polish origin are also highly favourable, as they prove the lack of prejudice and discrimination. They are particularly important because early intercultural experiences enable the development of intercultural competences and a positive perception of diversity (Waal et al., 2020). Based on the obtained research results, it can be concluded that younger school-age children are open to meeting new places and people. Children's curiosity, which is a permanent part of their development, also realized through social interactions (Engel, 2011), is not limited only to their own culture. The attitude of parents of Polish children towards students and parents of other nationalities is slightly different. In the opinion of teachers, the most common attitude of Polish parents proves their indifference to families of other nationalities. While more open-minded attitudes would be more desirable, it is promising that teachers did not observe negative behaviour.

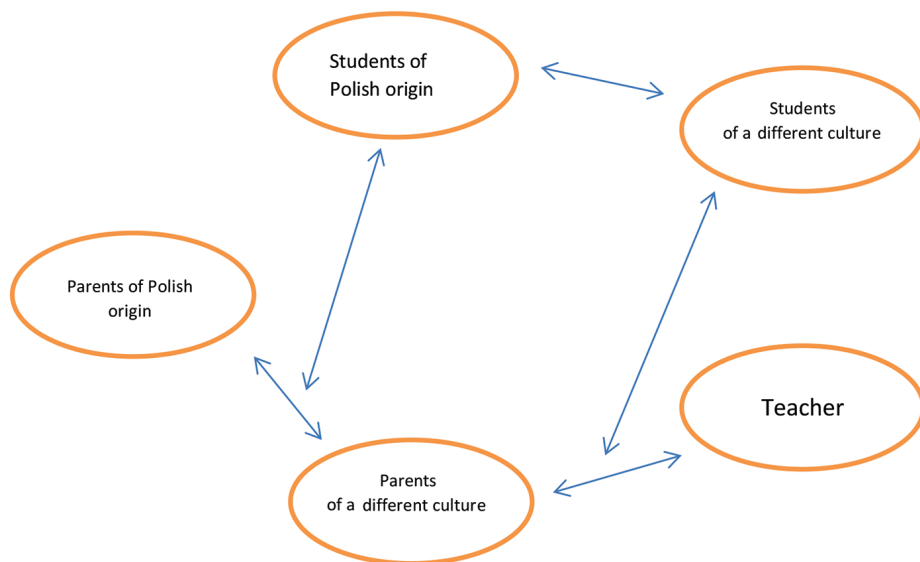
The analysis of the research results also indicated several dependencies that affect building a multicultural society. These are the relationships between:

- attitudes of Polish students and the attitudes of children of other nationalities,
- cooperation of teachers with parents of other nationalities and the attitude of children of other nationalities,
- teachers' experience and the quality of cooperation with parents of different nationalities,
- the attitude of Polish parents and the attitude of Polish children.

The relationships between the entities and their connections are shown in Figure 1.

The research also showed how important teachers are in contact with all entities. Due to their professional duties, they can adequately create conditions for establishing proper relations among students and parents. They are the first to mediate in the case of misunderstandings or problems. Therefore, it is important that a constant element of their preparation and professional development is to raise their qualifications to work in a culturally diverse class.

Figure 1. Dependencies and connections between the entities of the educational process



Source: own research.

The results of the conducted research showed the state of intercultural education in Polish borderland schools before the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine. The challenges faced by the educational system in the face of the influx of a large number of Ukrainian students should undoubtedly be an incentive to undertake further research on the “new multicultural reality” in Polish schools.

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Internationalization of education: motivations and benefits of academic mobility within the Erasmus+ Programme based on the example of Lisbon, Portugal¹

Abstract: The internationalization of higher education is steadily increasing, which can be observed also in the growing number of university students benefiting from the European mobility program European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus+). The author's survey questionnaire was used to investigate the motivations that influence the decision to participate in the Erasmus+ programme and to choose Lisbon as a student exchange city, as well as to learn about the benefits of mobility. Furthermore, the differences between the scholarship holders from Poland and those from other countries were presented. In general, students considered a number of factors when joining Erasmus+. International mobility plays an important role in both personal and educational development. The information obtained on academic mobility may contribute to the development and popularization of the idea of academic exchange programmes among students and may facilitate the planning of promotional activities of the university's international relations offices.

Keywords: university students, Portugal, internationalization, international student mobility, Erasmus+

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Introduction

The internationalization of the educational process is steadily increasing (Cohen et al., 2013; Vildavsky, 2011; Popowska, 2016), which, among other things, is reflected in the growing mobility of students, lecturers, and university staff (Sasin, 2014). Internationalization is a broad term defined as an intentional process of international, intercultural, or global integration for the purpose of post-secondary education, improved quality of education, access to research for all students and university employees, and making meaningful contributions to the society (de Wit et al., 2015; Jibeen and Khan, 2015). In 2018, 5.6 million students chose to study abroad, doubling the number from 2005 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2019). This tendency is also observed in Portugal. The country is ranked among the top destinations for academic mobility (Sobral, 2022). Nowadays, academic mobility is one of the basic concepts of education (de Wit and Altbach, 2020). It is defined as a period of studying, teaching and/or research in a country other than the country of origin of the student or academic staff member. The period of stay is limited, and the person returns to his or her home country after the allotted time (Puchkov et al., 2018).

Students deciding to take part in the exchange mobility programme and then on the destination are guided by a variety of motivations that depend on many factors. To understand what motivates students to take part in international mobility programmes and how they choose a particular exchange country, it is necessary to look at the factors that may influence their decisions. As an expert of the European Commission, E. Krzaklewska (2008) developed a model representing students' motivations for participating in the Erasmus+ programme. She distinguished two groups of motivations, the first having an experimental dimension and containing motivations of cultural background and related to personal motivations. This group included motivations such as curiosity about another culture, the desire for entertainment, gaining experience, changing the environment, and personal development. In the second group, the motivations are categorized as those focused on academic and professional development. Students with motivations in this group decide to join the Erasmus programme because they want to acquire knowledge and skills related to their field of study, as well as to learn or improve the use of foreign languages and they expect their stay abroad to enhance their future career opportunities.

Mazzarol (1998) identified push-pull factors that determine the decision-making process of a prospective scholarship holder. Push factors are those that affect decisions to study abroad in the country of permanent residence. These include economic, political, and social factors in the country which the scholarship holder leaves. Pull factors are those that are determined by the attractiveness of a planned educational exchange destination to students. Six such factors were labelled (Mazzarol et al., 1997). Researchers showed that knowledge, availability of information, and prestige of a potential destination are important. Furthermore, students also considered recommendations, positive references from relatives and people who had previously participated in a mobility programme in the country. Other key factors shown by researchers are the costs associated with living abroad (travel, subsistence, security). Social factors related to whether students in the host country have family or friends were an important determinant as well. The fifth is a factor relating to the geography of the host country. The last factor is related to the environment, that is, the climate and lifestyle of the destination.

International academic mobility offers many benefits, opportunities, and experiences that cannot be achieved in any other way (Bodger, 1998). According to Turos (1997), mobility is important for self-education and personal, educational and professional development. During the stay, students find out how important the following are: perceptive skills, scientific knowledge, foreign language skills, establishing interpersonal contacts, and overcoming distrust of others.

With the growing interest in foreign exchange programmes among students, it becomes important to find out what motivates them to join academic mobility programmes. Learning about the benefits of academic mobility will contribute to the development and popularization of the idea of academic mobility among students, which is promoted by international mobility programmes.

The aim of this study was to gain information about the motivations influencing the decision to take part in a foreign exchange programme (Erasmus+) and the choice of Lisbon as the city of student exchange. The study also aimed to identify the benefits of student mobility. An additional aim of the study was to gain information about statistically significant differences between motivations and benefits among scholarship holders from Poland and those from other countries. The following research questions were posed to achieve the research aim:

- What were the motivations of prospective scholarship holders of international exchange programmes and what were their reasons for choosing Lisbon as the location for their international mobility?
- What benefits were observed by students participating in academic mobility programme in Lisbon?
- Are there differences in motivations for participation and benefits of Erasmus+ programme between Polish scholarship holders and those of other nationalities?

Methodology

The quantitative method of the diagnostic survey was applied with the use of the author's own questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted among students taking part in the Erasmus+ programme at universities in Lisbon. The work was complemented by the study of the author's own experiences gained during her stay within the Erasmus+ programme.

The survey data was collected from March to May 2020. The questionnaires were created in English on Google Drive using Google Forms, and then posted on Facebook, in groups for international students in Lisbon. In addition, the questionnaire was distributed through instant messaging to the author's friends from different countries, who also participated in university programmes abroad in Lisbon, with a request to send it to other Erasmus+ students.

The study included a random sample of 60 (49 female and 11 male) students who were taking part in the Erasmus+ programme between January 2016 and March 2020 at all universities in Lisbon. The only criterion for inclusion in the study was the fact of participation in the Erasmus+ programme in the period specified above. There are thirty-three universities located in Lisbon, out of which three are among the five visited by the largest number of Erasmus students each year (European Commission, 2016).

The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first included questions related to students' motivations and, more specifically, to the factors that influenced students' decision to take part in the exchange programme and the determinants of choosing Lisbon. This section also included questions about the benefits of the stay. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to gender, nationality, degree, and a question about the length of stay in Lisbon.

Statistical methods were used to analyze the results. Non-parametric U Mann-Whitney test with correction for continuity was used to evaluate the differences between the means because the requirements of normal distribution were not met in Lilliefors test. Classic significance levels were used: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$ (Statistica 13, StatSoft, Inc. 2014).

Results

The most numerous nationality group was Poles (38.3%). Italians and Slovenians (8.3% each), Spaniards and Greeks (6.7% each) started their studies in the Portuguese capital, which is also confirmed by the data of the European Commission, which enumerates students from Poland, Italy, Spain as those who most often come to study in Portugal within the Erasmus+ programme (European Commission, 2018). Other nationalities of students accounted for 5% of the respondents or fewer (Hungarians, Romanians, Croats, Bulgarians, Slovaks, French, Germans, Turks, Danes, Austrians, Lithuanians, and Belgians). More than half of the study group (60%) studied in undergraduate programmes and 35% did an exchange during their graduate programme. Furthermore, 3.3% were students of third-level studies and the remaining students went abroad for student internship (1.7%). An overwhelming percentage of the foreign students from the group surveyed (80%) participated in the exchange programme for one term, 18% of the students studied educational tourism for two terms, and 2% declared that their exchange lasted shorter due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Polish students from the Erasmus programme statistically significantly more often declared that the reason for their participation in the programme was the need to improve their foreign language skills and to combine studying with travelling, whereas students from other parts of the world statistically significantly more often decided to participate in the programme because they wanted to experience something new and change their current environment (cf. Table 1). This question required scholarship holders to select up to three factors.

Table 1. The reasons for participating in the Erasmus+ programme and the differences in responses between the group of students from Poland and other countries

| Factors | Total (%) | Polish Erasmus Students (%) | Other Nationalities (%) | P |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Willingness to gain new experiences – life experiences | 56.70 | 39.13 | 67.57 | 0.0153* |
| Developing language skills | 48.30 | 65.22 | 37.84 | 0.0195* |
| Desire for personal development | 36.70 | 43.48 | 32.43 | 0.1939 |
| Possibility to combine learning with traveling | 35.00 | 47.83 | 27.03 | 0.0503* |
| Willingness to make international acquaintances – the cultural aspect | 31.70 | 26.09 | 35.14 | 0.2319 |
| Curiosity about the world | 30.00 | 34.78 | 27.03 | 0.2621 |
| Learning to be independent | 15.00 | 17.39 | 13.51 | 0.3412 |
| Possibility of including the scholarship in the Curriculum Vitae | 13.30 | 17.39 | 10.81 | 0.2330 |
| Expecting a ,relaxed' academic term/ year abroad | 8.30 | 4.35 | 10.81 | 0.1894 |
| Willingness to change the environment | 8.30 | 0 | 13.51 | 0.0328* |
| Recommendation from a friend who participated in the program | 3.30 | 4.35 | 2.70 | 0.3646 |
| Possibility of grants, university scholarships | 1.70 | 0 | 2.70 | 0.2134 |

* $p < 0.05$

Source: own research.

Respondents were also asked a question aimed to find out what had guided them in choosing Lisbon as their student exchange city. This question required the respondent to select three main motivations (cf. Table 2). Polish students were statistically significantly more likely to decide to go on an academic trip to Lisbon because of the city's location, which creates travel opportunities, while students of other nationalities were statistically significantly more likely to indicate interest in the country as a motivation for choosing Lisbon.

Table 2. The reasons for choosing Lisbon as the Erasmus + programme destination by scholarship holders from Poland and other countries

| Factors | Total (%) | Polish Erasmus Students (%) | Other Nationalities (%) | P |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Mild and favorable climate | 70.00 | 73.91 | 67.57 | 0.3012 |
| Interest in Portugal | 38.30 | 21.74 | 48.65 | 0.0186* |
| Positive feedback about the destination | 30.00 | 21.74 | 35.14 | 0.1354 |
| Cultural aspect | 25.00 | 30.43 | 21.62 | 0.2218 |

| Factors | Total (%) | Polish Erasmus Students (%) | Other Nationalities (%) | P |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Location of Lisbon, which offers extensive travel opportunities | 21.70 | 34.78 | 13.51 | 0.0259* |
| Cost of living in Portugal is lower compared to other countries available for selection | 21.70 | 17.39 | 24.32 | 0.2632 |
| Touristic attractions of the destination | 20.00 | 21.74 | 18.92 | 0.3953 |
| Opportunity to meet people from all over the world | 20.00 | 21.74 | 18.92 | 0.3953 |
| A wide university offer – a wide range of interesting subjects | 16.70 | 21.74 | 13.51 | 0.2028 |
| By accident | 16.70 | 8.70 | 21.62 | 0.0958 |
| Entertainment considerations | 10.00 | 13.04 | 8.11 | 0.2680 |
| A small selection from foreign universities | 10.00 | 13.04 | 8.11 | 0.2680 |

* p < 0.05

Source: own research.

The undoubted motivations of the scholarship holders are reflected in the benefits of mobility that they observed. To find out the positive aspects of mobility, respondents were asked to rate on a five-point scale how each aspect of the exchange reflected the benefits they received. The students participating in the exchange programme observed many positive aspects after their mobility stay ended (cf. Table 3). Such benefits as becoming familiar with the labour market in the host country, gaining new knowledge, experiences, and skills related to the field of study were statistically significantly more often declared by Polish scholarship holders. This may indicate that Polish students, compared to foreigners, were more focused on educational and professional opportunities.

Table 3. Benefits of the Erasmus+ program in Lisbon observed by the scholarship holders from Poland and other nationalities

| Benefits | Total | Polish Erasmus Students | Other Nationalities | P |
|--|-------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Unforgettable travel memories and experiences | 4.80 | 4.70 | 4.86 | 0.2593 |
| Getting to know Portugal, the country of Erasmus program (culture, language) | 4.68 | 4.74 | 4.65 | 0.5734 |
| Increasing independence and self-confidence | 4.60 | 4.43 | 4.70 | 0.2903 |
| Establishing contacts on an international scale | 4.58 | 4.43 | 4.68 | 0.1145 |
| Improving language skills | 4.42 | 4.57 | 4.32 | 0.1866 |
| Acquiring new knowledge, experience and skills related to the field of study | 4.35 | 4.61 | 4.19 | 0.0609 |

| Benefits | Total | Polish Erasmus Students | Other Nationalities | P |
|--|-------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Developing soft skills (e.g. adaptability, teamwork, stress tolerance) | 4.33 | 4.39 | 4.30 | 0.6764 |
| Changing perspectives for the future | 4.33 | 4.30 | 4.35 | 0.7348 |
| Increasing career opportunities in the future | 3.92 | 4.04 | 3.84 | 0.4108 |
| Knowledge of the labour market in the host country | 3.75 | 4.09 | 3.54 | 0.0132* |
| Increasing openness and intercultural awareness | 4.53 | 4.43 | 4.59 | 0.4871 |

* $p < 0.05$

Source: own research.

Discussion

Students consider many factors when deciding to participate in international mobility programmes (Monteiro and Pereira, 2016; Biñas-Henne, 2011; Juvan and Lesjak, 2011; Sova, 2017; Dragomiletskii, 2018). The present study have proved that scholarship holders of the Erasmus+ programme in Lisbon were most often driven by cultural and experiential factors and by the need for entertainment, personal development, and relaxation rather than by the motivations related to educational or professional development. This has been also shown in some previous studies (Findlay and King, 2006; González, 2011; Teichler, 2004; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Lesjak et al., 2015; Kosmaczewska, 2021). The willingness to gain new experiences and the desire to learn a foreign language (Krupnik and Krzaklewska, 2006; Maiworm and Teichler, 2002) were the most common reasons for taking part in the Erasmus+ programme. At the same time, students coming from Poland were statistically significantly more likely to decide to participate in the programme due to their desire to improve their foreign language skills. The factor which equally often determined the participation in the programme was the need for personal development, including learning independence, increasing self-confidence, openness, and soft skills (Maiworm and Teichler, 2002).

Student mobility programmes are focused on the countries attractive due to their climate (González, 2011; Mazzarol et al., 1997). Portugal attracts many international students every year and Lisbon itself is among the twenty cities in Europe that were the most frequent destinations for international students in 2012–2013 (Van Mol and Ekamper, 2016), which demonstrates the city's prominent level of internationalization. Lisbon is characterized by cultural diversity, with an amazing atmosphere, so everyone in the city feels comfortable. Therefore, it is understandable why the most frequently

declared motivation for choosing Lisbon among the respondents was the climate of the city. Undoubtedly, with the friendly and mild subtropical Mediterranean climate and its location in the south of Europe, in the vicinity of the Atlantic Ocean, Lisbon offers attractive conditions, also for enjoying tourist activities (Gierak, 2017). This was also one of the main reasons for the foreign students' departures. Comparable results were obtained in previous studies (Sin et al., 2016; Mészáros, 2011), which have shown that location, climate, and range of leisure activities are the factors that mainly influence the choice of Portugal as an exchange country. These factors played a more significant role in the choice of Portugal than the good reputation of the host institution, which was also observed in this study. The image of a country is critical when choosing a tourist (here educational) destination (Matiza and Slabbert, 2020).

Approximately one-third of the surveyed students declared that the interest in the country was important to them when choosing an exchange city, and a similar percentage (35%) also indicated that the motivations for their participation in the Erasmus+ programme were the opportunity to combine studying with travelling and visiting the country. This shows that students are interested in the country in which they implement international mobility programmes. Previous studies by Pawłowska et al. (2009) showed that 96% of international students travel outside their exchange city. As demonstrated in a study by Lesjak, students' willingness to travel plays a very important factor in their decision to participate.

Although individual students are characterized by different motivations that guide them in their decision to take part in an international mobility programme, each student observes a wide range of positive outcomes (European Commission, 2017). Among most respondents, the greatest observed benefit of the exchange was the memories and experiences brought about by travelling. Undoubtedly, travel itself allows a person to learn a lot about themselves and the place they are visiting, its culture, language, and the community (Lesjak et al., 2015). While travelling, students have the opportunity to learn through experience (Huang, 2008). For international students, travel is an important part of their foreign exchange, which has been supported by previous research showing that tourism is a significant aspect of student mobility (Kłopotowska, 2020; Martinez-Roget et al., 2013; Gardiner et al., 2013; Vukić, 2015).

Many of the benefits observed from the scholarship stay abroad are also related to the personal development of the students, who reported that their

independence and self-confidence increased, which had also been observed in some previous studies (Bracht et al., 2006). A large group of international students in Lisbon enumerated important aspects of the exchange such as increasing openness, awareness of, and tolerance for cultural differences, and establishing contacts on an international scale (Atalar, 2020; Wiśniewski and Bukalska, 2013). Krzaklewska stressed that academic mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ are mostly aimed at building the European identity and at developing intercultural skills of exchange participants, rather than increasing the generation of highly educated young Europeans (Feyen and Krzaklewska, 2013).

Students declared that during their scholarship stay in Portugal, they deepened their knowledge of the culture and language of the country. This means that they were able to achieve what was one of the main motivations for their academic mobility. Hadis (2005) points out that it is important for a student taking part in an international mobility programme to be exposed to diverse cultures and lifestyles at the place of mobility. This scholar noted that in this way, students develop their interests and become more open-minded while their curiosity about international issues increases, and when they return to their residence country, they are more focused on studying or work-related activities.

Students were less likely to perceive benefits related to professional development, such as the opportunity to become familiar with the labour market in Portugal, and relatively few students felt that the experience of international mobility enhanced their future career opportunities. This may take place because their motivations for leaving were different and they focused on other aspects of the exchange during their mobility stay. The largest group consisted of students at the first stage of their university education, who are just entering the labour market. The related results of their mobility study were presented by Van Hoof and Verbeeten (2005), who showed that about half of the surveyed scholarship holders observed benefits related to future employment compared to 97% who observed benefits related to personal development. Furthermore, as shown in previous studies, it is easier for students after participation in mobility programmes to be employed (Żebryk et al., 2021; OECD, 2019; Alejziak 2018; European Commission, 2017) and start working for higher salaries (Messer and Wolter, 2007; Liwiński, 2019). The competencies acquired during the exchange are appreciated by future employers (Bryła, 2014; Dąbrowska-Resiak, 2019). Although benefits of a professional nature are not directly perceived by students, the remaining

experiences, skills, and knowledge will indirectly translate into their later professional and academic careers.

However, if benefits at the educational and career-related level were observed, then Polish Erasmus+ programme students in Lisbon tended to observe these benefits to a greater extent than students from other countries. The survey conducted among university students Erasmus+ programme (European Commission, 2011) shows that scholarship holders from Poland, compared to those from Belgium, Turkey, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Hungary, Greece, and France, are more satisfied with the exchange in terms of learning. Undoubtedly, this proves that Erasmus+ students from Poland consider their studying abroad as an opportunity to increase their skills related to the field of study and as a time during which they have an opportunity to find out more about the labour market in the host country. The differences in perceived benefits of exchange programmes regarding labour market awareness in Portugal between Polish students and students of other nationalities may also stem from the fact that a significant percentage of the Polish (especially young) population declares their intention to seek employment abroad (Gi Group, 2023). However, these are mere conjectures, and far-reaching conclusions could only be drawn after collecting a larger amount of data and more extensive research material.

For a participant, the aim of the Erasmus programme, and, more specifically, of Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals, is to achieve at least one of the outcomes set by the European Commission (European Commission, 2011). The present study showed that not one, but many benefits were observed by the beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ programme in Lisbon. This confirms the postulates of the European Commission, which stresses that staying abroad and taking part in an international mobility programme should become an inseparable part of education.

Conclusions

The internationalization of higher education is steadily increasing, so it is important to find out what motivates students when they decide to participate in the programme and when they choose their exchange destination, and to look at the benefits of the programme.

1. Many factors influence a student's decision to join an international exchange programme, including experimental, educational, personal, cultural, and entertainment factors. When choosing Lisbon, the schol-

arship holders were most often guided by the climate and their interest in the Portuguese culture.

2. International mobility plays a significant role in the development on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and educational levels.
3. The willingness to improve a foreign language and the possibility to combine learning with tourism activities were statistically significantly more frequent reasons for the participation of Polish students in the Erasmus+ programme compared to those of other nationalities.
4. Compared to foreigners, Polish students more often observed positive aspects of the programme in terms of education (by developing the skills and knowledge related to their field of study) and career (by becoming familiar with the labour market in Portugal).
5. The information obtained through academic mobility may contribute to the development and popularization of the idea of international exchange programmes among students, which may directly influence or even facilitate the decision-making process for students who consider participation in an international exchange programme.

The results of the survey may help plan the promotional activities of the university's international relations offices. The results of the study will also help increase the community's awareness of the idea of international mobility programmes, and, more specifically, the motivations for participation in them and the benefits they offer.

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Expanding educational spaces of cooperation and social relations through Technology-enhanced International Virtual Exchanges

Abstract: Technology-enhanced international virtual exchanges (IVE), or Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), provide educators and students with the access and tools to connect with the world through collaboration with colleagues and peers in a global context (SUNY COIL Center, “Welcome”, n.d.a). In the IVE courses, students in different countries work together to broaden not only their academic knowledge, but also digital literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills (Werner, 2015). In this study, technology-enhanced IVE are introduced and the benefits of IVE for educators and students are explored. Some concrete examples are also shared of how two professors from Ukraine and the United States reflected on the course of collaboration with our French partner professor to co-plan and co-teach a technology-enhanced IVE course in order to offer sustainable international education and provide students with the opportunities to gain diverse cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-disciplinary experiences, to demonstrate communication skills using technology, and to improve their intercultural competence.

Keywords: technology, virtual exchanges, student cooperation, social relations, intercultural competence

Introduction

Today the world is a global village, in which people are all interconnected and interdependent. It is important for college graduates to be prepared as global citizens, who are open-minded and adapted to communities on the worldwide scale (United Nations, “Global citizenship”, n.d.a). The State University

of New York (SUNY) Global Learning for All: Educating for a Sustainable Future (GLFA) defines global learning as the process of fostering a better understanding of oneself, societal and cultural influences, and the world, during which the learners develop the abilities and skills to embrace diversity and work across differences in order to build mutual understanding and to find solutions for the challenges we are facing (“The GLFA initiative defines Global Learning” section, §1, 2023b).

This article is aimed at introducing technology-enhanced IVE and discussing the benefits IVE brought to educators and students through a descriptive review. We, two professors from Ukraine and the United States, have shared concrete examples of how we collaborated with our French partner professor to co-plan and co-teach a technology-enhanced IVE course in order to offer sustainable international education and provide students with the opportunities to gain diverse cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-disciplinary experiences, to demonstrate communication skills using technology, and to improve their intercultural competence.

Benefits of the International Virtual Exchanges

Traditionally, learning at a higher education institution usually takes place in an assigned classroom, within an assigned class time slot, and when students interact with their peers who register for and are enrolled in the same course. During this process, the participating professors work together to co-plan and co-teach selected contents with joint student learning outcomes, while their students work together to complete joint tasks and achieve common goals, using technology tools and the internet. Through shared learning experiences without time and location boundaries, the IVE offers a cost-effective pathway to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and to engage learners in one learning community within the global village.

Aligning with the skills contributing to workforce success

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), a leading organization for higher education institutions in the U.S., is dedicated to advancing educational quality and equity and supporting the success of all students (AAC&U, 2023, homepage). It partnered with Hanover Research and conducted their 7th survey on the employers’ views on how higher education institutions contribute to workforce success. A total of 496 executives and

hiring managers who were responsible for hiring and promotion decisions in the U.S. companies of various types, sizes, and industries participated in this survey (Finley, 2021). As a result, the participating employers reported 15 skills they perceived as “very important” for workforce success that college graduates were expected to have. They also pointed out that less than half of the college graduates possessed these abilities and skills needed to succeed in the workforce (Finley, 2021). Since higher education institutions play an important role in preparing their graduates for the workforce, they are responsible for offering such learning opportunities that enable their students develop these personal capacities and skills in addition to the growth of academic content knowledge. IVE is an effective way to help achieve the majority of these goals and get college graduates ready for careers.

Table 1. Alignment Between the Workforce Abilities/Skills and the IVE Examples

| Personal Capabilities/ Skills of College Graduates | * Skills of College Graduates Viewed as Important by Employers | ** Skills of Recent Graduates Reported as “Very Well Prepared” by Employers | Activities in the France-Ukraine-US IVE course |
|--|--|---|---|
| Critical thinking | 95% | 39% | KWL chart – Synthesis of research-based cultural similarities & differences |
| Effective work in teams | 93% | 48% | Team introduction video & Final team presentation |
| Demonstrating complex problem-solving skills | 93% | 39% | Overcoming barriers (different time zones, locations, languages, cultures, disciplines, technology preferences, etc.) to complete tasks |
| Locating, evaluating, and using information in decision making | 93% | 42% | KWL chart, Interview, & Final team presentation |
| Communication through speaking/ presentation skills | 93% | 41% | Team introduction video, Interview, Final team presentation, and the process to complete tasks |
| Integration of ideas/ information across settings and contexts | 93% | 39% | Team introduction video, Interview, Final team presentation, and the process to complete tasks |
| Application of knowledge/skills in real-world settings | 92% | 39% | Teamwork with partner students across countries to complete joint tasks |
| Creative thinking | 92% | 46% | Thinking outside of the box in the process of teamwork, real-world applications, choice-decision, and problem-solving to complete tasks |
| Analyzing and interpreting data | 91% | 41% | KWL chart & Final team presentation with interview results |

| Personal Capabilities/ Skills of College Graduates | * Skills of College Graduates Viewed as Important by Employers | ** Skills of Recent Graduates Reported as "Very Well Prepared" by Employers | Activities in the France-Ukraine-US IVE course |
|--|--|---|--|
| Digital literacy | 91% | 49% | Communication and teamwork with partner students across countries using technology tools and online platforms |
| Ethical judgment and reasoning | 91% | 41% | Teamwork with partner students and conduct interviews with professionals in the field |
| Communication through writing | 90% | 44% | Communication, orally and in writing, with partner students across countries using technology tools and online platforms |
| Communication/work with people from different cultural backgrounds | 89% | 43% | Communication and teamwork with partner students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds across countries |
| Civic skills/civic engagement | 83% | 44% | Participation in teamwork & discussions on diversity and sustainable education |
| Work with numbers and statistics | 90% | 44% | Optional per students' choice |

Notes: * Data retrieved from Finley, 2021, p. 6, categories of "Very Important" & "Somewhat Important".

** Data retrieved from Finley, 2021, p. 16, category of "Share of employers who report that recent graduates are "very well prepared" on a particular skill.

Table 1 displays the alignment between the workforce abilities/skills and the examples of the IVE learning activities. It indicates that through the IVE project, the participating students in France, Ukraine, and the U.S. developed the majority of the most desired personal capabilities and skills by the workforce with the only exception of the category of "working with numbers and statistics", which depended on the student's choice of the topics and their selection of the materials to complete the assigned tasks. The examples were further described in the section entitled "A three-way IVE project: France-Ukraine-the United States."

Aligning with the high-impact practices

Kuh (2008) synthesized 10 evidence-based high-impact practices, which significantly increased student retention rate and engagement. These identified high-impact practices consisting of first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive

courses, undergraduate research, collaborative assignments & projects, diversity & global learning, service learning & community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses & projects (Kuh, 2008). In IVEs, educators from different universities across countries carefully and intentionally co-plan shared learning objectives, co-select common materials, co-design joint assessments, and collaborate to facilitate students' learning through diverse and global lenses. Their students work together to build international learning communities with shared intellectual experiences in the process of completing collaborative assignments and projects, conducting service learning and/or community-based learning, and discovering commonalities and differences across diverse cultures. Thus, they gain intercultural experiential learning, develop intercultural competencies, and become better prepared as global citizens (Zhang et al, 2022).

Table 2. Alignment Between the High-Impact Practices and the IVE Examples

| High-Impact Practices | Activities in the France–Ukraine–US IVE course |
|---|---|
| Diversity & Global Learning | IVE: Communication and teamwork with partner students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds across countries |
| Collaborative Assignments & Projects | Team introduction video with culture comparisons & Final team presentation with interview |
| Common Intellectual Experiences | Team introduction video & Final team presentation |
| Learning Communities | Teamwork with partner students across countries to complete joint tasks |
| Service Learning & Community-Based Learning | Teamwork with partner students and conducting interviews with professionals in the field |
| Undergraduate Research | KWL chart – Synthesis of research-based cultural similarities & differences |
| First-Year Seminars and Experiences | Not Applicable due to the nature of the course/the stage in the program |
| Writing-Intensive Courses | |
| Internships | |
| Capstone Courses & Projects | |

Table 2 displays the alignment between the high-impact practices and the examples of the IVE learning activities. It indicates that the three-way IVE project offered the participating students in France, Ukraine, and the U.S. opportunities to engage in high-impact practices of diversity and global learning, collaborative assignments and projects, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, service learning, and community-based learning, as well as undergraduate research. The partner professors assessed students' acquired knowledge and skills by using various activities and as-

assessments embedded in the project. Because of limited space in this paper, the future studies can focus on the assessments, elaborate them further, and provide data evidence. Due to the nature of the course, which was offered neither in the first year nor the senior year of the program, the described IVE did not have the component of first-year experiences, internships, capstone projects, or writing-intensive experiences.

Aligning with the United Nations' sustainable development Goal 4. Quality Education

In 2015, all United Nations (UN) members adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a blueprint to work together for a better and more sustainable world for all people and the planet by 2030 (UN, “The 17 goals”, n.d.b). A fundamental component of the 2030 Agenda is the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which is quality education aiming to facilitate all stakeholders to engage in “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], “Goal 4”, n.d.). Regarding quality education, the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 (i.e., the Report) points out that the COVID-19 global pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and other disasters have deepened the learning crisis and worsened educational inequity (UN, 2022). Accordingly, the Report calls for action for the governments to offer programs for all children to resume schooling, recover from their learning losses, and take care of their psychosocial needs (UN, 2022). Furthermore, the Report states that safe, inclusive, and continuous education helps learners cope with crises. For example, in spite of the war, the challenges it brought, and the damages it caused, remote learning has provided students in Ukraine with a psychologically safe place and a sense of normality (UN, 2022).

Table 3. Alignment Between the IVE Examples and the Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

| Goals and Targets | Indicator | The France–Ukraine–US IVE course |
|---|--|---|
| 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university | 4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training | All students enrolled in the participating classes in France, Ukraine, and the US were engaged in the IVE (100%). |

| Goals and Targets | Indicator | The France–Ukraine–US IVE course |
|--|--|---|
| 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship | 4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills | All students in the IVE course were engaged in activities using technical – and workforce-related skills (100%). |
| 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development | 4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment | All students in the IVE course were engaged in a curriculum on global citizenship education and sustainable education (100%). Their knowledge and skills were assessed by the professors across three countries (100%). The US participating students were pre-service teachers enrolled in the Childhood and Adolescence Inclusive Education programs (33.3%). |

Through collaboration via technological tools and the internet, IVEs provide students with sustainable international education with high quality. Table 3 displays the alignment between the France-Ukraine-US IVE course examples and the indicators applicable to the university setting, described in the Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN Statistics Division, n.d.).

A Three-way IVE Project: France–Ukraine–the United States

Since the fall semester of 2019, we have worked with Dr. Cynthia Boyer, our partner professor in France, to offer our students a three-way IVE project on the use and development of technology, which was a cross-country, cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-disciplinary collaboration among students enrolled in an English course in France, those in an Intercultural Communication course in Ukraine, and those in a Special Education course in the United States. We, the three professors, used backward design to co-plan the project, which started with the student learning outcomes (SLOs).

Then we co-developed several assessments, which were aligned with SLOs to monitor student learning progress throughout the IVE project. To fit into the schedules of all three courses across countries, the project was held for seven to eight weeks with four to five synchronous meetings, during which the students interacted with each other and worked together

on the joint tasks. In addition, students coordinated within their team to find outside-of-class time and preferred online platform(s) and technology tool(s) to communicate and continue their work. One assessment was an ongoing “What I Know, What I Want-to-know, and What I Learned (KWL) chart” modified from the original KWL chart created by Ogle (1986), which was used for students to reflect their learning about their partner students’ countries and cultures. Another assessment is an ice-breaker activity with a team introduction video and comments on peers’ videos. The students also conducted interviews with local professionals on the use of technology, and integrated the interview information into their final team presentation, comparing the development of technology and its use in education in France, Ukraine, and the United States.

During this three-way international virtual exchange, many challenges and obstacles were presented, such as different time zones, schedules, languages, class sizes, disciplines, cultures, technology preferences, course expectations, the pandemic, and the war (Zhang et al, 2023; Zhang & Pearlman, 2021). We and our students collaborated closely, communicated constantly, demonstrated great flexibility and understanding, and supported each other to build cooperation, make social relations, overcome challenges, and complete the project successfully.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper introduced technology-enhanced international virtual exchanges (IVE), or Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). It also provided a descriptive review of the benefits an IVE brought to educators and students, aligning with the skills contributing to workforce success reported by the AAC&U (Finley, 2021), the AAC&U high-impact practices (Kuh, 2008), and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 4. Quality Education (UN, 2022). Furthermore, a case study was provided concerning a three-way IVE course across France, Ukraine, and the United States.

This paper is descriptive in nature, is focused on IVE, a specific technological teaching tool, and on recognizing its benefits to sustainable education and student learning. Future studies will further explore how IVE, as a deeply humanistic phenomenon, offers intercultural exchange opportunities to students and will evaluate its effectiveness in improving student intercultural competence. In summary, the IVE is a cost-effective way to expand educational spaces through cooperation and social relations building, to provide

students with sustainable international education, and to better prepare students for global citizenship and workforce success.

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The use of new technologies in education – opportunities, risks and challenges in the times of intensive intercultural change

Abstract: This study comprises an analysis of the school education system in the context of using modern technologies. Its main goal is to present the benefits and limitations associated with the implementation of modern technologies in the school environment. Two fundamental questions will be asked: 1) What are the effects of using new technologies in education, including intercultural education? 2) Can modern technologies pave the way for implementing the ideal of education as an activity aimed primarily at shaping an individual capable of effective and creative adaptation to the social reality in which otherness, including cultural otherness, is common? The authors indicate the types of implemented technologies and assess their impact on adapting students to the extracurricular reality. Referring to the source data and postulates of the contemporary pedagogical and sociological thought, the authors highlight the topicality of the message requiring from the school the activation and development of students' competencies that will be effectively and creatively implemented in their future professional and social life. It should also be noted that education takes place in cyberspace as well, especially when it is related to the use of modern technologies, which is why great importance should be drawn to cybersecurity.

Keywords: education, new technologies, cybersecurity, interculturalism, ideal of education

Introduction

Contemporary societies, including the Polish one, can be described as systems of highly specialised institutions and units in which education plays a special role. It consists not only in the formation of human life abilities

which, on the one hand, will make one mature, critically thinking, and capable of full participation in social life (Digioacchino et al., 2016), but on the other hand, will equip one with the skills to flexibly and effectively adapt to unplanned changes and difficulties (Arcalean & Schiopu, 2009). The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly tested the adaptability of people and entire systems, including education. The literature on the subject suggests that education, especially intercultural one, fulfils two basic functions: socializing and liberating. The former consists in the socialization of a person, which makes one capable of living in a group, expressing emotions, and resolving conflicts. The latter is to teach one to liberate oneself from different environments, especially when one's expectations are illegitimate. The liberating function is also to enable a person to creatively develop their own agency, new practices and forms of social and individual life (Freire, 1972). Such an understanding of education, combining the formation of human identity with one's natural, creative development, refers to some extent to the thought of Florian Znaniecki and his ideal of education. Observing the growing complexity and the changeability of social life, Znaniecki advocated the idea of education preparing for socio-cultural life in general, not for participation in one or another group (Adamczyk, 2013). In particular, Znaniecki had in mind the cultural system into which learners should be introduced, and the social role for which they are prepared. However, this is not only about preparing the individual for later social roles. First of all, it is important to form a creative individual, who is able, after completing their education, to find themselves in the social reality and creatively change this reality. Therefore, the educational environment should be more or less similar to the ideal image of the cultural system of the educational group, which should be adopted by the learner during education (Kukla & Mielczarek, 2020). Therefore, modern formal and informal education should adapt to a much greater extent modern technologies that have settled in so many important areas of everyday and professional life (Furmanek, 2014). Contemporary education in Poland is subjected to changes not only at the legal level. The didactic process is also gradually changing (due to the rapid development of modern technologies) in order to use them in teaching. Today's schools are fundamentally different from the schools attended by Baby Boomers – 1946–1964, Generation X – 1965–1980, or Generation Y – 1981–1996 (Appelbaum et al., 2005). The changes that education is subjected to are unfavourable for some, for others they are a chance for the school to become a modern and student-friendly place. What are the effects of using new technologies in education?

Can modern technologies pave the way for the implementation of the ideal of education claimed, for instance, by Florian Znaniecki, to be an action aimed primarily at shaping a creative individual capable of adapting to social reality and creative changing of this reality?

One of the objectives of the school education system is the development of learners' creativity conducive to active participation in economic life, including the use of innovative curricular, organizational or methodological solutions in education. Another objective indicated is to develop learners' skills in the efficient use of information and communication technologies. Therefore, modern technologies in education have their legal basis as well (Karpiuk, 2020, p. 278).

Research methodology

The main objective of the analysis is to present the benefits, barriers and limitations resulting from the implementation of modern technologies in the school education system in the context of the creative educational ideal proposed by Znaniecki. Our intention is to answer two fundamental questions: 1) What are the effects of using new technologies in education, including intercultural education? 2) Can modern technologies pave the way for the implementation of the ideal of education as an activity aimed primarily at shaping an individual capable of effective and creative adaptation to social reality in which otherness, including cultural otherness, is common?

In the conducted research, the classic method of cognitive explanation, i.e., the method of analysis was used. The analysis was proceeded in two stages. The first stage consisted in collecting materials to extract the most important data, isolate the most important concepts and, consequently, determine the issues adequate for the research intentions. At this stage, the analytical-comparative method was used. The second stage consisted in the analysis of documents, reports, studies, works, aimed at establishing facts and ideas relevant in the context of the discussed problem, which are modern technologies in school education in relation to the educational ideal of Florian Znaniecki.

Research results

New technologies in schools – where and how are they used? In education, new technologies are used with an increasing frequency (Kuzin, 2018). Ob-

viously, computers with access to the network are the basis. In addition to computers, schools use other technological achievements, including tablets, interactive whiteboards, software, interactive platforms, electronic journals, or books on electronic devices. Modern technologies are used at the level of formal communication, informal communication, and didactics. It seems that computers with Internet access at school are already a standard. Looking at the report “Polska szkoła w dobie cyfryzacji. Diagnoza 2017” [Polish school in the era of digitization. Diagnosis 2017], it turns out that this is only partially true. Modern technologies are not used in schools as often as it is commonly believed because there is a lack of appropriate equipment on which educators and students could work. According to the data presented by the report, every fifth student at school used their own equipment for work in class, and apart from the computer and interactive whiteboard, the most commonly used equipment was a smartphone. Tablets, measurement interfaces, blocks for learning programming, or robots were almost not used in educational institutions (Plebańska et al. & PCG Edukacja, 2017). Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has also verified the infrastructure of Polish schools. The data from the NIK report showed that from April to May 2020, the Ministry of Education had to launch two projects aimed at reducing the scale of digital exclusion and increasing distance learning opportunities. According to the information provided by schools, some students did not have laptops, access to Internet connection with the right broadband. As part of these projects, the purchase of 137 000 pieces of computer equipment for teachers and students was refunded, 2 400 school multimedia packages (including 60 000 tablets) and 764 mobile computer labs were donated, including 12 224 laptops (NIK, 2021).

Despite the indicated difficulties, computers with access to the network for learning IT, mathematics, foreign languages, or Polish are increasingly in use, and students and teachers appreciate the potential of digital technologies and their impact on increasing the attractiveness, effectiveness of classes, and students' involvement in learning. These devices are used by uploading programs for learning specific subjects and quizzes, e.g., historical or chemical. They are also open to the public for students staying in the library or common room. Thanks to them, students search for information necessary for lessons and they learn independently. Computers can be used by students with learning difficulties, e.g., children and adolescents with diagnosed dysgraphia (Hasselbring et al., 2000). Not without significance is currently the presence of social media, such as Facebook. They allow for associating

students, e.g., by creating discussion groups, interest groups, and providing all participants with information about subsequent meetings or exchanging thematic articles found on the web, using the platform. Thus, they also contribute to strengthening social ties.

Why is the use of interactive whiteboards so important for the quality of teaching? Boards are among the most frequently chosen modern teaching aids. The first advantage is the ability to use this device at all stages of education, from kindergarten to the last grades of secondary school. They make learning easier and more interesting (Sessoms, 2008; Pitula 2021).

The so-called e-books and audiobooks also play an important role in education. E-books in many schools solve the problem of insufficiently supplied libraries and allow students to access the broadly understood literature. Libraries invest in new e-books, which are cheaper than buying many copies of school books. Audiobooks, in turn, are a perfect solution for busy people: they can, for example, clean up and read a book at the same time, and for children who have a problem with reading, e.g. they have a strong sight impairment or are diagnosed with dyslexia. Electronic student diaries have also been introduced in many schools, which are a kind of computer platform that allows for checking student data and their grades. Thanks to this, parents can quickly and easily monitor their children's educational achievements without visiting school. In addition to grades and attendance, teachers can post information on what to prepare for classes, when they plan larger tests, and can add information about a school trip or the next parents' meeting. Universities, in turn, have introduced electronic index books, which are slowly replacing paper ones. An increasing number of schools and higher education institutions offer modern e-learning platforms, including distance learning, practically without leaving home. Abroad, and especially overseas, e-learning is already an everyday reality. Thanks to the use of such tools, one can offer lectures via the Internet, organize online courses and trainings and conduct online lessons. The importance of preparing the educational system for effective e-learning has been proved by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion

The presented data and information indicate two important aspects of the contemporary reality. First of all, the development of new technologies means that nowadays, people have to learn faster and differently, using modern technologies (Pitula 2022). Secondly, the appropriate way of education

prepares to deal with the complexity of the world and the dynamics of its changes and to adapt to changing living conditions (Pituła 2021).

Florian Znaniecki appealed for such a method of education that required education of individuals capable of adaptation and creative presence in the social reality. This is also one of the commonly held statements in the expert literature, according to which schools are places for broadly understood learning and the role of educators is to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the future (Mitra, 2011).

While writing about science, it should be emphasized that it is about the broad context of information and skills that adults already possess and children and adolescents must acquire to use them later in their adult lives (Mishra & Close, 2020). At this point, it is worth defining precisely the functions of contemporary education, which, depending on the theoretical premises adopted by researchers and the applicable socio-political conditions, are defined and treated differently. Nowadays, several basic functions of education are indicated, such as socialization, integration, determining the social position, cultural function and caring one. In the context of the conducted discussion, the socialization function is particularly important.

The role of education in the socialization of each member of the community, regardless of where, by whom, and under what conditions one was raised, is to transmit and consolidate knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable communication, interpersonal relationships and general understanding of the environment in which the individual lives. More broadly, the role of education in the context of the socialization function is to teach members of society the (mainly scientific) knowledge, ideological and moral values, abilities and skills, norms of behaviour, the content of which is determined by the social, economic, and political structure of this society and the level of its material and technological development. In this context, the use of modern technologies in education and the instruction on them is crucial. This is important in the context of determining the individual's social position. Education allows for achieving a certain status, getting the right education, and, consequently, allows for advancing in the social hierarchy. That is because education can provide more employment opportunities and, consequently, a better social status of a person, which is difficult without considering digital competencies (Davis, 2021). The integrative function of education is extremely important in the context of modern technologies, digital competencies, and communication (Markowska-Manista, Dobkowska, Balkan, 2023).

School is the first place where a person learns to integrate with others, learns social conventions, and learns the principles of their application. Spending time in classroom, with youth organisations and peer groups, allows for better adaptation to the demands, norms, and principles of the society. Such integration cannot be fully implemented at present if it does not take into account communication based on modern technologies.

The task of education is not only teaching, but also education and care. As noted by Mishra and Close (2020, p. 2), the school's caring function largely allows parents to perform the economic function that is the family's responsibility. The school is also a place of entertainment and recreation, of establishing new bonds, often for the whole life. It is one of the reasons why the transition to remote learning made necessary by the pandemic has proved so difficult for young people. However, it was not only the lack of face-to-face contact with peers that was a negative factor in their overall well-being and academic performance. According to the NIK Report, the following elements had an impact on the reduction of the quality of education, the deepening of educational inequalities, and the deterioration of the psychophysical condition of students and teachers: limited access to distance education due to digital exclusion in the case of students; insufficient level of digital competencies necessary for distance learning among teachers; inability to provide all students with digital access to learning (NIK, 2021). The changes to which the global socio-economic post-COVID reality is subjected, not only in Poland, cause that in the scientific discourse, there are questions about the basic goals of education and their adaptation to the changing reality (Biesta, 2009).

Security in cyberspace (like other types of security) allows not only to meet social needs, but also ensures the uninterrupted functioning of public institutions (Karpiuk, 2022, p. 82). In the case of cybersecurity, an appropriate level of protection of information systems is to be ensured. However, in connection with the need to guarantee such a level, in special cases, there may be restrictions on individual liberties and rights in cyberspace (Czuryk, 2022, p. 34).

Security in cyberspace is a very important element allowing for the efficient performance of public tasks using ICT systems, which must be properly protected against cyberattacks that may, even in extreme cases, prevent the work of the authorities (Hoffman & Karpiuk, 2022, p. 628). It also applies to education as a public task, which can also be carried out through ICT systems, as was commonly seen in the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the duty of public authorities to ensure cybersecurity for all public services, including

those related to education, when provided electronically. Such services are to be publicly available on the one hand, and on the other hand, to be resistant to cyber threats that interfere with their use (Karpiuk, 2021, p. 234). This obligation also applies to threats occurring in education if learning takes place in cyberspace.

Conclusions

What are the effects of modern technologies on the world of education? Modern technologies certainly have advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include the fact that they significantly facilitate education for many groups of people, children, and disabled youth: the blind, hearing impaired, or chronically ill, whose health condition makes it impossible to stay at school. Thanks to modern technologies, they can acquire knowledge in a way that is adapted to their capabilities, using e-learning and special software. Moreover, modern technologies make learning much more pleasant and interesting for students. One can conduct lessons using innovative interactive whiteboards that activate young people, eliminating reluctance while listening to teachers' lectures. Thanks to interactive whiteboards and other similar devices, students take an active part in the lesson and remember more of it. In turn, electronic student diaries facilitate contact between parents and teachers. Modern technologies also have their drawbacks. Computers and the Internet make interpersonal relationships shallow; children spend a lot of time online; they have difficulties in establishing proper relationships. Writing e-mails and text messages makes us less willing to handwrite, children get tired of their hands faster, they have problems with maintaining calligraphic writing and cannot focus.

Information and communication technologies introduced to schools should prepare children for digital adulthood by providing them with modern tools and equipping them with the desired competences of the future (Iwanicka, 2019). This requires a competent teacher who, with their knowledge, experience and commitment, will be able to properly implement new technologies into the teaching process, in accordance with the assumed goals. Teachers who do not feel confident and competent in a digital environment may retreat to the old teaching methods they have proven, which are increasingly different from the changing reality (Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2023).

The answer to the second research question (Can modern technologies pave the way for the implementation of the ideal of education, as an action

aimed primarily at shaping an individual capable of effective and creative adaptation to social reality?) is not unambiguous. Modern technologies can cause and in many cases cause that properly used, they not only facilitate learning, but also allow students and young people to develop not in opposition to the digital world of social reality, but compatibly with it. Implementing them to schools, where their task is to facilitate learning and make it even more pleasant for the recipients, meets Znaniecki's claim of acquiring competencies by students during education that allow them to creatively change the social reality in which they will function after graduation (Adamczyk, 2013).

It should be noted as well that education also takes place in cyberspace, especially when it is related to the use of modern technologies, which is why great importance should be attached to cybersecurity. It is particularly important when the cyberspace is used by children and young people who do not have sufficient knowledge about cyber threats or life experience.

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EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE



Implementation of the Positive Early Childhood Education Curriculum for students with migration experience – the assumptions and directions of action

Abstract: Migration puts children in a difficult situation – it takes away their stability and constancy of everyday events and plucks them from a safe environment. The purpose of the article is to present the main assumptions and innovative ideas related to the author’s Positive Early Childhood Education Curriculum, as well as indicating the forms of work with students with migration trauma experience. The applied method was the educational project description. The extraordinary nature of the Curriculum is exhibited in the relocation of metatheoretical assumptions – from pedagogy of “lack” to pedagogy of “growth”. Therefore, it is recommended that the child’s well-being should be nurtured (M. Seligman, A. Antonovsky) alongside the development of intercultural proximity and “soft competences”, which are of importance for students with trauma experiences. The Curriculum allows as well for acquiring teacher’s self-awareness. It has been indicated how to implement the Curriculum assumptions – positivity, optimality, balance, and prospectivity for students with various cultural and biographical backgrounds. Special attention is devoted to strengthening the resilience in students with migration experiences and to the directions of actions to enable them the emotional, socio-cultural, instrumental, material and procedural, systemic, environmental and preventive support.

Keywords: early childhood education, student with migration experience, Positive Early Childhood Education Curriculum, positive pedagogy, resilience

Introduction

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine made many people struggle with the trauma of wartime emigration – a threat to life and health as well as locational,

geopolitical and economic instability. This leads to the risk of intensification of the situation and symptoms (Elvevåg and DeLisi, 2022) associated with post-traumatic consequences: experiencing negative emotions – anxiety, influx, depression, losses (Anonymous Author, 2018), interpersonal relationships disorder (loneliness, isolation), cognitive development disorder (Barret, 1997), e.g. lack of motivation for taking up learning and the functioning in a state of misinformation. This crisis created new challenges for Polish school. The tasks of helping a large number of foreign students, the importance of protecting their mental health, the development of resilience (Kobasa, 1979) and learning to cope with crisis situations were the most significant ones. The previous research and analyses have indicated a low level of preparation of Polish education for such challenges (Mamzer, 2018; Markowska-Manista and Dąbrowa, 2016).

Therefore, the goal is to dedicate the main assumptions and innovative ideas related to the *Positive Early Childhood Education Curriculum* (Anonymous Author, 2023) to guide the forms of work with students with the experience of migration trauma. From 2023, this curriculum will be introduced by the WSiP Publishing House as a nationwide educational program, which gives both the opportunity of getting to know with it for a wide group of teachers and the hope that it may help to apply it while working with the student with migration experience. The strategy of working with students described in the *Curriculum* enables a two-way activity. It is directed to the specific ways of alleviating trauma affected by the child (Briere and Scott, 2010; Brom and Kleber, 1989) and also to long-term supporting of resilience related to positive pedagogy and the concept of Generalized Resilience Resources by A. Antonovsky (1979, 1986, 1994, 1995, 1997), as well as to strengthening the components of comprehensibility, resourcefulness, meaningfulness (Binnebesel, 2006, Kosińska-Dec and Jelonkiewicz, 2001).

Characteristics of the Curriculum

The *Curriculum* is intended for students with various potentials determined by their cultural and biographical background. The author's inspiration to develop the *Positive Early Childhood Education Curriculum* (Anonymous Author, 2023) came from the willingness to adjust education to the current needs of the child and the new challenges of the present day and age. As the conceptual basis of the *Curriculum* (Anonymous Author, 2023, p. 4) was developed, it was concluded that students needed to meet the following as-

pects: a positive educational start, self-confidence, the proximity of others and good relationships with them. The discussed *Curriculum* underlines the value of positivity, **the relocation of metatheoretical assumptions – from pedagogy of “lack”, “deprivation”** (Jacyno and Szulżycka, 1999) to pedagogy of “growth” (Szmidt, 2013) which testifies to its originality.

The analyses of early childhood education (Klus-Stańska and Szczepka-Pustkowska, 2009) reveal traditional, instructional teaching methods to have lagged behind the progress of civilisation. The *Curriculum* builds on theoretical and didactic foundations inspired by the concepts of **humanistic pedagogy and sociocultural constructivism** (Bruner, 2006; Cole, 1995; Filipiak, 2012; Klus-Stańska 2018; Tomasello, 2002; Wood, 2006; Wygotski, 1989). The *Curriculum* recommends that learning should be perceived as a social process and that objectives, content and methods be customised and tailored to the learner’s potentialities and educational needs. The *Curriculum* is aimed at facilitating conditions conducive to the positive development of learners; therefore, emphasis is put on **their cognitive wisdom and responsibility, resilience and security, resourcefulness and creativity, and “soft competences”** (sensitivity and cooperation, intercultural proximity). Furthermore, the *Curriculum* establishes four standards, which are the assumptions of the direction and quality of education: *positivity, optimality, balancing and propectivity* (Anonymous Author, 2023, pp. 18–20).

Positivity

For more than two decades, representatives of social sciences have been advocating for a change in focus “*from human weaknesses to human strength*” (Trzebińska, 2008, p. 21). The shift presupposes a transformation of questions related to the learner – instead of specifying: “*What are the child’s weaknesses?*”, researchers make attempts to answer the question: “*What are the child’s strengths on which their education can be built?*”. Accordingly, the *Curriculum* suggests looking at the child in a manner related to “positive psychology and pedagogy” (Carr, 2009; Czapiński, 2019; Szmidt, 2013) and – in line with the theoretical assumptions of M.P. Seligman (2005, 2010) and the research of A. Antonovsky (1979, 1995) and A. Antonovsky and S. Sagy (1986) – it recommends that the child’s well-being and resilience should be nurtured, which is of particular importance in the case of students who have experienced trauma (Witkin, 2000).

Optimality

Optimality is related to making the most of the student's opportunities and environment. As far as working with students with migration experience is concerned, it is recommended using varied methods to be adjusted as optimally as possible to the students' needs while using an efficient communication strategy (applying all means of expression).

Balancing and integration

While in class, balancing and integration will be related to the following co-existing moments (Anonymous Author, 2023, pp. 18–19):

- triggering the freedom of thought and actions enabling the thinking process to be organised;
- compensating curiosity with situations in which confidence is gained;
- using both scientific findings and intuitive perceptions of art;
- developing declarative knowledge integrated with procedural knowledge.

As regards working with the students who have experienced migration, it is assumed that they will feel confident under the following conditions:

- development of the individual's "self" and community relations;
- expression and control of emotions;
- simultaneous toughness, sensitivity and empathy;
- offsetting dynamic activity with moments of calmness and tranquillity.

Prospectivity

The teacher's actions should be related to the care for the students' future, including the ones who have fallen victim to circumstance. This objective may be achieved by, for instance, promoting competences important in future (Bakhshi et al., 2017) and using creative thinking as the students adapt to new tasks at hand.

A reflective teacher

The *Curriculum* assumes the form of dialogue with the teacher (Anonymous Author, 2023, pp. 20–21; 91). In a culturally diverse environment, it is especially important to encourage personal creativity and for the teacher to develop their didactic self-awareness. As the teacher's knowledge of teaching is expanded, the emancipatory and interpretative approach (Brookfield, 1995) is to be applied through questions allowing the teacher to initiate the reconstruction of their practice and to enable the analysis of actual school

situations. Reflection on how tasks are fulfilled with the inclusion of *positivity, optimality, balancing and prospectiveness* support teachers as they make decisions (Mizerek, 2021; Pollard, 1998). Thanks to this, they can take the role of a “*supportive companion*” (Klus-Stańska, 2018, p. 128) to the child’s cultural, social and cognitive experiences.

Methods – working with students with migration experience using A. Antonovsky’s theory and positive pedagogy

The development of the didactic recommendations (Bernacka-Langier, et al., 2011; Guziuk-Tkacz, 2019; Jurek, 2015; Kubitsky, 2012) is substantiated here by the complexity of the situation in which a migrant family finds itself, the scale of the migration phenomenon and the current socio-political realities. As regards students with migration experience, it is requisite that non-conventional ways of support are sought, as the classical ones are not always capable of meeting their needs or fulfilling their potentialities. On the basis of positive pedagogy and A. Antonovsky’s theory, the Curriculum uses methods related to minimizing the effects of trauma and developing resilience. A. Antonovsky (1995, 1997) distinguishes three aspects of life experiences that shape the resilience:

- logicity, coherence – understood as the similarity of the new situation with previous experiences;
- overload/underload balance defining the relationship between requirements and capabilities, energy, efficiency, abilities and knowledge; the author attributed an equal negative role to overload (excess of stimuli) and underload (emptiness, monotony);
- participation in decision-making related to consent, responsibility and influence on the outcome of the tasks assigned to the individual;

The stronger the sense of coherence, the more resistant the child becomes to traumatic events (Jelonkiewicz and Kosińska-Dec, 2007; Sęk, 2001), searching for logic, sense and resourcefulness (possibility of action) in them.

The aftermath of crisis experience – information and cognitive support

Migration puts children in a difficult situation, as it takes away their stability and constancy in everyday events and plucks them from the environment they know and in which they feel safe. The awareness of a student’s potential

reactions makes the teacher prepare for unpredictable conduct, which they should consider as typically arising from the students' involvement in events "*beyond the normal human experience*" (Gałecki, 2022).

The child resorts to such conduct as they react to chronic deprivation and persistent overload attributable to migration (Borkowska, 2016, Elvevåg and DeLisi, 2022; Oviedo, et al., 2022). These exceptional circumstances, the threat to one's life and health, witnessing warfare and violence can trigger PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms (Joseph, Williams and Yule, 1997). Children go through negative emotional states, such as chronic anxiety, sadness; they become apathetic and hypersensitive (Lis-Turlejska, 1993; 2005). They reluctantly discuss their experiences or make friends. Nightmares cause insomnia and inspire terror. Children have the tendency to re-enact their trauma in their thoughts and drawings, while displaying an apparent indifference to the horror of their experience (Bryant and Harvey, 2011; Cohen, et al., 2011; Heszen, 2013; Terelak, 2001;). Trauma psychologists (Everly and Lating, 1995; Lifton, 1980; Horowitz, 1993) admit that children at first deny what took place. Later, they turn to anger. They try reversing their loss in the next phase. After the period of hope, apathy and sadness appear. In the long term, the child may also come to terms with what they have experienced and recover their self-control.

Trust and understanding – emotional support

Children with migration experience take time before they open up and they need more attention. They are less willing to help and may alienate themselves from the group or display excessive emotionality (Charlton and Thompson, 1996).

The primary task should be to carefully and discreetly observe the student. It is important not to "be around" invasively and to put what makes the child feel safe to good use. The methods that may help calm the child's nerves include (but are not limited to): music therapy, relaxation or psychodrama. In some particular situations, *conversation* plays the most essential role. Its course necessitates showing empathy and tact and creating a sense of security and psychological comfort for such a student. The forms of spoken conversation are related to the concept of A. Antonovsky (1995, 1997). The fact that the teacher may not avoid these conversations is pointed out. Such a traumatic situation should be addressed in the way that should strain the students' resilience to the least possible extent and should not aggravate the

state of stress or uncertainty. As for younger children, it is good to initiate conversation with them by using drawings or games.

Emotions and safety – “Will something happen...?”

The interview should be carried out by the teacher when children are cool, calm and focused. Do not incite emotions, but do not pretend that nothing bad has happened, either. For instance, use such a paraphrase as: *“I can see that you are scared. Do you want to talk about it?”* It is important for the conversation not to turn into questioning or subjecting the students’ emotions to public judgement.

Children who have experienced trauma may be more distracted or tense (Herman, 1999). Therefore, apart from conversation, put emphasis on instilling the sense of proximity and warmth; other useful methods include: planning time together, carrying out routine tasks, directing attention to activities related to students’ interest, reducing emotional tension.

Comprehensibility – “What does it mean...?”

The student is likely to feel more confident if they comprehend what is going on and can make sense of the experiences around them. Talk about what you are sure of, in as simple terms as possible, in the language tailored to the students’ age as you explain difficult concepts and phenomena, in a manner that will allow them to accept this emotionally.

Making sense – “Why...?”

Children often inquire about the meaning of the evil affecting their lives. Explain that not only good things happen to people, that sometimes one may run across evil people and find oneself in unfavourable situations. On the other hand, draw their attention to the diversity of the world and the presence of people who help others, care about safety and are willing to prevent evil.

Resourcefulness – “What can I do?”

Frequently, children feel more confident when they know they may react to the events at hand. It is worth showing them that even a situation which may seem completely beyond one’s control can be affected. You may engage the students in activities allowing them to make an impact, such as helping people in need or creating networks of students who pursue similar goals. Create and foster a sense of community, togetherness, and solidarity.

Building relationships, counteracting exclusion – sociocultural support

The *Curriculum* acknowledges an important role of peers as the child develops competences. The assumption is made that a group of the student's peers also includes teachers (*peer tutoring*). The student finds it easier to acquire new skills by learning from partners at a similar developmental stage (Sajdera, 2016). However, those of them who have experienced migration may be under the impression that they do not fit in culturally and tend to isolate themselves or to stick to their national groups only. The greater such alienation is, the more the students are missing their loved ones left behind in their homeland. The differences discovered between the new culture and one's own can surprise them or even make them feel indignant, the cognitive dissonance being displayed as **culture shock**: positive attitude towards cultural novelty (referred to as the honeymoon), disorientation (anger directed at oneself and others at a later stage), reintegration (integration into the new culture), autonomy and independence – effective functioning in both cultural contexts.

Incomplete adaptation can trigger concerns among such learners' peers, which are caused by environmental biases confirming the unwillingness of immigrants to adapt. It is necessary that the teacher calmly yet firmly opposes such hostile attitudes towards migrant students and inspires their classmates to help, and that the teacher draws their attention to the importance of all cultures and the indispensability of each and every member of the group. A proper form of inclusion is joint action, for instance during celebrations, as well as the representation of the culture to which the student belonged in their country of origin or serving a function in the school community. The sense of self-worth among students developed in this way contributes to greater involvement in learning and school life (Łuszczynska, 2004).

Organisation of learning – individualization, instrumental support – positive diagnosis, strategy of positive challenges

Working with children who have experienced migration can be related to families seeking asylum in Poland for various (both economic and political) reasons. Therefore, it should be a priority to identify the child's legal status and the choices affecting their adaptation (permanent vs. temporary resi-

dence, etc.). This should be also based on thorough observation and provide for learning their needs and “strengths” (Gardner, 2002). It should be kept in mind that any diagnosis must be dynamic, non-stigmatising and focused on questions: *What are the child’s current options and needs? What makes the child unique? What strategies does the child adopt while dealing with difficult issues?*

Ensuring equal opportunities in education provides for individualization while presenting challenges to the student. The *Curriculum* (Anonymous Author, 2023, pp. 48–49) makes the assumption that information discrepancy (cognitive conflict) is the most effective way to initiate learning. However, this difficulty (a sense of their own incompetence, etc.) can frequently become off-putting for the students. Accordingly, it is suggested that ignorance should be reformulated into a “**positive challenge**” as the starting point for working out a solution. Meanwhile, the methods of coping with the challenge are being developed (if I am trying to figure something out, it is a challenge for me, a reason to take action, not to feel deterred or to fail), a shift from “*how it should be done*” to “*how it can be done*,” taking into consideration other solutions in the equation. The challenge enables the positive structuring of experiences, organizing them (“*planning how I do something*”) and attaching meaning to them (“*why am I doing something?*”). Additionally, my suggestion is that the analysis and assessment of student achievement ought to be: *positive and optimising* – oriented towards their competences rather than deficiencies; *balanced* – using various forms of information collection; related to all spheres of one’s development; *prospective* – presenting challenges for the future.

During the school year, however, specific issues may turn up, for instance the lack of textbooks or a student joining classes in the middle of the school year. In the first place, there are communication barriers (a different alphabet, e.g. Latin vs. Cyrillic). It is advised that teachers do not require exact correctness, that they use expressive gestures (related to *optimal “communicative totality”*), rely on multisensory transmission and seek help from a cultural assistant. What might cause issues is frequent absenteeism among migrant children due to commitments to their family (e.g. caring for siblings). However, the ability to diagnose such obstacles (and the educational needs of the student) can help reduce their risk and allow a major step to be taken towards providing equal opportunities in education (Anonymous Author, 2023, pp. 71–73).

Cooperation and integration with parents – systemic and community support

The student's environment has a significant impact on their attitude towards school; educational awareness and cultural norms of parents are also significant; for instance, parents may consider school necessary, indifferent or harmful. For that reason, the student's education is to be supported by an important pillar that is the ability to unite parents around common goals. As a result of their erratic rhythm of life (Figley, 1986), they may not see the importance of their children's education in a country which they consider to be a stop on their way to another location. Consistently, and for causes related to language, parents may not be interested whether their children make progress at school or not. In the case of major cultural and linguistic differences, it is therefore important to facilitate the mediation of an assistant to validate the teacher's intentions and to establish good relationship.

Minimising antisocial conduct and learning to cope – preventive support

Aid measures do not always bring about a lasting result with immediate effect. Most frequently, the disturbance of one's everyday life, chronic stress and unstable socio-economic situation foster negative attitudes (indifference, passivity and lack of confidence) and antisocial conduct. The measures are aimed to attract the teacher's attention or to work one's way up in the hierarchy of peers. Their source usually lies in some issues with self-esteem, low resilience and inappropriate stress management mechanisms. Consistently, preventive measures to counteract anti-social conduct, e.g. disregard for duties, aggression or inciting violence, are to be implemented at the same time. In the *Curriculum* (Anonymous Author, 2023, pp. 59–62), 3 forms of preventive student support are recommended.

The educational strategy of *positive discipline* (Nelsen, 2015) assumes that the student and purposes of their actions should be understood; focus should be on solutions instead of punishment; efforts and endeavours should be appreciated, not only relying on measurable success; responsibility and positive relationships are to be shared; instilling feelings of shame or guilt should be avoided. The perception of a sense of belonging, the respect by students with migration experience, the emphasis on prospectiveness, re-

sponsibility and sensitivity both affect anger management and reduce the occurrence of problems. The patient and consistent establishment of limits to misconduct is to be combined with: training in the application of socially permissible methods of dealing with frustration and negative emotions, building up the student's confidence in their own skills, strengthening self-esteem but also joint responsibility and trust in others.

Predictability and peacefulness on the part of the teacher, giving rise to comprehensible, organized and foreseeable situations develops resilience – *resilience, bravery, sense of coherence* (Antonovsky, 1995; Flach, 1990; Hanson and Hanson, 2018; Sikorska, 2016; Strycharczyk and Clough, 2021), ability to handle difficult situations (mental flexibility, ability to self-correct). According to Antonovsky (1995), there are three aspects of experience shaping this: *logicality, coherence* – similarity of a new situation to a previous experience; *overload/underload balance* – defining the relation between requirements and capabilities and *involvement in making decisions* (influence on the task outcome).

Outdoor methods related to elements of *adventure education and experiential pedagogy* suggest that the students toughen up under stressful conditions with positive values (Anonymous Author, 2023, p. 61). They facilitate the creation of experiences during which challenges are confronted, obstacles are overcome, and the child is taught to handle difficult circumstances. They increase the sense of control, boost confidence and can solve difficulties encountered by over-sensitive students.

Conclusions

The extraordinary nature of the situation, uncertainty, threat to life and health, fear for loved ones adversely affect students' emotions, self-image, self-esteem and motivation. The long-term consequences of limited social life, chronic, persistent stressors have adverse effects on the emotional well-being of children (Dudek, 2003). The program aims: to promote optimism, positive attitude towards oneself and to reduce anxiety, which, according to the assumptions of M.P. Seligman (1997, 2005, 2010) and the research on the sense of coherence by A. Antonovsky (1995), is conducive to the health and resilience of students (Mroziak, Czabała and Zwoliński, 1996). Yet, most of all, it builds and strengthens a young person's sense of meaning in life. In conclusion, the *Curriculum* will be aimed at creating positive conditions for the students that have experienced migration so that they can learn and

participate in school life to the full extent. The stable, balanced and versatile processes of adaptation and, above all, healing the trauma experienced due to migration facilitate their development of cognitive responsibility, resilience and resourcefulness.

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Implementation of the DPA approach in an intercultural context on the example of the ACTTE project

Abstract: Due to the emergence of new social problems resulting from weakening pro-integration moods regarding culturally, ethnically, or religiously diverse societies, the Acting in Context by Training the Trainers in Social Empowerment (ACTTE) project was prepared and implemented. The Polish National Agency of Academic Exchange (NAWA) financed the project as part of the International Academic Partnerships program. The project goals were: 1) shaping competencies/skills in the field of DPA (Developing the Power to Act) in organized training participants (NGO employees and academic teachers), 2) developing tools for intervention work based on the concept of Empowerment. Within the training, the research was carried out based on the action research methodology and the use of scaling and uncategorized interview. The article presents the excerpt of the research, which was aimed at determining the changes in the competencies related to the use of the DPA approach in the project's participants, as well as their subjective understanding of the DPA. The presented research results show the legitimacy of the project implementation by partner institutions, which are universities and non-governmental organizations. The competences and skills acquired by the project participants can be used in academic and environmental work.

Keywords: training, intervention, social problems, Empowerment, interculturalism

Introduction

The contemporary world is constantly transforming, and its distinctive feature is multiculturalism. For many years, pro-integration moods prevailed in Europe regarding culturally, ethnically, or religiously diverse societies. Still,

the following years brought significant changes in attitudes towards multiculturalism. The change in the perception of the Other/Stranger could have been the result of the intensification of terrorism, an uncontrolled wave of refugees and emigrants (Lewowicki, 2017, p. 19), and ultimately – the ongoing war in Ukraine. These negative tendencies have recently become visible in Poland, but other European societies are not free from them either. This seems disturbing, considering that all of Europe constitutes a mixture of different nationalities and cultures.

The literature analysis and numerous studies confirm that the acceptance of multiculturalism enhances the integration of diverse societies (Cabiati and Raineri, 2016; Gee et al., 2009). Multiculturalism serves new forms of the desired social cohesion, which is a necessary condition for economic growth and social development in the requirements of the post-modern economy (Sadowski, 2016, p. 79). The post-pandemic reality and the military conflict in Ukraine have shown that Europe should consolidate. Therefore, intercultural education, both formal and non-formal, becomes essential. In the latter, the citizens, gathered around non-governmental organizations, play an important role. In many environments, foundations and associations play the role of leaders in undertaking activities in the field of intercultural education. This education is crucial in shaping intercultural coexistence skills, especially in the conditions in which entire groups become pauperized.

The social assistance and social work system, both in Poland and the entire European Union, is facing new challenges related to the emergence of problems, such as increasing socio-economic inequalities or intensified migration processes and the insufficient effectiveness of interventions undertaken in this area. The Acting in Context by Training the Trainers in Social Empowerment (ACTTE) project was prepared and implemented to meet these problems and the expectations of various environments. The Polish National Agency of Academic Exchange (NAWA) financed the project as part of the International Academic Partnerships program. The project responded to the current social needs in Poland and the EU countries. It was also consistent with the current model of social work, assuming the active participation of people receiving support in overcoming their difficulties (Laging and Heidenreich, 2019; Tanner et al., 2017).

The ACTTE project was carried out by a consortium of 4 universities and 4 NGOs from Poland, France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium. The main goals of the project were: (1) creating tools for intervention work (a toolbox) based on the concept of Empowerment for employees of non-governmental orga-

nizations (NGOs) working with marginalized and socially excluded people and academic teachers educating future educators and social workers, (2) developing competencies/skills in DPA (Developing the Power to Act) – an approach using the concept of Empowerment in people participating in training (both NGO employees and academic teachers).

The DPA approach is based on the observation that over many decades of social work, there has often been a lack of productivity, which makes the social workers tend to develop a sense of professional helplessness. At the same time, the assisted people are often blocked and remain frozen in the sense of helplessness, in which any possibility of change is unattainable in their eyes (Le Bossé, 2016). In line with the DPA approach, Empowerment is the cornerstone of the psychological process in which motivational action is a crucial issue, and the intervention should be tailored to individuals and the context of their lives. DPA is “a process by which people, together or separately, gain a greater opportunity to act on what is important to themselves, their relatives, or the group they identify with” (Le Bossé, 2016). In this approach, the first step is to recognize the problem here and now because the here and now is the only place to act. There is no possibility of acting in the future or the past. It is impossible to rebuild the past or project the future onto the present. Thus, one of the most critical aspects of this approach is that it is an imperative to be rooted in here and now. The second necessary step is identifying the conditions required to turn the action into success. To do this, it is essential to recognize the relevant conditions and make a change in the immediate surroundings (Rappaport, 1984). With this approach, it is possible to reverse the destruction and translate it into a personal or collective construction process.

The DPA approach is focused on four axes that formed the basis for the training provided in the ACTTE project: 1) Identifying people involved in the problem; 2) Involvement of interested people in defining problems and solutions; 3) Taking into account the context when conducting the intervention; 4) Introducing the awareness-raising approach. The overriding goal of the training was to shape the “train the trainers” competencies among the participants. Each workshop was organized in a different partner country (Spain, Italy, Belgium) and lasted four days. There were five workshops in the project – two online (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and three face-to-face trainings. To show the participants the sociocultural context of the DPA approach implementation, the study visits to social work institutions that use the Empowerment concept in their interventions were organized during the workshops.

Methodology

The research methodology was based on the concept of action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2007, p. 1), including a participatory approach. Action research is a social research strategy that combines the competencies of researchers with the knowledge and commitment of research participants in the face of social, political, or environmental problems (Greenwood and Levin, 2007). Purposeful sampling was applied. Twelve people (NGO employees and academic teachers) were selected from partner institutions to participate in the research.

The research involved a triangulation of methods. Within the quantitative part, a diagnostic tool for measuring professional and social skills was prepared (pre – and post-test). The first research stage included diagnosing the professional and social skills of DPA workshops participants at the start of their participation in the project. The second stage involved the diagnosis of additional professional and social skills resulting from the nature of the training based on the Empowerment concept acquired during a series of 5 workshops. Statistical analyses were performed to compare the results obtained in the first and second stages of the study. All the obtained variables were expressed on an ordered polynomial scale (Likert scale), so in further analysis, it was necessary to use non-parametric tests and statistics. As two studies were conducted, but it was impossible to assign the respondents' answers from both studies, it was necessary to use non-parametric tests for independent samples. For this purpose, the Mann-Whitney U test (Domański, 1980, p. 144; Ferguson and Takane, 1997, pp. 457, 460–461) was used as the strongest non-parametric alternative to the Student's t-test. The effect size was determined from the non-directional formula for the rank-two-series correlation (r) proposed by Wendt. The observed probability (p) was used in reading the test results. If this probability was lower than the assumed significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, then the null hypothesis on the lack of differences between the first and second test was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

In line with the qualitative approach, twelve participants of the DPA workshop were interviewed. The interviews were conducted with eight NGO employees and four academic teachers. During the interviews, some data were collected concerning DPA workshops participants' experiences gained during the training and utilizing the acquired knowledge and skills in professional practice. The primary purpose of the interviews was to determine the

effectiveness of the methods learned by the participants and the possibility of using them in various cultural contexts. Analytical coding was used in the collected data elaboration (Richards, 2015, p.112–114).

During the research, answers to the following research questions were obtained:

- To what extent have the workshops participants’ competencies in using the DPA approach improved?
- How do the workshops participants understand the DPA approach?

The results of the research are presented in the following sections.

Results

Changes in the competencies related to the use of the DPA approach in workshops participants

In the diagnostic tool for measuring personal and professional skills, which was used as a pre-test and post-test in the quantitative part of the research conducted in the project, two groups of competencies related to DPA can be distinguished. The first concerns competencies closely associated with the assumptions of the DPA approach; the second falls within the area of DPA and may also refer to broader professional skills. With regard to both of the above-mentioned groups of competencies, it was checked whether their level increased in the workshop participants after the training.

Among the competencies closely related to the DPA, the following were distinguished: 1) inclusive perspective on clients (p=0,061); 2) offering others the possibility to tell their story (p=0,048); 3) answering the needs of the client (p=0,094); 4) identifying client’s needs on micro-, mezzo – and macro level (p=0,179); 5) knowledge of the DPA (p=0,003); 6) knowledge of Empowerment (p=0,000); 7) awareness of the influence of social context (p=0,038); 8) reflecting through different perspectives (p=0,044); 9) ability to teach DPA related tools and knowledge (p=0,024); 10) giving voice to people who are marginalized (p=0,012) (Table 1).

Table 1. Competences closely related to the DPA approach (N=12)

| | Mean rank I study | Mean rank II badanie | Z | p | r | Dependence |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------|--------------|-------|------------|
| Inclusive perspective on clients | 10.4 | 15.5 | -1.88 | 0.061 | 0.429 | Tendency |
| Offering others the possibility to tell their story | 10.3 | 15.7 | -1.98 | 0.048 | 0.450 | Yes |

| | Mean rank I study | Mean rank II badanie | Z | p | r | Dependence |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------|--------------|-------|------------|
| Answering the needs of the client | 10.5 | 15.3 | -1.67 | 0.094 | 0.000 | Tendency |
| Identifying client's needs on micro-, meso – and macro-level | 10.9 | 14.8 | -1.34 | 0.179 | 0.000 | No |
| Knowledge of DPA | 9.0 | 17.4 | -3.02 | 0.003 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Knowledge of empowerment | 8.2 | 18.5 | -3.59 | 0.000 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Awareness of social context influence | 10.1 | 15.9 | -2.08 | 0.038 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Reflecting through different perspectives | 10.2 | 15.8 | -2.02 | 0.044 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Ability to teach DPA related tools and knowledge | 9.8 | 16.3 | -2.26 | 0.024 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Giving voice to people who are marginalized | 9.5 | 16.7 | -2.51 | 0.012 | 0.000 | Yes |

Source: own research.

Statistically significant differences between the first and the second measurement, indicating an increase in the level of competences among workshop participants after the completion of the training, were found for seven out of the ten mentioned, with the most prominent change taking place in relation to those competencies that are key for the DPA, i.e. “knowledge of the DPA”, “Knowledge of empowerment”, “giving voice to people who are marginalized” and “ability to teach DPA related tools and knowledge”. A slightly smaller, but still statistically significant difference was observed in relation to “awareness of the influence of the social context”, “reflecting through different perspectives” and “offering others the possibility to tell their story”. In the case of two of the competences mentioned – “inclusive perspective on clients” and “answering the needs of the client” – no statistically significant differences were found, but a trend towards significance was observed. The lack of a statistically significant difference concerned the “identifying client’s needs on micro-, mezzo – and macro-level”, which may indicate the need to further deepen the skills of the participants in this area and / or their strong focus on the immediate situational context in which the client is involved.

The competencies related to the DPA, but also referring to the broader professional context, include: 1) challenging stereotypes, prejudices, and culturalization ($p=0,022$); 2) knowledge of participation ($p=0,001$); 3) ability to organize employee training ($p=0,005$); 4) ability to create new tools ($p=0,036$); 5) ability to show personal vulnerability in teams or with clients ($p=0,010$); 6) identifying structural problems/needs and taking action ($p=0,074$) (Table 2).

Table 2. DPA-related competences referring to broader professional context (N=12)

| | Mean rank I study | Mean rank II badanie | Z | p | r | Depen- dence |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-------|--------------|-------|-----------------|
| Challenging stereotypes, prejudices and culturalization | 9.9 | 16.2 | -2.28 | 0.022 | 0.521 | Yes |
| Knowledge of participation | 8.8 | 17.8 | -3.20 | 0.001 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Ability to organize employee training | 9.3 | 17.0 | -2.82 | 0.005 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Ability to create new tools | 10.0 | 16.1 | -2.10 | 0.036 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Ability to show personal vulnerability in teams or with clients | 9.4 | 16.9 | -2.59 | 0.010 | 0.000 | Yes |
| Identifying structural problems/needs and taking action | 10.4 | 15.5 | -1.79 | 0.074 | 0.000 | Tendency |

Source: own research.

Only in the case of one of the competencies mentioned – identifying structural problems/needs and taking action – no statistically significant differences were found between the first and the second measurement, confirming an increase in its level after the completion of the training. However, a trend towards significance was observed. It may again indicate participants' low concentration on the mezzo – and macrostructural conditions of the functioning of beneficiaries they offer to support. With regard to the remaining competencies related to the DPA, the existence of statistically significant differences between the measurements was proved. Thus, the increase in participants' competencies after the workshop was confirmed.

Understanding of the DPA approach by the workshops participants

To supplement the data obtained in the quantitative study, non-categorized interviews were conducted with the participants of the workshops regarding their subjective understanding of the DPA approach. In their statements, the respondents referred to the DPA approach in terms of agency, emphasizing its focus on the resources of each person, which was taken as the first analytical category. The respondents defined the DPA approach as *“working with participants or groups, based on strengthening their resources, using skills they already have, and opportunities provided by their environment”* (Respondent 3). They also believed it was *“helping people out of a difficult situation. Giving them the power to find the strengths that will help them overcome the difficulties they face”* (Respondent 4). In their statements, the respondents pointed

out that the traditional way of understanding help and support for socially excluded people in this approach is not a priority aspect, as evidenced by the following statements:

- *“Traditionally, the social educator is the person who knows. And in that approach, the beneficiary, or the person concerned, is a person who knows. And we just have to make the person aware of a total process of empowering”* (Respondent 7),
- *“Helping people the new way, it’s a new perspective for me of considering our work. It’s a new way of considering beneficiaries... I like the focus is much more on the beneficiary to me with that approach... It is about engaging a person in their project”.* (Respondent 6),
- *“The DPA approach is a different approach to working with people ... focusing on how they can act to change themselves, change their life situation”* (Respondent 2).
- *“A way to empower them (beneficiaries)... Forcing your beneficiaries to think doesn’t work... it’s not working, and it doesn’t empower them. It doesn’t give them the keys to like engaging in the project themselves and do things themselves... . The role of the community around the beneficiary”* (Respondent 6).

The respondents perceive the DPA approach as an innovative way of focusing on people in need. Therefore, the second shared analytical category was responsibility, which means paying attention to the fact that social workers cannot solve other people’s problems but can only accompany the beneficiaries in solving them. There are some examples of statements that are the evidence of this understanding:

- *“Thanks to the DPA approach, I realized that their (beneficiaries’) problems are not mine. I can maybe manage or help them to manage. This is the thinking that the beneficiaries should take their lives into their own hands, make their own choices”* (Respondent 9),
- *“I think it’s an approach that fits with my attitude in this kind of work because it’s focused on letting people understand who they are inside. Improve their life starting from themselves...”* (Respondent 10),
- *“Taking into account the context from which the person we work with comes from, aimed at support/empowerment... (Empowerment) is focused on the participant, not on what we want for them, but on what they need for themselves”* (Respondent 3).

Other respondents emphasized that *“it is such an approach that gives a lot of life energy, faith that something can be done”* (Respondent 1), *“it’s a state of*

spirit" (Respondent 5). One of the respondents compared the DPA approach to the work of a doctor: "according to me, the DPA approach is in which the main goal is to help people to exist. It is an accompaniment in the process of change" (Respondent 8). The respondents also pay attention to the personal benefits of the DPA approach: "It is useful for me in a personal sense, but also in the sense that I can help other people. I.e.. for me, it's like letting me know that I can do something. That I have the strength to correct something in my life, which is a problem, which is a difficulty. The workshops have taught me this, i.e., that the strength is in me..." (Respondent 1).

Conclusions

Historical and political issues, as well as migration at different levels worldwide, make individuals with different habits, cultures, and social structures need to live and work together. It is the main factor driving intercultural education and a prominent issue (Aslantaş, 2019; Błeszyńska, 2008; Bennett, 2009). Education is an instrument for the comprehensive development of individuals and entire societies. It can take place at any age and can cover different areas. It is implemented through the activities of many institutions, both in a formal and informal dimensions. It can also occur through interaction with the natural environment, especially when such interaction is socially and culturally determined. Its intercultural dimension takes on a new meaning in the changing Europe (Lloyd, 2008; Civitillo et al., 2018).

Participation in the international project allowed the participants to get to know a new approach to working with people from socially marginalized environments, but also contributed to the knowledge of other sociocultural perspectives, which became the basis for designing innovative aid solutions. The initiatives taken as part of the project are in line with the words of Jerzy Nikitorowicz. He claims that "intercultural education is just moving from the already noticed multiplicity to the interaction of cultures, i.e., from passive adaptation to inter-action and it prepares for cooperation and mutual use of the achievements of people of different races, nationalities, religions, cultures" (Nikitorowicz, 2009, p. 292). In this way, intercultural education aims to minimize or prevent possible tensions, biases, privileges, or stereotypes that can occur between societies and individuals (Perry and Southwell, 2011; Portera, 2008). This aspect was of great importance during the implementation of the project. Different perspectives and socio-economic or cultural situations constituted the essential value in creating a training offer regard-

ing the DPA approach. As a result of the project activities, the TOOLBOX was developed and translated into the partners' languages. In addition to the English version, Polish, French, Spanish, Italian, and Flemish versions are available. The materials included in TOOLBOX are the result of international cooperation, based on the previous experiences of the partners, taking into account their sociocultural perspective. Still, at the same time, they also result from designing joint aid activities based on the Empowerment concept and the DPA approach. The TOOLBOX will be available to all project partners using the developed materials to train subsequent educators.

The data obtained as a result of empirical research led to the assumption that the activities undertaken within the framework of the project turned out to be effective and valuable for the participants. All respondents believe that the DPA approach is an effective form of providing support to socially marginalized people. In the current socio-economic situation in Europe, helping the excluded takes on a new meaning. The socio-economic transformation and challenges caused by previously unknown or distant problems mean that many people, especially those from marginalized environments or suffering from dysfunctions, will not cope without adequate support. For this reason, empowerment-oriented education is a priority task, thanks to which individuals, groups, organizations and communities in difficult situations can regain control over their own lives.

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Chinese culture of interdependence and relations in education – *guanxi* in school practice

Abstract: The aim of the article is to discuss the Chinese educational culture in the context of the pursuing *guanxi* tradition. The article answers the question what *guanxi* is and how it is applied in the Chinese educational system. The subject of research is the educational system and *guanxi* culture and its practical implications. In the article, the existing studies are used of Chinese and other foreign authors. The qualitative research method involves analyses of secondary sources which outlined the methods and principles of operation of the old Chinese tradition of regulating social relationships in education in the network of three-sided personal relations: school-home, parent-teacher, and students-teachers.

Keywords: comparative education, education in China, educational system, *guanxi*

Introduction

When one begins to interpret and learn about a particular educational system, usually the first field of interpretation involves educational problems occurring in a given country or the results of international comparative studies. This is a result, and it could be also said a product, of a number of component factors, such as the country's economy, history, geography, and culture. In order to better understand the laws that govern educational systems and what these problems and the results of international comparative studies really show, a deeper cultural analysis and interpretation of education is needed. By studying the cultural conditions of educational systems, one is able to enter the process of cognition of a particular system and to provide

research tools and methods, among others, by comparative studies – comparative pedagogy, in which the explored subject of the article is located.

The presented article brings theoretical considerations that are of great importance for science – also in the field of comparative education. Science advances through technological development, but also through addressing significant issues. Formulating inspiring descriptions, which is characteristic of comparative education, encourages exploration and drives the development of science. Comparative education describes and analyzes educational phenomena, explains and examines how education changes and what influences it. Inspirations and qualitative analyses of foreign and local literature contribute to the dissemination of science and an exchange of scientific ideas. The interpretation and exploration of the existing research by authors from different cultural backgrounds makes the knowledge filtered – the local readers can use it to better understand what is happening in the world in a particular field of education. The multitude of descriptions and interpretations contributes to the improvement of the quality of science and education, where understanding is the first step to change. As my research method, the secondary source qualitative analysis was used, which resulted in building cultural and educational knowledge based on it and supported by the results and conclusions drawn from the re-analyzed data. I used Chinese and foreign studies as the sources of analysis, which allowed me to gain a dual perspective. The purpose of the following article will be, firstly, to analyze the social phenomenon of *guanxi* and an attempt to explain it. This will be followed by direct references and practical applications of *guanxi* in the educational system, in the network of school-home, parent-teacher and student-teacher relationships. In the selection of the foundational research for the analysis, the criteria were as follows: the researcher's background and the selection of examples relating to Chinese traditions with an educational context. I have chosen examples of the practical application of *guanxi* which show the three-sided perspective of the relations of people participating in the educational process, culturally entangled in the parent – student – teacher network.

The conducted analyses are important for Polish and foreign readers, due to the fact that higher education is increasingly internationalized. Chinese students are increasingly becoming an important element of the learning landscape, e.g. in Poland. According to UNESCO (2023) statistics, over one million Chinese students are enrolled in tertiary education institutions abroad, their tuition fees are a considerable source of income for many universities, and they have become a significant component of the Chinese

presence worldwide. Poland hosts 62.091 mobile international students and 26.496 of them are Chinese. Their culture and previous educational experience affect how they study, what educational relationships they have with lecturers and classmates, how they conduct research, and many more things. Understanding the cultural context of students' learning is necessary for the good functioning of higher education institutions in the world during the internationalization era. This proves the importance of understanding how students learn and how culture influences it.

China and its cultural determinants of education constitute an interesting research subject, and considering the significant role of the Middle Kingdom in the world, it is also an important and interesting topic. China needs to be observed, but it is also important to make every effort to learn about it. It is impossible to explore Chinese education without placing it in the cultural context. According to Margaret Mead (1943), education is a cultural process, a socially significant activity undertaken by human beings and in most cases it constitutes a significant part of human biography. It should be added that it is a faithful reflection of the principles, laws and traditions of the society. In the case of China, the strong Confucian framework is significantly marked (Mańkowska 2020), however, only its interpretation from different perspectives gives a complete picture of the whole and enhances the familiarization with this complex country and its people. Obtaining a complete view is possible only and exclusively through the application of an interdisciplinary approach in the analysis, which was conducted by George Z.F. Bereday in his comparative studies (Wojniak, 2018). In this article, an element of contemporary Chinese culture will be characterized, namely the networks of interdependence of various members of society, on the basis of the literature on the subject called *guanxi*. In China, *guanxi* practices are present in various systems: the political, health care and educational ones.

***Guanxi* – a personal connection, a network or a relationship?**

The applications of *guanxi* are present in every aspect of Chinese life and are often the subject of local and foreign scholarly considerations. Among international researchers, the interest in the phenomenon of *guanxi* in an educational context has been present for several years. Researchers from around the world have been trying to understand how this tradition works, what it consists in, and how it can be used, for example, in creating university mergers with China. In a purely business partnership, the need to know

the prevailing culture and social rules is obvious. The discussion of *guanxi* in sociological studies mainly focuses on interpreting the role of *guanxi* in the transitional economy of the China mainland. The literature mentions two alternative standpoints in the context of the practical use of *guanxi*. It is argued that *guanxi* is best interpreted institutionally, as an element of social organization characterized by underdeveloped rules (as conceptualized and interpreted by the Western culture) (Gold, Guthrie and Wank, 2002). The second standpoint emphasizes the importance of the Confucian heritage in treating *guanxi* as an integral part of Chinese culture (Hwang 1987; Yang 1994). Most sinologists agree that the concept of *guanxi* derives mostly from the Confucian tradition (Hwang 1987; Yang 1994). It is interesting to note that this tradition has been planted on the European soil and functions, for example, in the form of the European Guanxi organization bringing together young people, between 18 and 40 years of age from Europe and China, who can cooperate with each other on certain principles. This involves an increasingly popular and used on the old continent principle of cooperation and networking. It is an important knowledge base in cooperation with China as well.

Let one therefore look at how *guanxi* tradition is interpreted in the literature. It has been described by Chinese and non-Chinese authors as a “personal connection”, “relationship”, or “network” in which the people of the Middle Kingdom function on a daily basis and which helps them deal with difficult issues or solve problems of various kinds (Yang, 1994). The influential Chinese sociologist Xiaotong Fei (1992), in his famous work *From the Soil* (first published in 1947 in Chinese and translated into English in 1992), depicted the functioning of Chinese people in complex social structures as the image of a wave formed by a stone thrown into a pond. Each individual is surrounded by a series of concentric circles formed by their own social influence. Each network of social relationships has a centre. Each circle extending away from the centre becomes more and more distant. It is in this arrangement that the network of interpersonal relationships and the *guanxi* in question function.

Western translations of the Chinese word *guanxi* are increasingly using two types of definitions. The first interprets and translates the *guanxi* system as “connections”, while the second translates it as “relationships”. Jacobs defines *guanxi* as particularistic relationships. Gold, in turn, states that “*guanxi* is a relationship of power” (Gold, 1985, p. 660), because it is connected with controlling precious goods or the access to them, which gives power over

others. For Yang, *guanxi* refers to the interpersonal or personal relationship (Yang, 1994). It is worth mentioning that a few scholars have expanded the term *guanxi* from its original meaning (“relationship”) to “exchange”, “resources”, and even “social exchange process”, arguing that “the concept of *guanxi* is complex and multifaceted” (Fan, 2002, p. 545). *Guanxi* is not practiced with everyone, but only with the people with whom one has or will have a good relationship, and for this to occur, both parties need to ensure correctness and sincerity. The second condition for building a network of relationships is time. The *guanxi* tradition is not only time-consuming, but organizationally and morally involving. Many hours of conversations spent at joint meetings and dinners will pass before the cooperation partners decide to build a network of relationships with each other. Yet, from the Chinese point of view, building networking in this way is profitable, even though it may be spread out over time. Some studies have used a source-based theory, taking *guanxi* as a kind of organizational resource (Luo, 2000). Another interesting interpretation of *guanxi* is that it functions as a form of social capital (Qi, 2013). I believe that this perspective accurately interprets this tradition, because leveraging social capital in China has a centuries-old tradition and is widely used and accepted. Numerous scholars point out that *guanxi* is a “special form” or a “variety” of the social capital (Gold, Guthrie and Wank, 2002; Qi, 2013). In this framework, one can say that in the Chinese view, social capital is the ability of participants to provide benefits through membership in social networks or other social structures (Portes, 1998). Academics, foreign scholars working in Chinese universities, whom I interviewed, explained the *guanxi* tradition through its literal interpretation. According to my interlocutors, *guanxi* means: *who you know* or *connections to many things*.

Building a network of relationships is done on many levels and in many ways. In China, but not only there, it is good to know people from many industries, to maintain relationships and positive relations with them. Modern *guanxi* is built in many ways, one of the most current methods belongs to various social network groups or *what's ups* first, and then these acquaintances are transferred to the real world in face-to-face meetings. It is interesting to note that in practice *guanxi* refers to certain activities that for many interpreters of social reality may have clearly instrumental characteristics and only by placing them in a Chinese context can they be understood. Foreign studies of *guanxi* in many cases link it to corruption, or directly interpret it that way. This is most often due to the application of their own cultural patterns in interpreting a foreign culture and its practical implications. It should

be emphasized that when used for legal purposes that do not infringe on public interests, *guanxi* can be an extremely useful way for members of a relationship network to deal with their legitimate personal or business affairs. The practice of *guanxi* only breaks down when the exchange, or transaction, involves corrupt activities, or when one or more parties to the relationship in the *guanxi* network act outside the law (Li, 2018). Corrupt practices can be found in China and unfortunately some *guanxi* activities can be indirectly linked to them. It is argued that it is China's current political system that is responsible for a lax legal system in which corruption and the practice of *guanxi* have "merged" and taken a different direction from the original (King, 1998).

***Guanxi* at the school system**

The cultural phenomenon of *guanxi* is also present in educational practice. *Guanxi* in the school system is evident in the network of school – home, parent – teacher, and student – teacher relationships. The first example of *guanxi* tradition is the situation of a child from the countryside whose parents want a better future for their child, and their goal is to send their child to a secondary school in a large city other than their home one, which will increase the child's chances of getting into a good university. Because the child is not registered in that city, the situation seems to be hopeless, but the parents will do their best to find a solution. As a rule, the school career of children in China is planned from early childhood or determined directly by the socio-economic status of the family. For this purpose, parents will use the network of social relationships they have, i.e. family, friends, acquaintances near and far, and anyone else whom they will owe some kind of debt in the future – yet, they will also expand their social network. In order to obtain registration with the school district, the child's mother will sign a contract with a company that provides employment and employee housing at the destination, although she will physically work from her current place of residence. This opportunity will be arranged for her by a friend of a friend. The child's father, on the other hand, will have a direct relationship with the director of the facility to which he wishes to send his child. He will have several meetings with the principal and convince them to accept his child as a student at that school. In this way, both the principal and the father increase their social networks of interrelation. The family whose child has been admitted to the school through the use of *guanxi* must ensure that in

the undetermined future they will repay the people who made it possible for them to reach their goal and not lose face by, for example, failing or refusing to help, should those people ever ask them to return the favour. The above example, in the process of using *guanxi*, completely ignores the issue of money (fee/payment), while the issue of interdependence and exchange is strongly outlined, where people skilfully use the social capital known and available to them to achieve their goal, in this case an educational one.

Another example of using the *guanxi* tradition is the use of teacher's knowledge and status by the representatives of this profession. A teacher in China assumes the role of a sage who shares their wisdom with their students, and this is how they are perceived by the society. A teacher is the person who has a significant impact on the future of the learner and parents are aware of teachers' capabilities, so they do their best not to fall into disgrace and maintain a good relationship with the school staff. Teachers in China have opportunities to favour, recognize, write positive reviews, give more attention to some students and less attention to others. The teacher's attention is something that distinguishes students and can produce positive results. The teacher in the classroom has some both symbolic and tangible power. They can send someone to distant desks in the classroom, symbolically steer someone away from knowledge, or not give a child enough attention during a lesson or task. Especially at the secondary level, this is educationally and socially degrading for students and their families. In many cases, the symbolic removal of knowledge and the relegation of students' needs to the background strengthens teachers' positions. By choosing to do so, teachers show that they can do this and that they apply this "privilege". Degradation of a student may result from several reasons: insufficient knowledge of the student (students, especially in secondary schools, are required to make superhuman efforts to acquire knowledge), lack of preparation for classes, unrequited favour, and insufficient respect shown to the teacher. On the other hand, the teacher can show personal involvement in the student's affairs, which, although formally forbidden, is condoned by the society. This occurs in the form of giving extra lessons in special afternoon schools (only children from the *guanxi* network are admitted to the so-called tutoring courses) or arranging a place in the best afternoon courses for selected students (places in the best courses are also reserved for students from the network), which are conducted in the afternoons or weekends by school teachers. Creating a *guanxi* network also means giving gifts to teachers (not necessarily money, but e.g. vouchers), inviting them to family celebrations (also very personal

ones) or celebrating together, obviously not with all students' family members, but with those from the "network".

Parents also function in the network of *guanxi* relationships. Both parties, i.e. parents and teachers, care about good, proper connections and relationships. These work best when parents have the support of significant teachers or the financial support to invest in their child's education. The relationships and bonds between Chinese teachers and parents are very distinctive and woven with threads of varying thickness, figuratively speaking. Chinese parents and teachers want them to be correct and profitable (not necessarily financially), because then both parties gain. In China, a teacher's relationship network is not frowned upon – especially valuable are those with an extensive network of opportunities needed by students and the teachers themselves. It is in everyone's interest to have a large coverage of the relationship network.

At the end of this, between the threads of this web (also in the figurative sense), there is a student and their need to learn. Students are completely subordinated to the currents that are organized for them by parents in conjunction with teachers. They submit to the educational plans cut to size, often traced from a *guanxi* template, and remain obedient to their parents and teachers to the very end.

Conclusion

Finally, it is worth considering why the *guanxi* tradition is so prevalent in China. Firstly, it is the practicality that leads the Chinese to value personal relationships. If their use of these relationships leads to the achievement of their goals, it is not uncommon for them to devalue the rules and laws of the society. The scattered culture makes the Chinese feel comfortable with vague rules and restless with defined and established rules. The business or professional life is always mixed with social life, and the line between the latter and the former is blurred. The Chinese have a distinctive world view and look for connections between situations and connections in everything (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). In this sense, the institutional causes of *guanxi* mentioned earlier are also influenced by specificity and the scattered culture. The imperfect, flexible and changeable rules of law binding in the Middle Kingdom are not only the result of the political and economic system, but are also strongly influenced by the Chinese culture. In education, in the parent-child-teacher relationship, every effort is made to

create a network of relationships that is as extensive and neat as possible and that is primarily practical. In this constellation of arrangements, teachers and schools hold symbolic power in their hands – the access to the desired goods, as well as parents with their networks that can prove useful to the school or the teacher. In such an arrangement, from the point of view of individuals, no one loses, everyone gains, which is why *guanxi* practices discussed here are not subject to moral social judgments as long as they are within the legal framework. According to the Chinese interpretation, it is a *win-win* situation, where everyone is further enriched by new relationships and dependencies. Rushed and hasty negotiations are frowned upon, and time and hurry, contrary to Western beliefs, are “not money”.

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REVIEWING ARTICLES



Book review:
Renata Nowakowska-Siuta:
Comparative education. Methodology contexts
Warszawa 2023: Wydawnictwo Naukowe ChAT,
pp. 192, ISBN 9788360273753

In many scientific disciplines, it is the book that represents the culmination of scientific creation. It is the summation of a scientist's many years of hard work and the expression of their passion; it often opens up new problem fields and serves as a source of diverse impulses. Geoffrey Crossick states: 'There is no equivalent for research books which are central (...) to dissemination of research in the arts, humanities and much of social sciences' (Crossick, 2016, p. 14).

Moreover, according to Eleonora Belfiore, 'the academic status is related to a large extent to "traditional gold standard of academic achievements represented by the (...) monograph' (Belfiore, 2013, p. 207) .

This is precisely the standard represented by Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's latest book *Comparative education. Methodology contexts* (Warsaw 2023). It constitutes another excellent work of the author, after the previously published: *Romantyczny i pragmatyczny. Idea niemieckiego uniwersytetu neohumnaistycznego i jej społeczne rekonstrukcje* [*Romantic and ragmatic. The idea of the German neohumanist university and its social reconstructions*] (2018) and *O edukacji w Finlandii. Studium z pedagogiki porównawczej* [*On education in Finland. A study in comparative education*] (2021).

The book, with its 'comparatist and methodological' profile, makes a contribution that cannot be overestimated in contemporary Polish comparative education. Its innovative nature lies in the introduction of methodological issues and problem fields so far absent from the discourse of comparative education, and this is done in a thoroughly constructive way. Drawing very

aptly and respectfully on the existing tradition of comparative education, the author enriches it with original notions, categories and concepts, demonstrating comprehensively how they can contribute to deepening the methodological position of 'comparison' or 'comparativity'. At the same time, the book is, as I am convinced, an expression of Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's scholarly passions, and at the same time a proof of her great competence in the sphere of constructing scientific discourse.

While sharing my reflections on the book, I shall start from a more general statement. The author's consistent narrative, contained in the book *Comparative education. Methodology contexts*, is definitely focused on methodological issues, however, it is by no means methodological 'in itself' or 'for itself'. Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's way of thinking (and writing) is always, both in this and in her previous texts, irrevocably multidisciplinary and multicontextual. For here, in the discussed book, methodological considerations are contextualised not only pedagogically, but also historically, politically, or sociologically (which is also evidenced by the highly representative multilingual literature on the subject used by the author). What is dealt with here is not a mere 'citation' of categories or quotations derived from these disciplines, but an integrated narrative that constitutes an original synthesis. This can be referred to as 'comprehensive interdisciplinarity', or even transdisciplinarity, an approach of an integrative nature.

What can be observed here is highly original thinking across boundaries; boundaries of disciplines, boundaries of methodological traditions, but also boundaries of different – as Michael Foucault would say – 'versions of reality' (existing or potential ones). At the same time, however, the author conducts a number of detailed analyses, referring to the potential – for comparative education – of specific theories, concepts, categories or notions. At times, she introduces the readers to interesting methodological case studies; she imbues comparison and comparativism with a chosen approach in order to show a new perspective, making it clear what this approach brings to comparative education, but also, conversely, how the latter enriches the former – what potential comparative education brings to this approach itself.

The book therefore has two equal main protagonists: comparative education and methodology. They conduct a very interactive scholarly dialogue with each other. Through her book, Renata Nowakowska-Siuta gives inspiring impulses to 'think differently', to encounter theoretical and methodological difference, to confront 'what is' with 'what can be'.

In each chapter, the author introduces the reader to fascinating images, related primarily to the answers to the following questions: What is comparative education? What could comparative education become? – both in the mind (imagination) of the scholar and in strictly theoretical considerations and empirical research. The chapters represent a remarkable level of expertise, and, at the same time, are highly interesting in their content.

The above assessment applies to the first chapter, which in itself constitutes an excellent ‘methodological dissertation,’ while, at the same time, demonstrates the author’s way of thinking about comparative education in its (potential) methodological richness, not only in the pedagogical context. The erudition of the narrative here is matched by the logic and precision of the argument.

A vitally important role in the book is played by the superbly written second chapter, devoted to the interrelationship of social science paradigms and paradigms of comparative education. The author rightly states that in both cases ‘discussions around the paradigms of contemporary comparative education generally concern quantitative and qualitative analyses of systemic changes taking place in education in its broadest sense.’ She is absolutely correct in writing that it is ‘the theoretical and methodological problem of the relationship between reality as an object and the socio-scientific act of cognition’ that is the source of ‘the important new paradigm for capturing comparatist content.’ I would add that there is no doubt her book fits perfectly into this way of thinking; it actually constitutes a great example of it. The third chapter of the reviewed book is devoted to the problem of choosing the area of research in comparative education, in the context of Amos Tversky’s and Daniel Kahneman’s theory of similarity and accessibility heuristics. This is another chapter which I consider absolutely praiseworthy for it is original and full of content.

The analyses contained in the very extensive fourth chapter constitute an important contribution of the author to the methodology of comparative education. The chapter is devoted to research conducted within this sub-discipline – in a strictly methodological context. What was read by me with particular interest was the part of the chapter which the author aptly entitled ‘Selected, historically established, but rarely used ways of comparison.’ This is because it presents the content that is extremely innovative and rather unknown to the Polish reader (Ogden’s and Richards’ triangle; Porphyrian Tree, Mill’s canons, Raymond Boudon’s formula, Möbius’ ribbon in comparatistics or, the last but not the least, an extremely successful reference to one of the author’s favourite classics – Max Weber). This chapter is another

confirmation of the author's extraordinary competence in terms of, so to speak, the methodological approach to methodology. The very well-written fifth chapter addresses the dynamics of the development of comparative education. Here, the author shows in a substantive manner the possibilities and limitations in this respect.

Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's book *Comparative education. Methodological contexts* is certainly an integral part of the debates concerning the undetermined status and identity of comparative education. One can quote at this point – following C.C. Wolhuter – the 1996 statement by David Wilson's (former president of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies) on the prosopagnosia of comparative education. In psychology, the term prosopagnosia refers to the inability to recognise faces; in this case, however, it is related to the belief that comparative education does not have its 'clearly recognised face or identity' (Wolhuter, 2015, p. 11). Comparative education is also referred to as an amorphous or structureless area of research (Wolhuter, 2008, p. 323). C.C. Wolhuter also cited Ervin H. Epstein's and Katherine T. Carroll's claim that it is an 'eclectic/diverse field with adjustable borders and contours which are difficult to demarcate' (Wolhuter, 2015, p. 16).

The second line of criticism of comparative education relates to its relationship with other pedagogical sub-disciplines or disciplines of social sciences. It is argued here that comparative education lacks its own theories and research methods. Consequently, it is not autonomous, as it must inevitably draw on the work of other sciences, above all sociology, history, economics, political science, philosophy but also law and psychology.

As David A. Turner puts it: 'the concepts and methods of comparative education were, therefore, dependent on external reference to other, foundation disciplines for their legitimacy' (Turner, 2019, p. 14). Alexander A. Wiseman and Nikolay Popov put forward the thesis that comparative education borrows or adopts theories and methodologies from the disciplines of social sciences, while there are virtually no instances when its own contribution is used, for example, by sociology or political science (Wiseman and Popov, 2015, p. 4). One definitely deals here with an 'asymmetry of influence'. It is for this reason that the words of Harold Noah and Max A. Eckstein are sometimes cited, who argue that the identity crisis of comparative education stems from its eclecticism (Fletcher, 1974, p. 353).

The already cited C.C. Wolhuter argues that all classifications of approaches within comparative education contain an 'impressive kaleidoscope' of theories, however, they have 'their origin outside comparative education'

(Wolhuter, 2015, p. 30). He goes on to write: 'This creates the impression that comparative education is at its best some exercise in applying theories from other disciplines to education, not a fully-fledged scholarly field or discipline in its own right'. In this context, what is underlying the critical assessment of education (in my unjustified view) in this area is the notion, expressed *inter alia* by Richard Peters, that it is not an 'autonomous discipline' but a 'field' in which other disciplines, most notably philosophy, psychology and sociology, find their applications (McCulloch, 2002, p. 2).

The narratives, arguments and case studies contained in Renata-Nowakowska-Siuta's book strongly contradict the aforementioned lines of criticism of comparative education. However, they undoubtedly confirm the proposition that the ambiguity of theory, methods and problem fields of comparative education is not a limiting factor; on the contrary, it determines its scientific openness and potential. Thus, the lack of demarcation of its boundaries, the absence of an unambiguous theoretical or methodological core and the borrowing of diverse methods from the disciplines of the social sciences or the humanities can constitute a source of vitality for comparative education. It forms, as is brilliantly evident in Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's book, the basis for constructing a non-dogmatic and unorthodox identity for this scientific sub-discipline.

Comparative education is – as also clearly follows from Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's book – an 'open' sub-discipline, 'interested' in or rather 'curious' about the multidimensional, multidisciplinary contexts of educational reality. It is heterogeneous in nature. As early as in 1974, Harold J. Noah wrote about the need for a range of diverse approaches in comparative education. He stated with conviction: 'none may claim monopoly on truth', 'the task of the scholar (...) is to recognize which approach gives the most useful results for a given purpose and in a given situation' (Noah, 1974, p. 344). Phillip G. Altbach wrote in 1991: 'comparative education looks at many directions at once, and this has helped to shape a field that at the same time is left without a clearly defined centre' (Altbach, 1991, p. 491). Comparative education is also of a 'borderline' nature in all its dimensions. This 'borderland nature' needs by no means to be a destructive factor for this sub-discipline – on the contrary, it may be a factor of its scientific potential and developmental dynamism. The 'borderland nature' makes it possible to broaden the subject of research and diversify the approaches of comparative education. It is also thanks to this, referring here to Robert Cowen's considerations, that comparative education constitutes a very 'exciting' research space, a 'reward-

ing and flexible' one (Cowen, 2008, p. 18). In relation to this sub-discipline, as can also be seen in Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's book, Rudolf Stichweh's statement seems to be confirmed that 'one of the most interesting features of modern science is exactly that it gains an almost unlimited capacity for self-activation through its internal differentiation (...)' (Stichweh, 1992, p. 12).

One can also refer here to the words by Steven J. Klees when he proudly stated in 2008 that 'the principal comparative advantage of the comparative education is that the field is literally constituted by border crossing, and comparative educators, by necessity, and roaming far beyond education.' (Klees, 2008, p. 302). Certainly, one must also agree with W. James Jacob and Sheng Yao Cheng's assertion that the fundamental dissimilarity of the theories used by comparativists is not an indication of weakness in comparative education. This is demonstrated admirably in the book under review. On the contrary, the existing 'dynamic variety' underpins its 'comparative and theoretical strength' (Jacob and Cheng, 2005, p. 230). The authors even write about 'the power of theoretical synergy' afforded by the use of diverse, and increasingly new theories and methods in comparative education (Jacob and Cheng, 2005, p. 245). Accordingly, it is argued with some validity that 'that there is no single or unified *comparative education*, but that there are multiple comparative educations' (Wolhuter, 2008, pp. 323–324). The co-existence of these comparative educations can be observed in the book addressed in this text, with the author brilliantly navigating through their domains.

When reading Renata Nowakowska-Siuta's book, the notion of interdisciplinarity inevitably arises in the reader's mind. However, in her text this interdisciplinarity is not unconditional, it does not lead to the dispersion or abolition of the distinctiveness of the sub-discipline itself, to its 'dissolution'. This takes place because the dominant approach among scholars, not only within comparative education, is expressed – as is aptly noticed by Marc De Mey – in the statement: 'first disciplinarity before engaging in interdisciplinarity' (Bechtel, 1986, 3). Thus, interdisciplinarity does not lead to the contestation of the (sub)discipline, but can lead to its enrichment by introducing new research contexts (Mittelstraß, 2018, p. 17). Stephen Rowland puts it in a similar way: 'interdisciplinary contestation is not to merge or loosen disciplinary boundaries,' but rather to lead to a 'clearer understanding of disciplinary difference' and to a perception of disciplines as dynamic practices (Rowland, 2006, p. 81). Interdisciplinarity also becomes one of the sources of creative 'disciplinary instability and dynamism' (Wardle and Down, 2018, p. 115). Undoubtedly, the thesis put forward by Angelique Chettiparamb that

interdisciplines could not exist without disciplines is also correct (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 16). John A. Aldrich writes: 'the term "interdisciplinary," itself, requires a base of disciplines from which to consider acting across disciplines' (Aldrich, 2014, p. 3). In this context, it can be argued that comparative education is not an interdiscipline, but is embedded in the broader field of educational sciences, although individual researchers may refer to (and be 'embedded' in) the theories or assumptions of different social sciences or humanities. This seems to be the direction followed by the thinking of George Bereday and Martin Carnoy, who assume, as David A. Turner puts it, that a prerequisite for comparative education to be scholarly is for the comparativist to have 'strong disciplinary background in one of the "contributing" disciplines' (Turner, 2019, p. 14). This approach, as is evident from a reading of the book under review, is also represented by Renata Nowakowska-Siuta.

In conclusion, I would like to state that the book *Comparative education. Methodology contexts* is an excellent work in every respect. It follows the best traditions of thinking about comparative education and practicing comparative education, and at the same time, to repeat once again, it represents openness to the future, it is original and inspiring. The author's scientific temperament consisting in transgressing what is known, in introducing changes to the map of the discourse, in striving for multicontextual perception and analysis of the addressed issues, and, finally, in the unique freedom in constructing the narrative, is very much visible in the book. After reading the book, I reaffirm – in relation to it – the validity of the last paragraph of the introduction in which the Author writes: 'A book is not a reproduction of reality; rather, metaphorically speaking, it constitutes a peculiar act of forgetting the reality that takes place in the process of reading and understanding. But if we do realise this oblivion, then we will be able to remember and perhaps then reach the reality that the book touches.'

For a number of years Renata Nowakowska-Siuta has undertaken a variety of important activities aimed at revitalising Polish comparative education. Examples of these may be the lectures by eminent scholars she has organised within the framework of the Team for International Comparative Studies of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, which she directs, as well as the superbly edited volume of 'Studies on the Theory of Education' (volume XIV (44), 2023 number 3) devoted to comparative education. The reviewed book by Renata Nowakowska-Siuta perfectly fits into the idea of creating Polish comparative education in its new, dynamic form.

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Post-dependent Europe has a voice.
A review of the volume edited by
Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska
and Urszula Markowska-Manista:
Non-inclusive education in Central and Eastern Europe.
Comparative studies of teaching ethnicity,
religion and gender
London 2023: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC,
pp. 248, ISBN 9781350325265

The reviewed publication comprises a discussion on inclusive education, so important in the days of growing migration into Europe, including the Central and Eastern one (CEE), resulting e.g. from the full-scale war in the Ukraine. This publication focuses on inclusiveness related to three identity dimensions: ethnicity, religion and gender. The authors aimed at perceiving those aspects from the perspective of countries with low cultural differentiation (ethnically homogeneous ones), with no colonial past or the impact of the USSR for decades. This was the starting point for the editors' discussion of the global, intercultural and inclusive education in schools. The entire publication is embedded in the perspective of human rights and refers to the activities aimed at implementing anti-discriminating policies in the educational space. The title suggests a peculiar diagnosis of the conditions in the states of the region, while specific chapters provide detailed reasons for the thesis formulated in this way.

When creating this highly important and necessary publication, its editors invited (to cooperation) researchers from many CEE states (including the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Russia, Romania or Hungary) who are familiar with who studies and, importantly, who understands the specific

nature of inclusive education in the space devoid of well-established presence of the Other. The preface to the publication was prepared by Jacqueline Bhabha of Harvard University who stressed the significance and topicality of subjects covered in this volume also for those not connected with the region.

In this publication, the authors refer to the concept of *leveraged pedagogy* (Kulpa, 2014), in which – on the basis of the traditional division into East and West (Nisbett, 2004) – the West takes the dominant position for Central and Eastern European countries, depicting them as underdeveloped ones in many aspects, including education. In this vertical relation, the West determines the framework for the region states. This is related to strategies of coping with social inequality, discrimination or exclusion. The concept does not consider the cultural specificity of CEE states, their historical experiences or current social structure (Górak-Sosnowska and Markowska-Manista, 2023, pp. 1–4). All the same, the West reconstructs the patron-customer relationship, with no partnership, focused on disapproval and non-empowerment of participants in the change process (Freire, 2007).

The authors guide the readers through the topics of non-inclusive education in Central and Eastern European countries, starting with chapters devoted to the challenge of implementing the concepts of inclusive education developed in the West into the systems used in CEE. The consecutive chapters, based mostly on qualitative study findings, depict local educational reality related to ethnic origin, religion and gender. As emphasized by the authors, the presented case studies are not representative of all countries in the region. However, they make a highly consistent narrative concerning the response of educational systems in the regional states to the attempted implementation of the paradigms followed in the West.

The first, opening chapter by Urszula Markowska-Manista, entitled “Intercultural Teaching in a ‘Monocultural’ Country: Why Do We Need a Decolonial Approach to Teaching about Diversity?” characterizes the specific nature of introducing intercultural education to Polish schools. It offers an in-depth analysis of the way in which such education is perceived, but also a critical reflection on the very process of teaching about diversity in the monocultural environment. According to the author, the absence of the intercultural education in Polish schools stems from numerous variables, many of which are not related to education. In this chapter, she highlights the significance and weight of inclusive education, pointing also to the need to decolonize teaching about cultural diversity. This is a tool allowing one

both to build intercultural openness to diversity and to create institutions (including educational ones) in which everyone feels safe. The chapter ends with a paragraph of a special undertone since there are about 180 thousand Ukrainian learners in Polish schools: “The presence of learners with migration experience in Polish schools enriches the educational process, makes intercultural education a real process of intercultural communication and constitutes a value for school, learners, teachers and the majority society” (Markowska-Manista, 2023, p. 22).

The second chapter, titled “A Cultural History of the Other in Curriculum Design Transformation and Practice” by Rafael Filiberto Forteza Fernández is devoted to a critical analysis of neoliberal ideology and its ties with teaching English (as a foreign language), where this language is the “globalization foothold”. An analysis is carried out based on teaching experience when designing and implementing the *Language and Country Studies* syllabus at one of the Russian universities for a multi-national group. The presented outcomes of the activities performed point to the significance of an in-depth reflection on the implemented contents and of the introduction of the curriculum modifications concerning the glocalization process.

Jan Květina, in the chapter entitled “The Pluralist Paradigm in the Czech Educational Process: Teaching about Collective Identities and Democracy in the Constructivist Educational Project”, undertakes an analysis of the factors of key importance for implementing democratic values and pluralistic philosophy in the educational system. From the perspective of the Czech environment, one can trace changes in the civic education, the definitions of the nationality/ethnicity and their reflections in educational curricula. His study contains inspiring advice for the educational system staff. The reader will learn sample strategies of organizing educational space for activities oriented towards the development of critical reflection on social reality aimed at shaping the attitudes of openness and respect for Others.

“Preparation of Estonian Teachers to Tackle Extremism in a Classroom: A Systematic Review of Empirical Studies Published in *Estonian Journal of Education* (2013–21)” is a chapter by Alar Kilp and Heidi Maiberg who analyzed the significance of the educational system in the context of preventive activities related to extremist attitudes of young people. Particular attention was paid to the role of teachers in the process and to the need of providing them with knowledge and skills to cope with extremist behaviors. Although, according to the conducted meta-analysis, extremism was not a problem tackled directly in the educational studies in Estonia, the variables indicated

in the studies may be of key importance for shaping the pedagogical competences of teachers in contemporary schools.

In subsequent parts of the publication, one can find texts referring in a straightforward way to identity dimensions (Jenkins, 2014) mentioned in the title, i.e. ethnicity, religion and gender. The analyzed areas refer to the marginalized and discriminated communities. The analyses reveal clear reference to the discrimination chain, the cause and effect where one can find the dependencies between the presence of stereotypes and prejudice and discrimination. Lack of knowledge on Others and living by simplified, collective, negative judgments results in social prejudice (Allport, 1954), which in turn leads to activities in which a minority group member is treated inferior to a majority group one. This is the reason why the role of education is crucial while building intercultural sensitivity and enabling the acquisition of experience in living in the ethno-relativistic reality (Bennett, 2017).

The first chapter in the second part of the publication is devoted to religious identity. In the title, Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, its author, refers to one of the stereotypes, asking the question: “Are Muslims Scared of Pork?: Teaching about Islam in Polish Schools”. The article contains not only an analysis of the challenges of teaching Islam in a monocultural educational space but also teaching strategies used in this process. The author pays particular attention to the strategy of “anchoring” Islam-related contents in the existing curricula, providing some specific examples of its implementation. From the perspective of a reader who deals with education, such practical tips are of special importance, in particular when relating to such underrepresented topics.

The subsequent chapter, in which Adriana Cupcea analyzes “Representations of Islam in the Romanian History Textbooks in the Post-1990 Period” refers to the religious identity as well. The analysis results reveal the narrative evolution from the schematic presentation of Islam to the integrative one. The problem, however, is posed by the associations of Islam with religious fundamentalism present in textbooks published after 2001, which strengthen stereotyping and may result in the young generation’s internalizing a Muslim as an external enemy.

The second identity dimension represented in this publication is ethnicity. It is discussed with respect to the Roma, the largest ethnic minority in Europe. This topic can be viewed here from two perspectives – the Hungarian and the Czech one.

Jekatyerina Dunajeva, the author of “Othering through Textbooks: Teaching about Roma in Contemporary Hungarian Schools”, carries out a metaanaly-

sis of the findings provided by the studies on that group's representation in textbooks and analyzes the content of textbooks for primary school learners to identify the frequency of the Romani folk stories in readings and literature handbooks for children and adolescents. The author provides an account of her field studies carried out at schools during literature classes as well. According to Dunajeva, the Hungarian case demonstrates a close relationship between the political line of reasoning and the taught educational content. It is worth stressing that making education political is a challenge not only for the Hungarian system but also for all the nationalistically-minded states.

Ethnicity from the Czech perspective is discussed in the text by Radek Vorlíček. In the chapter entitled "Social Exclusion and the Construction of the Other at a Czech Basic School: An Anthropological Perspective", the author undertakes the topic of inequality in the Czech educational system and analyzes the educational reform aimed at integration. The ethnographic studies carried out in a place with 12 thousand inhabitants, in one of primary schools, refer to socially disadvantaged learners and the attitudes of teachers towards the Roma. Their findings reveal some universal mechanisms of building a space for social inclusion but also for exclusion.

The chapter entitled "Present but Absent: Education about the Roma and Sinti Genocide in Poland" by Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska and Dominika Zakrzewska-Oleǳka is a specific bridge connecting two important subjects related to ethnic minorities, namely social exclusion and discrimination, with its extreme symptom being extermination of a group of Others (Allport, 1954, pp. 14–15). This part of the publication is devoted to the extermination of the Roma and Sinti by the Nazi Germany. The genocide of those ethnic groups during World War II has been neglected and marginalized in the educational space. The article fills in this gap, pointing also to the fact that the problem of neglecting the extermination of the Roma and Sinti is characteristic of the countries in that region. The chapter ends with a highly important requirement addressed to all education-related people: "every effort should be made to ensure that historical education takes into account the needs and sensitivity of the incoming generations that function in a reality different from that which is familiar to us. If we do not make the effort, we will lose the opportunity to influence their attitudes through education about the past, which should be an important lesson and a warning for the future" (Talewicz-Kwiatkowska and Zakrzewska-Oleǳka, 2023, p. 169).

"Polish-Jewish Rivalry for Memory" by Lech Nijakowski is a chapter devoted to some selected toposes and discursive strategies related to the small

Jewish in Poland (according to the 2021 census, ca. 15.7 thousand of people identified themselves as Jews). The “rivalry for memory” used in the title is an attempt at pointing to the major victim of World War II, the course of which gives rise to strong social emotions. The author uses that to present important practical recommendations concerning the teaching about Shoah, teaching oriented to the ability to analyze, to ethical reflection, to showing results and responsibility for the committed acts. Teaching about Holocaust also means building a capital to analyze modern times and to be able to look at the reality from the perspective of human rights.

The publication ends with the third “absent” educational subject, i.e. gender. The text by Masha Beketova entitled “Teaching Queer Post-Soviet Perspectives: Intersectional Pedagogy and Global Knowledge Inequalities” combines local knowledge with studying the narrative from the non-heteronormative perspective. In this chapter, one can find strong references to the concept of leveraged pedagogy, combined with discussing different contexts where the idea of queer is used in the post-Soviet space. The author introduces the intersectional approach, illustrating the complexity and multi-layered form of the individual identity. On the basis of her teaching practice, she shows how to teach and take into consideration the cultural diversity and the importance of the local perspective.

“Teaching Gender and Queer Studies at Polish Universities: Challenges, Limitations, Perspectives” is the final chapter in the publication, in which Magdalena Stoch diagnoses gender and queer educational activities from 1990 to this day, describing the development of those two fields of study and the political campaigns against them. What is discussed here is the role of innovative teaching methods used during university courses in those two fields, with some recommendations how to implement the assumptions of emancipation pedagogy. The tips can be found in the part ending the publication which presents the findings of studies involving academics who conduct gender and queer classes.

The whole publication uses mostly inclusive language which is even more valuable in relation to the discussed topics. On the one hand, it expresses the empowerment of minority individuals and groups, while on the other, it is a clear indicator of the authors’ inclusive attitudes. It is worth looking at the phrase “*refugee crisis*” used in the publication as it may have stigmatizing connotations for the readers (Fundacja Ocalenie, 2021). According to Górak-Sosnowska, this is more a crisis experienced by the migrants (“*the crisis of refugees*”, 2023, p. 88) when facing regimes which do not implement or perform migration policies.

The authorial research project presented in the reviewed publication is an interesting, inspiring enterprise with a catchy idea. It provokes reflection on the own educational strategies, encourages development of the ethno-relativistic perspective in looking at the educational reality and will probably be an impulse for new, in-depth studies on multicultural and intercultural education, on the high-quality global education for everyone. This book offers a chance to review the complexity of social identifications and identities (Loden, Rosener, 1991). Another advantage is its practical dimension. It offers many tips for teachers concerning e.g. possible solutions, specific activities, methodological guidelines and sample scenarios, and refers to the efficiency of activities. This makes it a complete book, posing such questions as e.g. How to teach multiculturalism in a single-culture classroom? However, it also offers information where one can find the voice of minority group members and allies but also experience the empowerment of the standpoint of the Central and Eastern European states. This publication should be a must-read for those responsible for educational policies in the Central and Eastern European states to ensure that the systemic solutions are oriented towards building education for everyone, inclusive education, education for every person.

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Book review:
Marlon Lee Moncrieffe ed.:
Decolonising curriculum knowledge.
International perspectives
and interdisciplinary approaches
Cham 2022: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 203
ISBN 9783031136221, ISBN 9783031136238 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13623-8>

The colonial times have left and still leave their mark on a big part of the world. The book: “Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge. International Perspectives and Interdisciplinary Approaches”, edited by Marlon Lee Moncrieffe, is devoted to decolonising curriculum knowledge for refreshing the direction of education to relearn in the nearest future. This is an interesting publication for many researchers in the socio-educational field, not only those related to the so-called Global South and postcolonial contexts. The book is a collection of works that speak about the importance of decolonising as the personal and institutional agency and power within international contexts. Postcolonial narrations are often normalized and unquestioned ideologies. The authors tell the readers about injustice and ongoing colonial practices, at the same time, telling them about the activities that are changing the contemporary world.

This voice against influences and colonial legacies in curriculum design in the Global South in the geopolitical context of knowledge, can be treated in educational institutions as a tool of influence and domination. It is worth emphasizing that such domination, invisible to the people of these large regions, often remains in the shadow of the postcolonial reality. This collection of essays is an enlightening read for educators and will also interest social researchers. The book can become a tool to decolonise the classroom expe-

rience of young people globally. The pressure of colonial history means that many countries are still struggling with the effects of a difficult past and internalized unfair positions. They have to struggle for a better position today. Imperial domination and the social, educational, economic, cultural and psychological aspects of colonial experience determine the present. The effects of this past are to be overcome, but they require work, attention and respect. Colonialism “transformed lives, colonialism has had distinct impacts on children within both colonising and colonised populations, but also modern understandings of childhood have been formed in the context of imperialism and were implicated in the rationale for colonialism” (Faulkner, 2020, p. 538).

The reviewed publication is essential for understanding the post-colonial educational situation and the quality of the contemporary social capital in post-colonial countries. Pierre Bourdieu noted: “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249). Individual forms of capital (social, cultural, economic) are interconnected. The phenomena discussed in the reviewed book are multi-threaded. They are part of the local and global situation. The narratives in this book remind us that the colonial past can and does influence the level of social trust and the development of the state.

What seems interesting is the initial motto of the book, expressed in several languages, including Creole, Russian, Thai, Polish and English: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” The languages used in the motto are a reference to the content of individual chapters. These individual parts of the book relate to selected regions of the world. Although they do not exhaust the topic, they constitute a reliable and interesting material. The authors represent a range of various countries, including the UK, Nepal, South Africa, Namibia, Australia, Colombia, Canada, Thailand, Mauritius, Poland, Russia, Norway, and the Netherlands. Therefore, the book allows one to make a comparative analysis. This is a noteworthy value of the publication discussed here.

The study consists of twelve main parts. Each of them deserves a separate discussion. Each text emphasizes a different type of need for decoloni-

zation, because the situations in different regions of the world are not the same. The promoted concept of globalization in colonised regions has not resulted in the illusory “global village”, according to Marshall McLuhan. It should be remembered that: “the global communication revolution has increased access to knowledge for the historically marginalized and enabled new opportunities for expression, but it has provided much greater power to longstanding social, economic, and political hegemonies” (Agodzo, 2015, p. 6). In the context of the discussed book, this is a particularly important note. “Decolonising the curriculum asks us to look at our shared assumptions about what the world is, particularly the assumptions regarding racial and civilizational hierarchy” (Cambridge, 2023). That is what this book is about. Reading this publication may result in the knowledge and understanding of the challenges facing the modern world. I will refer below to some selected parts of the study.

A series of texts opens with the introduction by the book editor Marlon Lee Moncrieffe entitled “Why Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge?”. The author indicates the problem identified by the uncritical cultural reproduction of colonial and Eurocentric curriculum knowledge and discourses, power, and cultural imperialism. Postcolonial injustice is seen here as the key to understanding how the colonial past still affects many modern societies. Marlon Lee Moncrieffe argues that the book’s main aim is to disseminate the perspectives of people that curriculum knowledge has silenced and marginalized, as well as to examine and criticize the Eurocentric influences on Global South developments in education. As the volume’s editor, Marlon Lee Moncrieffe formulates the goals of the book’s methodology as follows: “The aim of this eclectic approach is to provide illustration of the multicultural context of a unique European institution; from its recognizing the hegemony of Western-centric knowledge, to its being absorbed with the power of the decolonial method in teaching and learning, fuelled by philosophical notions of self-development, including support through the professional learning community, meaning-orientated reflection and the virtues of ethical leadership. The quest for institutional and personal transformation consists in exhibiting ontological pluralism in practice and action. This means welcoming and applying multiple ways of seeing and being, and multiple ways of knowing through the pluriverse of epistemologies that are available to all in the unique educational context” (Moncrieffe, 2022, p. 10).

The next text is a collective work by Marlies Kustatscher, Edwar Calderón, E. Kay M. Tisdall, William A. Evanko, and Juan Manuel Gomez Serna: “De-

colonising Participatory Methods with Children and Young People in International Research Collaborations: Reflections from a Participatory Arts-Based Project with Afrocolombian and Indigenous Young People in Colombia". The article explains the importance of participation among children and youth, emphasizing participatory methodologies as particularly important for activism and transformative education, which are always located within research relations and contexts. The authors argue that decolonising childhood and children is the way to undo historical and ongoing processes of colonialism to the transformations in many fields of the social life of colonial injustices. The authors present how music and art can deconstruct collective memories and imaginations. Participatory arts methodologies are helpful tools for social change. Studying them is important and necessary. However, the authors passionately expressed their doubts about their participation as representatives of the Global North in conducting this type of research. They wonder whether their engagement deconstructs or reifies colonial narratives and practices.

The discussion on the phenomena of arts-based teaching and learning can be found in the article by Nub Raj Bhandari and Marlon Lee Moncrieffe: "Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge Using Arts-Based Approaches for Teaching and Learning Civic Education with Young People in Nepal". The authors present and discuss some arts-based teaching and learning research projects regarding national values. The authors deconstruct how young people in Nepalese schools learn about civic and national values, such as citizenship, social behaviour, morality, and tolerance. The authors notice a correlation between the decolonisation of civic education and national political movements in Nepal. Apart from the research conclusions, the statements of the participants of the activities may be interesting for the reader.

Josephine Mwasheka Nghikefelwa, Frances Wyld, and Gina Wisker authored an article entitled: "Creating and Curating: Three Voices from Namibia, Australia and the UK on Decolonising the Literary-Related Doctorate", which is a product of dialogue between the two authors and researchers. The main considerations are focused on decolonising in the literary-related doctorate, considering issues such as identifying the author, reader or critic and the issue of what constitutes knowledge in the post-colonial reality.

An interesting part of the book is the text prepared by Hyleen Mariaye: "Decolonising World Bank Influence on Curriculum Reforms in Mauritius." This part discusses the relationship between economic factors and political opposition between the Global North and Global South in the context of development and quality in education.

A series of following articles explore the challenges of decolonisation and marginalization, and indicate the need for education in various world regions. These are the following texts: “Decolonising the ‘Thai-ness’ Discourse in Education” (prepared by Omsin Jatuporn), “Coloniality and National Exceptionalism in Norwegian Citizenship Education: Engaging the Ontological Baseline” (prepared by Kristin Gregers Eriksen), “Decolonising Early Childhood Curricula: A Canadian Perspective” (prepared by Zuhra Abawi), “Developing a Reframed Curriculum for the UK: Who Were the Ancient Britons?” (author: Marie Charles), “Decolonising the Curriculum in Hybrid Spaces: Muslim Schooling in Russia” (prepared by Kamil Nasibullof and Nataliia Kopylova), “Decolonising Education Through Bottom-Up Participatory Activities in Poland (prepared by Urszula Markowska-Manista). These texts prove that decolonisation of curricular knowledge within the framework of critical pedagogy facilitates understanding of oneself, one’s own culture, and the culture of “strangers”. The volume ends with an article prepared by Bert Meeuwssen entitled “Universe, Pluriverse and a Blue Ocean: Reflective Analogies and Philosophical Considerations for Decolonising Education – A View from the Netherlands.”

In conclusion, it is worth wondering who the main addressees of the book reviewed here are. They are not only scientists and specialists in this field. The authors have taken great care to write in an accessible way. This book can be helpful to a broad audience, especially those who explore and notice the challenges facing post-colonial countries. For the inhabitants of the so-called Global North, this book will perhaps make one realize the burden of the colonial past and also make one understand, to some extent, their still dominant position (both culturally and economically). This takes place as from the perspective of the wealthy countries of the north, the myth of globalization creates the illusion of equal access and potential (Ferguson, 1992). In some ways, reading this book is saddening. In the context of education, especially the situation of children in various world regions, the post-colonial reality comprises barriers and limitations. Yet in 1959, the UN recognized the child human rights subjects. Colonialism still casts a shadow on the image of modern times. The reader of the reviewed book would also be interested in the publication “Childhoods of the Global South. Children’s Rights and Resistance” (Liebel, Budde, Markowska-Manista, Meade, 2023). In this book, among other things, the following issues are considered: children’s rights movements, ethical challenges of research with children, children’s rights, and political subjectivities.

“Decolonising Curriculum Knowledge. International Perspectives and Interdisciplinary Approaches”, edited by Marlon Lee Moncrieffe, is a book reminding the readers that the scale of the challenges facing the Global South is enormous. However, adequately conducted education brings hope for a better future. This message can be read from the reviewed book.

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